

**ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON PRACTICALITY AND  
USEFULNESS OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19  
PANDEMIC AT TWO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

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**Abstract**

Since March 2020, the coronavirus disease, also known as COVID-19 has become a global pandemic. According to UNESCO, schools were closed in about 100 countries due to a public health emergency, including Indonesia. The condition forced teachers to make the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning. This study aims to determine the perceptions of EFL teachers about the practicality and usefulness of online learning at two junior high schools in Batang Hari regency, Jambi province. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative design and employed a semi-structured interview to collect the data. The subjects of this research are two English teachers at two Junior High Schools in Batang Hari regency. The findings showed that in terms of practicality, the teachers consider online learning was more practical, flexible, and effecient during online learning. In terms of usefulness, the teachers felt that the use of technology increased their knowledge of using technology, especially on an online platform.

Keywords : Teachers' perception, practicality, usefulness, online learning.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The case of coronavirus disease, known as COVID-19, has become a global pandemic. The massive spread of COVID-19 forces social distancing policy. Flores and Swennen (2020) state that policy was implemented by many countries in the world and has had a significant impact on various sectors of life, especially education. COVID-19 has changed the way people live, interact, work, teach, and learn. According to UNESCO (2020), schools were closed in many countries due to a public health emergency. Until April 1, 2020, UNESCO recorded at least 1.5 billion school-age children who could not attend school due to the impact of COVID-19 in 188 countries, including 60 million of them in Indonesia. This condition makes every country worked hard to find students' solutions to keep learning and fulfill their educational rights.

The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a policy as stated in Circular Letter Number 4 for the year 2020. One of the policies is that teaching and learning at all education levels will be done at home through online learning during the pandemic of the coronavirus. This policy forced all teachers in Indonesia to make the transition from the way they teach from face-to-face learning to online learning. According to Carliner (2004), online learning provides access to learning experiences via some technology. Online learning is part of distance learning. It means that teachers and students do not go to school, but rather teach and study from home using technology. The technology can be used like a smartphone, laptop, tablet, or computer. Flores and Swennen (2020) add that the difference between online learning during Pandemic COVID-19 and online learning implemented before is that teachers and students had to learn instantly how to adapt to online teaching.

The advantages of online learning for teachers and students include the following: teachers can easily access learning simply by using smartphones or other technological devices such as laptops that are connected to the internet; students do not go to school; they can study anywhere. Teachers can set the specified meeting time and assignment collection time, all of which are already in online learning. According to Hjeltnes and Hansson, (2004), also list some advantages of online learning: cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness, long-life education and ease of learning, time saving, greater flexibility, less geographical barriers, and better administration. It means that online learning gives the students many benefits, including flexibility in time and place and efficiency, since they do not pay for transportation and other costs as if they go to school. But despite the effectiveness, when online learning is being adopted for education, it also has some disadvantages. According to Dowling et al. (2003), making learning materials available online results in improved learning only for specific forms of collective assessment. Online classes also have limitations, including problems with internet access, poor internet connection quality, and insufficient digital skills of the respondents. Some benefits, such as time flexibility, can also be a limitation, especially for students who have difficulties with self-discipline (Attardi & Rogers, 2015).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students are required to keep learning in the midst of various limitations. This is also applied at the State Junior High Schools in Batang Hari. Although online learning has been established for more than a year, in reality, the conditions on the ground show that online learning activities are still difficult to implement and impractical, because not all teachers and students are ready for online learning, but in fact, online learning must be held to reduce the coronavirus. Another challenge is that at the junior high school level, the usefulness level is

different from universities and high schools, which presents challenges because teachers and students are doing online learning for the first time, especially in schools, especially in rural areas such as teachers and students had access to internet and they had IT support. In facing these challenges, educators must dare to make online learning an opportunity to change their education. Educators must be able to teach online learning, which incidentally must use technology. The function of technology itself is to describe natural and scientific phenomena, provide space for students to explore, and facilitate interaction and collaboration between students and teachers. In addition, teachers must prepare a learning system, a syllabus, and learning methods with digital or online learning patterns. In addition to teachers, parents also participate in assisting children to learn online; they help children to learn safely and effectively; and they need to give encouragement when children are bored and create a pleasant atmosphere.

The use of technology in online learning also has practicality in the learning process. Ease of use is the level expected by users of a system that is easy to achieve and use (Davis et al., 1989). The convenience factor is the extent to which a person believes that using the system is easy and does not require any effort from the user to do it. That means there is a personal belief that the technology is simple to use. Indications that the technology is easy to use can be seen from the intensity of use and interaction between users and the technology system. A system that is used more often indicates that this system is better known and more accessible to users to operate. At the school, WhatsApp, YouTube, Quizizz and Google Classroom applications are used as guides in learning, because the application is easier to use by students and teachers, especially for schools in rural areas that are not yet proficient in using technology.

