

“The Absence of Student-Teacher Emotional Closeness”, Rural and Urban English Teachers’ Voices during Covid-19 Pandemic

Moh. Taufik

*Universitas Negeri Malang
Moh.taufik09.edu@gmail.com*

Muhammad Burhanuddin Effendy

*Universitas Negeri Malang
burhanuddineffendy@gmail.com*

Abstract

The Corona Virus 19 (COVID-19) outbreak has made learning and teaching shifted to online. Some distinct modifications on teaching and learning need to be conducted, especially between those teaching English in rural and urban areas. This study is objected to eliciting teachers’ attitudes towards online learning of those teaching in rural and urban areas in the EFL context. A survey research design was employed to reach the objective with semi-interview and online questionnaires to collect data, distributed to the research subjects of 44 English teachers of secondary schools in rural and urban areas. The questionnaire was analyzed by finding the mean score of each item to determine tendencies, while the interview was analyzed by grouping the ideas into meaningful categories and was narratively described. The results showed significant differences in teachers' perception of teaching online in rural and urban areas, such as motivation, classroom management, technical support, and school and parents' support. It is then suggested that teaching online in rural and urban areas needs to be treated differently, a consideration for English teachers and the Ministry of Education to keep having ideal online learning and teaching.

Keywords: Covid 19, English teaching, online learning, teachers’ perception, rural and urban teachers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), some solutions to prevent its spread have been taken. Specifically, in the educational field around the globe, teachers and students are not allowed to have direct physical interaction in the classroom. Instead, they are required to conduct learning and teaching activities at a distance. The only alternative available, along with the rapid development of technology, is online learning. In addition, the Indonesian Ministry of Education has provided some facilities to support the implementation of online learning, such as an internet connection package and modification of the initial curriculum (*Sekretaris Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*, 2021).

Shifting from a traditional class to a digital one is not an easy task. Some studies were conducted to elicit issues faced by both teachers and students during online learning. It is found that online learning conducted during the pandemic could not produce the desired result of learning (Adnan and Anwar, 2020; Cheng, 2020; Demuyakor, 2020). It is argued that this failure is due to some technical and monetary issues. For instance, students did not attend the class because they ran out of internet connection packages or had a poor internet connection. In addition to it, students' mental health is also at risk. It is reported that students admitted to suffering from anxiety and frustration during online learning due to the less sufficient technical support, such as internet package, compatible devices, and noisy environment (Dutta, 2020; Ariyanti 2020). Apart from mental health, students were also identified to suffer eye disorder, interrupted sleeping cycles, and a stiff thumb joint (Wahid, Pribadi, and Wakas, 2020).

Online learning has brought some challenges to achieve efficient and effective teaching. It is argued that online learning misses some features that exist in offline learning. For example, as students and teachers do not directly interact, online learning is less collaborative, face-to-face emotional communication, and real-time feedback (Dutta, 2020; Cheng, 2020). Other extra works that exist in online learning are that the materials need digitization. Teachers need to adjust teaching resources and online activities based on students' home study characteristics and rules. Furthermore, the teaching content should experience diversification, including pandemic prevention, home health education, and mental health (Cheng, 2020).

To deal with complex issues of online learning, Richardson, Hollis, Pritchard, and Lingat (2020) suggested that professional development training need to be conducted to increase the quality and quantity of online and blended courses. The training should focus on using online learning tools and developing lesson plans with reduced cognitive load and increased interactivities (Mukhtar, Javed, Arooj, and Sethi, 2020). Professional development could significantly impact online learning, such as accessibility, student-centred learning, and learning comfort. Moreover, to solve the complex issues of online learning, Wahid et al. (2020) proposed some learning innovations, such as providing daily purpose to help students stay focus. It covers the syllabus during days off to be less demanding and teachers' intensive effort to keep students engaged with the study. In addition, Borup, Chambers, and Srimson (2019) suggested that learning from home should be optimized with parents' support. He further presented that some supports found to have a significant contribution towards

students' online learning are parents' advice on online course enrollment, monitoring students' progress, motivating students' online learning, and organizing the students' learning schedule.

Having understood how online learning has brought significant impacts, for both positive and negative, on students learning achievement and process, it is considered significant to narrow down the focus into English Language Teaching (ELT). Even though the Indonesian government has provided some facilities to anticipate the shift to online learning, teaching English may still face some significant problems, especially in the Indonesian context. For instance, even though in one side, based on the study conducted by Nugroho and Mutiaraningrum (2020), students' perception towards online learning was significantly positive, it contradicts major studies revealing that online learning around Indonesia still faces problems, such as students having low self-regulated learning, teachers' less motivation to bear internet cost and tending to stutter about technology, and parents lacking understanding about learning at home (Churiyah, Sholikhah, Filianti, and Sakdiyah, 2020; Purwanto et al., 2020; Rasmitadila, Rachmatullah, Aliyyah, and Samsuddin, 2020; Hermansyah and Aridah, 2021; Rahmawati, Fauziati, and Marmanto, 2021; Rianto, 2020).

Comprehending the different needs of urban and rural teachers, especially in English language teaching, significantly helps discover innovation or curriculum modification to enhance learning in each unique area (Bouck, 2018; Fadoun, Cipres, and Jambi, 2014). Considering the minor studies on how ELT practices during online learning are perceived by Indonesian English teachers especially of those teaching in rural and urban areas, this study explores the difference of perceptions towards online learning of high school English teachers practicing in rural and urban areas. It is assumed that specifically eliciting ELT teachers' perception towards online learning can help further develop reliable measurements on ELT during the pandemic in Indonesia, especially in rural and urban areas.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet-based learning can be conducted in two ways, synchronous and asynchronous (Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Farrell & Stanclik, 2021; Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2020; Moorhouse, Li, and Walsh, 2021). Synchronous online learning is an internet-based learning environment that allows live interactions between teachers and students, such as conferences and online chats. Some software or applications offered to conduct this type of learning may cover Zoom, Google Meet, and Whatsapp Groups call. Unlike synchronous online learning, asynchronous learning does not provide students and teachers with simultaneous interactions. Instead, teachers' and students' responses to one another may have some intervals of time. Some online learning tools that can support this type of learning are email, blogs, videos, and articles.

Newly experiencing distance learning, Moorhouse, Li, and Walsh (2021) suggested at least three significant problems teachers encounter: communication and interaction in a distance environment, the need for new awareness and skills, and the scale of process in distance language learning. Teachers have developed face-to-face communication and interaction skills and have learned varieties of ways of responding to students. However, as Moorhouse, Li, and Walsh (2021) further explained, those skills need to be adjusted with the distance learning environment. In addition, teachers must be utterly aware of distance

learning issues and attempt to develop distance learning teaching skills, such as developing their flexibility and shifting their mindset.

Another teachers' issue in distance learning is that the extent and scale of the planning, development and delivery processes involved in distance language learning will exceed the expectations and experiences of many language teachers (Kohnke and Moorhouse, 2020). Some teaching competencies are then required to help teachers develop their distance learning and teaching abilities. The competencies are as follows:

- Adjusting to the distance language learning settings,
- helping learners to adapt,
- identify the language learners' characteristics and needs at distant sites;
- provide ongoing support for learners in a new learning environment with often unfamiliar elements; and
- support students at a distance in taking responsibility for their learning.

The transition to online learning is undoubtedly a complex task. Rasmitadila et al. (2020) found that some online learning problems mostly concerned technical problems, students not possessing mobile phones or laptops, and poor internet connection. Specifically, online learning has brought a significant fluctuation in teachers' motivation from the teachers' side. Some teachers tended to be less enthusiastic in conducting the class due to the complexity of designing the course and managing the class (Rasmitadila et al., 2020).

A rural area is away from the commuting zone of an urban area populated by 10.000 people or more. On the contrary, according to Weeks (2010), an urban area is viewed as a place encompassing the density of population, organized social and economic aspects, and transformation of the natural environment into a built one.