According to Adam et al. (1992), practicality will reduce a person's time and energy to learn a system. Users believe that using technology is more flexible, easy to understand, and easy to operate. The teaching method used is conventional, either through discussion or question and answer. The teaching materials used are audio-visual or in the form of teaching materials derived from textbooks, modules, student worksheets, recorders, and films. Indicators of the practicality of use of technology according to (Davis, 1989), The system is easier to learn, and the system is easy to use to do what the user wants. By using the system, the user's skills will increase. The operation of the system is easier. Practicality of use influences individual attitudes towards technology used. The increase in perceived practicality plays a role in influencing the increase in perceived usefulness because an easy-to-use system does not take long to learn so that individuals have the opportunity to do something related to performance effectiveness.

In this study, the usefulness, which refers to achieved learning goals was given by the teacher. According to Davis et al. (1989), using technology can improve user productivity, user performance can be increased through technology utilization, and using technology can improve user process efficiency. In other words, practicality has an effect on usefulness. The ease of e-learning use will increase the benefits of e-learning for students. E-learning tends to be easily understood by students. The ease of use of e-learning that needs to be improved in particular is the ease of understanding the ins and outs of the software and the ease of finding references/materials needed by teachers and students. The development of technology and efficiency tends to replace the way of learning that is carried out through direct face-to-face meetings between teachers and students with online learning models.

Based on the explanation above that the online learning have practicality and usefulness for the teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic. The teachers must be able to use online learning media. Many aspects must be prepared for the implementation of English online learning, such as an internet network, learning media, and other facilities that can support the learning process. English online learning is especially important in rural areas where signal and internet access are limited. This research aims to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the practicality and usefulness of online learning.

## **METHOD**

This type of research is descriptive qualitative method. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982), qualitative research is descriptive, meaning that the data collected is in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. Data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, interviews, or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, or electronic communications are used to present the findings of this study. The research was conducted at two Junior High Schools in Batang Hari regency. The participants of this research are two English teachers at two Junior High Schools in Batang Hari regency. In this research, researcher used purposive sampling was applied to select the participants in this study.

The researcher conducted an interview. The researcher prepare an interview protocol to gain the data from the participants. In this study, a semi-structured interview was used, which involved themes and questions related to the teacher's perception of the practicality and usefulness of learning English online during the pandemic. The interview was conducted directly using the Indonesian language so that it is easily understood by the participants. The interview was 45 minutes for each participant. The researcher used interview guidelines and used a smartphone in collecting data. There are 10 questions related in the interview consisting of 6 items about practicality and 4 items about usefulness in online learning for two English teachers in two different junior high schools in Batang Hari.

The researcher uses Miles and Huberman's theory in analyzing the data, so there are three steps to do. Data reduction, refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data into a written up field note or transcript (Miles, 1994). In this section, the researcher summarized the data that was obtained from the recording carefully and in detail. The researcher chooses the main part, focuses on the important part, and discards something that is not related to the research focus. Then the researcher do the coding after transcribed the answer of the participans. Furthermore, the researcher need to read the answer and focus on their perspective related to English teachers' perceptions on the practicality and usefulness of online learning during a pandemic.

The second steps is data display. According to Miles (1994), an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing the action. The process of data display was based on the theme of the research, and the researcher designed a narrative in the form of words to combine information that was arranged in a coherent form that was easy for readers to understand. Based the themes of the research, for the first theme related to practicality and the second theme related to usefulness.

The last stage of data analysis is conclusion drawing and verification or interpretation. At this stage, conclusion drawing and verification are done through a process where the researcher interprets the data obtained along with related

descriptions and explanations. At this stage, it is important to obtain answers to the formulation of the problem that was early formulated.

## **FINDINGS**

After conducting interviews with two English teachers from different schools through semi structured interview and after analyzing the interview transcript. There are two major themes emerged from the research of English teacher learning online during a pandemic : (1) practicality (implementation of online learning, online learning practicality and effectiveness, teaching material of online learning, teaching methods of online learning, lerning media of online learning. (2) usefulness (the use of technology in online learning is useful, effeciency of technology, implemntation of online learning useful for achiving learning objectives).