There are significantly different challenges in teaching English around urban and rural areas. Endriyati, Prabowo, Abasa, and Akmal (2019) found that teaching English in rural areas faced more problems than in urban areas, both from teachers' and students' sides. The students tended to be less motivated, less active, and lack parents' support. Aside from the students' problems, the teachers in rural areas tended to be less familiar with Information and Technology (IT), lack understanding of teaching methods, are less trained, and are less supported by school facilities due to its incompleteness. Furthermore, Rahimpour and Kiani (2015) elicited that urban learners outperformed rural ones. It was then suggested that the significant difference was due to the learners' familiarity with the topic and its predictability, discourse genre, and the students' task complexity.

In the Indonesian context, teaching English in rural areas covers some crucial challenges. Mudra (2018), through his qualitative study, revealed that English teachers in rural areas tend to face complexity in controlling the classroom; students tend to create noises and underestimate the teachers' quality. Moreover, students' reluctance on English learning is argued to have been caused by the unavailability of up-to-date learning resources. This was majorly caused by the teachers' unwillingness to find up-to-date materials and difficulty accessing the outside world, causing the learning and teaching monotonous and boring.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research Design

A survey research design was chosen to support the researchers in achieving the goals of the study. It helped to generate an understanding of specific populations based on the research problems. In this study, researchers used a sample survey to measure intangibles in a portion of the population, such as opinions, attitudes, values, and sociological or psychological constructs of teachers in rural and urban areas (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Zaravieh, 2010). Using the survey, data from the subjects' responses could give some insights after going through analysis.

3.2 Participants

The participants were Indonesian EFL teachers in high schools from rural and urban areas. Furthermore, participants were from some sample schools in East Java and categorized considering their geographical locations to make inferences about the population. The name of the teachers and the schools were not mentioned respecting ethics in research. There are 44 responses consist of 32 teachers from urban areas and 12 teachers from rural areas. Researchers also selected 2 participants of each area to be the interviewees to get more details, one representing positive and the other representing negative preferences.

3.3 Instruments

The research used a web-based survey and interview. The survey content had covered the topics discussed in this research to assure the instruments' validity. A web-based survey was administered to collect the data from respondents by placing the questionnaire on Google forms (Ary et al., 2010). Moreover, the Likert questionnaire included 19 favorable statement items inspired by Rahayu, Budiyo, and Palyama (2017). It had been modified adequately to fit teachers' points of view and research objectives to guarantee representativeness. The Likert scale was changed to 1-4 (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree) to acquire a bold conclusion on teachers' tendencies.

Other than that, to get more data, researchers conducted telephone interviews that required oral questioning to the participants without face-to-face meetings (Ary et al., 2010). It was conducted to support the findings and check the consistency to get reliable and detailed data. This data-gathering technique was the best option possible regarding its advantages that required lower cost, faster completion, high response rates, and accessibility, especially during a pandemic.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

In this research, the data collection was done in two stages. First of all, the link address of the questionnaire made was shared via WhatsApp with all teachers. Then, participants answered the items provided on the website from November 16, 2020, to December 28, 2020. After that, data tabulation was created to summarize the findings. Secondly, researchers selected two teachers of each area that had the most positive and negative responses to participate in the WhatsApp telephone interview from December 31, 2020, to January 1, 2021. The conversation was recorded, and transcriptions were made afterwards. In this study, every teacher was informed that their privacy was safe, and researchers only assigned a pseudonym to present the data.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed through some steps. Firstly, researchers input the data from a web-based survey to Microsoft Excel. After that, calculations were made to determine respondents' answer frequencies of each item, total score, means, and percentage. To justify the category, the criteria of index was used to determine the conclusion were; strongly disagree = 0-25%, disagree = 26-50%, agree = 51-75%, strongly agree = 76-100%. Secondly, the transcriptions of the interview conducted were analyzed manually. For instance, important points from a question were quoted from the recordings. After that, the data were interpreted with the findings and relevant theory to conclude teachers' preferences and challenges of online learning in urban and rural areas.

4. FINDINGS

The results of the research were in the form of statistical data and interview transcription. The researchers stated the data tabulation of both teachers from the urban and rural areas to show their preferences and challenges in online English language learning. Moreover, the researchers included some essential quotations from each teacher to support the findings. The utterances of interviewees were also translated into proper English without changing the meaning to make sure that the information is clear. To ensure privacy safety, researchers only mention initials and numbers (e.g., TU1).

4.1 Perception of Online English Language Learning

Most of the participants from both urban and rural areas responded positively. They agreed with online English language learning during pandemic outbreaks, though academics face many challenges. Nevertheless, the finding was served partly: urban EFL Teachers' Perception in Table 1 and rural EFL Teachers' Perception in Table 2. Two themes of questions were analyzed, the teachers' preferences and challenges in online English language learning.

The total of participants surveyed on online teaching English in urban was 32 people. The results showed that 17 of 19 statements had been agreed by the participants, and about 2 of 19 disagreed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Urban EFL Teachers' Perception on Online Teaching

No	Score				Total	Total Score	Average	Index	Category
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree					
	1	2	3	4					
Teachers' Preference									
1	1	7	17	7	32	94	2.94	73.44	Agree
2	1	12	14	5	32	87	2.72	67.97	Agree
3	1	9	15	7	32	92	2.88	71.88	Agree
4	2	17	13	0	32	75	2.34	58.59	Agree

Challenges in Online English Language Teaching

5	5	18	9	0	32	68	2.13	53.13	Agree
6	1	8	22	1	32	87	2.72	67.97	Agree
7	0	18	11	3	32	81	2.53	63.28	Agree
8	2	19	11	0	32	73	2.28	57.03	Agree
9	1	17	12	2	32	79	2.47	61.72	Agree
10	1	23	7	1	32	72	2.25	56.25	Agree
11	0	15	15	2	32	83	2.59	64.84	Agree
12	1	15	16	0	32	79	2.47	61.72	Agree
13	1	16	12	3	32	81	2.53	63.28	Agree
14	1	19	12	0	32	75	2.34	58.59	Agree
15	1	15	16	0	32	79	2.47	61.72	Agree
16	2	23	6	1	32	70	2.19	54.69	Agree
17	4	25	3	0	32	63	1.97	49.22	Disagree
18	8	22	1	1	32	59	1.84	46.09	Disagree
19	7	16	8	1	32	67	2.09	52.34	Agree
					1464	2.41	60.20	Agree	

According to the first theme, all statements of the online survey have been agreed upon. It was indicated by the statements of teachers' preferences on statement 1, in which the index is 73.44% correspondingly. Moreover, the academics were motivated to adapt to new conditions during the outbreak. They also believed that by teaching English through digital technologies beyond the classroom, they were motivated, got online materials quickly, and got more advantages than disadvantages. The index for those three statements was 67.97%, 71.88%, and 58.59% respectively.

Based on the second theme, there were 15 statements. 13 of 15 were agreed, and the remaining two disagreed. The participants confessed that no significant problems occurred in their online class though the index of statement 5 obtained the second-lowest score among agreed statements. The index for this statement was 53.15%. From teachers' point of view, students could adapt well to the online learning environment as they are familiar with the technology. In addition, they could learn significantly with the online teaching methods applied by the teachers, so they were motivated and happy with online learning. These statements were proven by the results of data analysis which have the index of 67.97%, 63.28%, 57.03%, respectively. It indicated that statements number 6, 7, and 8 also had been agreed upon.

Furthermore, the participants responded positively in the practice of teaching English online. They could manage students well during the online learning activity, and the teachers faced no significant technical issues. It was proven by data analysis gathered through the survey which the index was 61.72% and 56.25%, respectively. Moreover, the data analysis showed that students and teachers had no great difficulty during online learning. They both had a supportive atmosphere with no interference from other people, which was proven by the index with 64.84%. Even though online learning was a new system conducted in this pandemic, the students could follow the class well. They could understand the teachers' instruction, and there was no severe misunderstanding.

Furthermore, it did not limit the students' activeness. They could still express their arguments with no anxiety issue. Those assertions were proven through the data analysis, which disclosed that the index was 61.72 % and 63.28%.

Regarding students' English skills, both macro-skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and micro skills (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) could be developed effectively though their index had a distant different score. The index of micro-skills had a lower score of 58.59%, while macro skills had a higher score of 61.72%. Furthermore, the teacher did not have a significant problem in assessing students. Even though participants agreed, it had the third-lowest score with an index of 54.69%. Due to the accuracy of the students' results, teachers could not monitor them effectively during the online learning process.