### **Practicality**

#### ***Implementation of Online Learning at School***

Related to research finding of perception of implementation online learning at school, Teacher 1 stated that her perception of the implementation of online learning at school has been running according to the applicable regulations. She stated that the study time had been shortened, the material had also been compressed, as well as the assignments given were not always about knowledge. The task also did not burden students because students indirectly study a lot on their own without guidance, so if the teacher gives a question that is too difficult, it is feared that students will even be too lazy to do it.

*“The implementation of online learning at this school is under the rules. The time has been shortened, the material has also been condensed, and the focus is also more on student skills. The task does not burden the students. The thing is, students learn on their own, so if the questions are too difficult, they won't even attempt it later”.*

As for the other teachers are on perception about implementation online learning at school, namely informant II, she said that:

*“The implementation of online learning in this school is following government regulations. In addition, according to government directives, we focus more on skills than knowledge because students spend a lot of time outside of school hours.”.*

This could be seen when the learning time is reduced from seven hours to only three hours of study time. The material was also compact and focused more on the students' skills. The last was the task given to students so as not to burden them. It was because students learn more on their own without the guidance of the teacher, so it was feared that if the questions were difficult, students would be too lazy to do it.

#### ***Online Learning is Practicality and Effectiveness***

From the government's policy, there are various positive and negative responses from the teachers. This was evidenced by the teacher's responses in interviews regarding the response of online learning, namely of mastery of technology, information, and communication.

*“I think it is positive because, with such a small item (cellphone), we can interact and children can listen to lessons a little more efficiently in time. With learning at home, I am more flexible in managing time and have more time with my family”.*

There were positive impacts, namely: knowledge of the use of technology was deeper, students tended to be more independent, creative, and responsible for their learning activities. With the flexibility of the place to study, teachers were familiar with using smart technology.

Meanwhile, the negative response to online learning was that it was difficult for teachers to convey the material and that students also took a long time to understand the material. Another response was that students become less interested in learning because they feel bored.

*“The negative impact that I have seen so far as teaching online is that students' interest in learning goes down (less interested) and lazy to read after this online learning”.*

It could be concluded that the negative impact of online learning was that students tend to be lazy. both in the decreased enthusiasm for learning and in the increasing reluctance to read when given an assignment. coupled with their habit of being lazy about collecting assignments.

### ***Teaching Material***

Teacher 1, stated that during online learning he had to repeat and re-read the material she was going to teach, and she also looked at internet sites related to the material and then summarized it. so that in the meeting she could combine several related materials. She gave an example: if the reading material he gave was about speaking, then at the same time it was also for listening material. In this way, she can maximize his teaching hours.

*“My perception of the material during online learning is that the material must include skills for students. The study time has been shortened, so it must be combined so that the skills match the material.*

The perception of teacher 1 was supported by the perception of teacher 2. She stated that besides shortening the time, the source of teaching materials was also very important. Not only from the internet, he also had his own handbook that helped him in preparing teaching materials.

*“I usually look for sources from school books and my own handbook of K13 books, where the book already includes titles, SK, KD indicators, and so on. Because books in general can be read and studied anywhere and anytime”.*

It can be said that the teacher's role is very important as a facilitator in learning activities. With these teaching materials, the learning process can be made more effective and interactive. With these teaching materials, the teacher will have more free time to manage the learning process so that it can run more effectively and efficiently.

### ***Method that Used during the Online Learning***

Following the emergence of the COVID-19 outbreak, the education system began to look for ways to innovate the teaching and learning process, especially in teaching methods. Teacher 1 usually uses the video based learning method. This learning method was created and has been recorded to assist in the learning process. By using this method, the teacher can provide a stimulus to learning for students.

*“I show a short video related to learning material, then I upload it on Google Classroom, and I give directions via WA”.*

Furthermore, teacher 2 also stated things that were in line with teacher 1. She said that by using video based learning, the material given to students was conveyed well, because the subject matter and the existence of the given task can be carried out properly.

*“Yes, I also use video based learning.”*

From the results of interviews regarding learning methods related to teachers' perceptions of online learning, the two teachers have similarities in learning methods, namely using video based learning and it can be concluded that the learning method is not much different from before online learning. Teachers use video-based learning methods that make the learning process more effective and provide new learning experiences for students because videos can make them feel entertained and not bored. Videos also stimulate students to be active in the learning process.

### ***Learning Media during the Online Learning***

There are many types of interaction applications here, such as, Google Classroom, Quizizz, WhatsApp, and many more. One of these types of applications that are often used by parents and the easiest way to operate or use it is WhatsApp and there are some teachers used others platform.