From 19 statements surveyed, two statements disagreed. They admitted that there are some significant challenges faced in conducting online English learning teaching from many aspects. One of them was that not all English learning goals were achieved through virtual learning. The data from table 1 indicated in statement 17 that the index was only 49.22%. In statement number 18, the participants also disagreed; almost all the participants needed more workshop training on online teaching since teachers were not used to teaching in the distance using digital technology. It has the lowest index of 46.09%; indicating disagreement. Finally, the participants agreed that online learning burdened neither students' nor teacher's economy though it has the lowest index score from the agreed statements. The total of participants surveyed in rural is 12 people. It showed that the participants disagreed only on one statement while the remains were agreed, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Rural EFL Teachers' Perception on Online Teaching

No	Score				Total	Total Score	Average	Index	Category
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree					
	1	2	3	4					
Teachers' Preference									
1	0	5	7	0	12	31	2.58	64.58	Agree
2	1	5	6	0	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree
3	0	2	6	4	12	38	3.17	79.17	Strongly Agree
4	1	6	4	1	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree
Challenges in Online English Language Teaching									
5	2	7	2	1	12	26	2.17	54.17	Agree
6	0	7	4	1	12	30	2.50	62.50	Agree
7	0	4	8	0	12	32	2.67	66.67	Agree
8	1	5	4	2	12	31	2.58	64.58	Agree
9	0	7	4	1	12	30	2.50	62.50	Agree
10	2	5	3	2	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree
11	0	8	3	1	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree
12	0	6	6	0	12	30	2.50	62.50	Agree
13	0	7	4	1	12	30	2.50	62.50	Agree

The Absence of Student-Teacher Emotional Closeness

14	0	5	5	2	12	33	2.75	68.75	Agree	
15	0	6	5	1	12	31	2.58	64.58	Agree	
16	0	6	4	2	12	32	2.67	66.67	Agree	
17	0	8	3	1	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree	
18	2	10	0	0	12	22	1.83	45.83	Disagree	
19	0	8	3	1	12	29	2.42	60.42	Agree	
							570	2.50	62.50	Agree

The first theme questions indicated that they admitted that during the pandemic outbreak, they agreed on conducting online English language learning. The participants enjoyed the teaching and were motivated to teach English through digital technology. It was proven by the data analysis, which disclosed that the index was 64.58% and 60.42%. Furthermore, the participants strongly agreed with statement 3 that they could quickly get online materials through digital technology, which genuinely benefited them. It was indicated by the index, which had 79.17%. From the previous statements, it related to the statement 4 that the online learning has more advantages than the disadvantage. It was proven by the index, which has 60.42%. The data suggested that the participants agreed with this statement.

Based on findings in the second theme questions, only one statement was disagreed. All the statements in the second theme had an average index score of 60%, which showed they agreed. The participants confessed that no significant problems occurred in their online classes. However, the index of statement 5 obtained the lowest score among agreed statements by the participants. The index for this statement was 54.17%. Some items had the same index results as in the urban. It was also revealed that students were viewed to be able to adapt well to the online learning environment as they are familiar with the technology. They could learn significantly with online teaching methods applied in the class.

Moreover, according to teachers, students were also motivated and happy with online learning. These statements were proven by the results of data analysis which had the index of 62.50%, 66.67%, 64.58% in order. Furthermore, the participants responded positively in the practice of teaching English online. They could manage students well during the online learning activities.

In addition, statements number 10 and 11 obtained a precise index score, 60.42%. The teachers faced no technical issues. Moreover, the data analysis showed that students and teachers had significant difficulty during online learning. Nevertheless, they both had a supportive atmosphere with no interference from other people. Even though online learning was a new system conducted in this pandemic, the students could follow the class well. They could understand the teachers' instruction, and there was no misunderstanding.

Furthermore, it did not limit the students' activeness. They could still express their arguments with no anxiety issue. Those assertions were proven through the data analysis, which obtained the same index score of 62.50%.

In terms of students' English skills, both macro-skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) and micro skills (grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation) could be developed effectively. However, the index of those data had a distant different score. Micro skills had a higher score of 68.75%, while macro skills had a lower score of 64.58%. Furthermore, the teacher did not have any significant problem assessing students, and all English learning

goals could be achieved in the online class. It was proven by the result which the index was 66.67% and 60.42% respectively.

From 19 statements surveyed, there was only one statement that was disagreed. Therefore, from the data, it could be revealed that all the participants needed more workshop training on online teaching since it had the lowest index of 45.83% that indicated disagreement. Finally, the participants agreed that online learning burdened neither students' nor teachers' economies; the index was 60.42%.

4.2 Experience in Online English Language Learning

The data collected from the interview supported the results the online survey. The selected participants shared their experiences in online English language learning during the pandemic outbreak and showed positive response. However, they preferred offline teaching if the pandemic did not happen. The participant perceived that the online class was better to provide her with more safety for now. Additionally, she still could handle the class effectively by using appropriate teaching methods.

In general, I enjoy the offline class. However, in this situation, I like the online class that it provides me with more safety. I tried my best to make my online class as interactive as an offline class. (TU.1)

Based on the teachers' preferences, there were differences in how motivated they were to teach online. For example, the urban teacher needed to be more motivated because it had more challenges and struggles to prepare the learning in making it interactive.

Since online learning has more challenges, such as the absence of emotional closeness between teachers and students, it becomes much less motivating. That motivation is significantly needed to make the process of learning atmosphere interactive. (TU.2).

However, other teachers in rural were demotivated to teach online. He said that specific English skills could not be learned online effectively. In addition, the application and platform used in teaching might affect the teacher's motivation. The teacher only used WhatsApp messenger to communicate with his students, so it was not interactive and practical.

English language skills have some components to convey. It is impossible to deliver the components to students as effectively and efficiently as in offline class in the online class. For example, in teaching pronunciation, giving them the written form is not enough. We need to simulate the pronunciation, and an online class, I think it is not possible. (TR.2)

Regarding the pandemic outbreak, teachers found many and varied problems in teaching. They had some problems regarding internet connection for online conference. To conquer the problem, the school had given them internet data to have online learning.

We had technical issues when shifting to the online class, such as low connection and internet data. For example, some students told me that they had to go to the side of a

river to get a stable internet connection. However, it has now been solved. We provided students with an internet data package (TU.1).

However, it differed from the rural teacher who could not conduct live teaching using Google meet or Zoom meeting.

I tried once but not anymore, considering that the students do not have a good internet connection.(TR.2).

The problems encountered were due to the internet connection problem and to manage the class as teachers could not handle the teaching and learning offline. The teacher suggested that there should be a control from the parents, for the online learning was conducted from home.

Furthermore, some students even forget their class schedules and oversleep. It is difficult for teachers to control the situation since we do not have a direct physical interaction. Parents are supposed to contribute to students' control. However, it is still hard to accomplish since they are busy with their work. (TU.2).

The approach used by teachers either in the urban or rural was different. The participants teaching in the urban used a student-centered approach; however, the rural used a teacher-centered approach. The participant with the highest score in urban did not find any significant problems; she could still teach the four skills through online teaching.

I think the problems are not significant. For writing, it is possible to conduct online. For speaking, I usually assign my students to create a video, whether individually or in pairs. Then, the video was collected for me. For reading, it is conducted almost similarly like in the offline class. Finally, for listening skill development, I usually assign my students to access online listening practice available on a particular website.(TU.1).

However, teachers in rural areas had problems teaching the four skills especially speaking skills.

I think speaking is the most challenging skill to develop when having an online class. Firstly, when I give the students example of speaking using voice notes in WA, it is significantly not conducive. The students are supposed to focus on my voice note, but then some may interrupt.(TR.2)

Meanwhile, another teacher in a rural area did not have any significant problem, but he said the online class was less effective. To overcome the problem, he focused on giving the students assignments.