*“For learning media, I make a ppt first, and the material that is made is given through Google Classroom, and I sometimes do video conferences using Google Classroom. “I often give directions or information via WhatsApp”.*

The teacher's perception is supported by the perception of teacher 2. In interviews conducted directly, teacher 2 stated that WhatsApp is an application commonly used by parents and students who have cellphones that can be used for learning media and that learning can take place using Quizizz.

*“I use Whatsapp to communicate with students to make it easier to convey subject matter. and use quizizz when discussing subject matter”.*

Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it can be concluded that the use of the Google Classroom, Quizizz and WhatsApp application as a learning medium actually occurs at the educational level. However, in certain school conditions, for example, junior and senior high schools located in rural areas, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is certainly a consideration

to use others platforms . Learning using this application can be achieved if in teaching it uses several strategies, which include learning models.

### **Usefulness**

#### ***The Use Technology in Online Learning is Useful***

This was evidenced by teachers' responses in the interview regarding the impact of technology on increasing productivity and teaching performance, namely that knowledge of technology use was deeper and teachers were familiarized with using smart technology.

*"Yes, there is. First, to increase my knowledge of information and communication technology and increase my knowledge of internet usage".*

This is also in line with teacher's 2 opinion that with us being able to use technology, we as teachers feel challenged to make learning media as interesting as possible.

*"I can find learning resources or various interesting templates, which also makes me excited about making teaching media".*

From the results of the interview, it can be concluded that the positive impact of technology is that, in addition to increasing the ability of technology that provides a lot of information about learning resources, teachers are also enthusiastic about making learning media.

#### ***Efficiency of Technology***

From the results of teacher's 1 interview, she said that online learning could increase efficiency in learning, such as efficiency in learning time, and students could study anywhere.

*"Yes, of course, increasing efficiency, especially time from learning".*

From the teacher's response, it can be said that online learning is efficient for teachers and students, such as saving time, helping students become independent and responsible with the tasks given, and that students become more creative and productive because they can easily find learning resources on the internet. It does not rule out the possibility that the teacher will be more creative again in design learning. So that could make teachers more creative in online learning. It could be seen from the teachers' response in the interview with the researcher, namely:

*"I also motivates me to design lessons so that students remain enthusiastic about learning. make videos more interesting for students".*

From the results of this interview, it can be concluded that the use of technology is believed to improve student learning outcomes and motivation. Improving student learning outcomes and motivation is directly an indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of learning implementation. Therefore, the development



of technology-based learning in learning is very important and must be done by teachers.

### ***Implementation of Oline Learning Useful for Achiving Learning Objectives***

This is evidenced by the teacher's responses in interviews regarding the achievement of learning objectives based on teaching materials, teaching methods, and learning media.

*“Of course it was achieved but not all, because during a pandemic like now, time is shortened and subject matter is condensed”.*

Furthermore, teacher 2 also stated that in addition to shortening and condensing teaching materials, media is also very influential in learning objectives. Because quality and meaningful learning can be created by using innovative and creative learning media. A media must be designed as attractive as possible so that students can learn a material easily. By utilizing various media in learning, students can take an active role in learning so that all their potential can be developed. Below are the results of the researcher's interview with teacher 2:

*“When I give media in the form of PPT, I make and add animation to the students' interests and excitement. Of course, the learning objectives will be achieved by seeing active and enthusiastic students”.*

Teacher 1 also said that they were required to for students who are able, but considering the short time period, of course, the target is not achieved. Teacher 1 gives additional assignments.

*“I think some of the learning objectives have been achieved, but not all. In the learning process, in addition to using wa as a medium, we also carry out supplementary teaching at home so that the material can be conveyed properly”.*

The response of the English teacher to the achievement of learning objectives is based on the teaching materials, teaching methods, and learning media used during the learning process. Because in the teaching and learning process, there are many factors that influence the achievement of learning objectives, including learning methods and media. With the teacher using interesting and not boring media and methods, it can facilitate students' understanding and make lessons more lively and interesting, and learning objectives will be achieved effectively and efficiently.

## **DISCUSSION**

Perceptions of teaching activities held by each teacher are seen from several aspects, including practicality and usefulness, where there are sections on each aspect. In the practicality section, there are aspects of implementation of online learning, online learning is practicality and effectiveness, teaching materials, teaching methods, and learning media. while in the usefulness section there are The use of technology in online learning is useful, Efficiency of Technology and Implememtation of online learning useful for Achiving learning objectives.

According to (Davis, 1989), The system is easier to learn, and the system is easy to use to do what the user wants. First, the researcher found that the teachers' perception of the implementation of online learning at school. Based on the results of the research during the COVID-19 pandemic, The teaching activities had also been held following the lesson plan (RPP) that was previously made. Most teachers shorten the learning time, while some continue to carry out the teaching activities according to the schedule. The implementation of online learning allowed teachers and students to carry out learning online from the comfort of their respective homes. Students could access learning materials and send assignments given by the teacher without having to meet face-to-face. The process of learning English was easier with online learning, but it could not make the English process more effective in achieving the learning objective. Students also gave positive perceptions to online English learning. The process of learning English is easier with online learning, and online English learning can foster students' independent learning attitude.

Secondly, teachers' perceptions of online learning is practical and effective. The practical and effective response of online learning is that teachers become more aware of the use of technology, which means that teachers are accustomed to using smart technology. There is a teacher response to online learning that responds practical to online learning, especially when it is more flexible in managing time and more practical during the learning process.

Thirdly, the researcher also found that the teachers' perception of teaching materials in English online learning during the pandemic. The material must be denser and more accurate because the students' learning hours were reduced, so the material must also be adjusted. The materials also played an important role in online learning, especially in English studies. The teacher shortens and combines teaching materials and sources of teaching materials through the internet, YouTube, and books related to teaching materials.

The next researcher found a method that is used during online learning. The teachers used video-based learning methods , which involve the delivery of knowledge or skills using video. Using video, learning is more effective and efficient. The shorter the duration of the video, the more meaningful, easy to understand and supportive of active learning.

After that, teachers' perceptions of media that were used during online learning were examined. The researcher found that applications that are often used by parents, and the easiest way to operate or use it is Quizizz, Google Classroom and WhatsApp. Learning using the those application can be achieved if in teaching it uses several strategies, which include learning models.

In this study, the usefulness, which refers to achieved learning goals was given by the teacher. According to Davis et al. (1989), using technology can improve user productivity, user performance can be increased through technology utilization, and using technology can improve user process efficiency.

First, teachers' perceptions of the use of technology in online learning is useful. The researcher found that online learning increases the knowledge of technology for teachers and knows how to make learning media through technology, namely knowledge of using technology more deeply and teachers are accustomed to using smart technology. Teachers feel increased insight and knowledge about the use of technology, especially on mobile phones. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of online learning can add insight into the use of technology.

Secondly, the researcher also found that the teachers' perception of technology is efficient. Online learning makes teachers think innovatively and creatively, and

online learning activities provide teachers with computer skills. According to Davis (1989), the teachers can find unlimited information that they can access via the internet. It will make teachers think more innovatively and creatively because online learning can help develop their cognitive abilities.

The last, the researcher found that the teachers' perception of benefit on English online learning is an active learning goal. In this study, the learning objectives during the pandemic were achieved but not all because of the time factor and the condensed material. But the teacher tries as much as possible as the learning process is not only done online but also at home so that the material can be conveyed properly. Methods, materials, and learning media are also important factors in achieving learning objectives so that students are more focused and easy to understand.

## **CONCLUSION**

The data analysis indicated that majority of the teachers showed a practicality and effectiveness response. But there were also a few not practical responses from teachers about online learning. These perceptions were addressed to confirm that online learning was not always effective because of the lack of supporting equipments at schools. Also, the students were not interested fully during online learning and they could not participate as effectively as in face to face learning.

In this study, more than half of the teachers find the online learning is useful and easy to use in their subjects taught, even though. The teachers generally showed the right attitude toward online learning. They committed to using online learning system to teach. The interview proves that teachers work hard to adapt to the online learning system. They make preparations before online learning such as lesson plan, material and technology used. In the process of online learning, teachers give assessment, feedback and evaluation to the students. Many schools and teachers were busy to change the learning schedule, try various learning platform and to cope with the challenges. It is an excellent step to establish effective online learning.

Furthermore, the teachers showed a good attitude towards the use of technology in teaching online during the pandemic. Online learning increase the knowledge of technology for teachers, to know how to make learning media through technology and teachers are accustomed to using smart technology. In other words, teachers feel increased insight and knowledge about use technology especially on online platform.

Teachers' ability to innovate in designing and gathering materials, learning methods, and media and choosing the best application in line with the material and techniques will examine their success in conducting online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Creativity as the key to a teacher's success to be able to motivate students to keep their enthusiasm in psychological burden. Teachers must be able to create models and learning strategies appropriate to students' character in their schools. The use several applications in online learning is beneficial for teachers in this learning process. teachers must be accustomed to their teaching by utilizing complex online media packaged effectively, easily accessed and understood by students.

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