Students who do not complete their assignments or are less active are given remedial assignments.(TR.1)

The results of the interview session also revealed how the teachers, both in the urban and rural, encountered their problems regarding online learning. The teachers tried to motivate the students in learning English. They learned how to be creative to choose appropriate methods during the pandemic.

The solution is that teachers should try harder to motivate students. If possible, teaching should also happen outside school hours, considering that students may answer too late when they are greeted personally during school hours due to internet connection problems.(TU.2).

I tried to have a more personal approach by contacting the students personally. Also, I prepare some additional materials for those who are late or missed the class. I frequently make learning media, such as video, and post it to Google Classroom or Edmodo.(TR.2).

All in all, the study indicated that most of the participants responded positively regarding the online English language teaching during the pandemic. As a result, the participants shared their experiences in managing the class and encountering the problems. The results implied that English teachers both in urban and rural agreed on online English language teaching. However, teachers in each area had different problems and solutions to solve.

5. DISCUSSION

The study revealed a slight difference in EFL teachers' perception of those teaching in rural and urban schools. The main issues of this study covered two aspects; a preference that is significantly related to teachers' motivation and teachers' challenges in conducting online learning both in urban and rural areas. First of all, it was revealed that all teachers, both in rural and urban areas, preferred teaching English online during the pandemic. It confirms a study by Rosayanti and Hardiana (2021) that, fundamentally speaking, online learning is the best alternative to offer during Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to it, The teachers' significant motivation in online learning is crucial to determine the output of teaching and learning activities (Hartnett, 2016). It is further stated that despite the complexity of handling online learning, motivation helps teachers be persistent in facing challenges. Then, it significantly impacts the teachers' choice of classroom activities, learning media enhancement, and interactive relationship with the learners (Ningsih and Fata, 2015; Usman, Silvianti and Marzatillah, 2016). Apart from teachers' motivation, the atmosphere of online learning is an external motivation for teachers' to have effective and efficient online learning activities. They agreed that digital-based teaching and learning provides them with ease in accessing and developing learning materials and gives more advantages. It echoed some studies revealing that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in English language teaching is perceived significantly positively due to the availability of various authentic materials, of the activities to consider, and of more student-centred teaching style (Hidayati, 2016; Al-Munawwarah, 2014; Mulyadi, 2018)

Based on the findings, it is also revealed that EFL teachers, both teachings in rural and urban areas, faced no significant difference. Based on their experience in English online teaching, they assumed that their students were familiar with the online learning atmosphere. It agrees with the study by Saeheng (2017) that found some students positively welcome the implementation of online learning. Other than that, one possible explanation is that most Indonesian EFL learners are accustomed to using technology in their daily life. It is

supported under a study conducted by Lekawael (2017) revealing that most Indonesian learners spent most of their time with their cell phone surfing on the internet (not for educational purposes), social media, and games indicated as the highest percentage respectively. On the contrary, students who employed cell phones for educational purposes covered 14%, and accessing dictionaries covered 20%. Despite the minuscule percentage, the study found that English learners admitted to viewing cell phones as a helpful tool to develop their English competence.

Other aspects of challenges, including teaching method, class management, students' participation, micro and macro English skills development, and language skill assessment, elaborated in items number 7 to 16 in the questionnaire, were perceived positively by teachers in rural and urban areas. As for the teaching method, based on the semi-interview, teachers in urban areas tended to have more students-centered activities than those in rural areas. Student-centered language learning has been argued to have significant impacts on language skill development. Teaching and learning the English language in this way contributes to creating a meaningful, democratic, and engaging learning atmosphere (Marwan, 2017), and is possible to be implemented in online learning by employing a certain learning media, such as *Whatsapp* (Munir, Erlinda, and Afrinursalim, 2021). In addition, Juliaty, Yuyun, Pattiwael, and Mau (2019) confirmed that EFL learners perceive student-centered learning positively based on their active engagement in group discussions and pair-works. However, the misconception of Student-centered language teaching may occur. Marwan (2017) argued that teachers' role is one of the aspects which is often misinterpreted. It is found that EFL teachers in rural areas assumed themselves to have student-centered learning. They gave the students a bunch of reading materials and assignments without the teachers' active participation as facilitators who are supposed to guide the students' process in understanding the materials. As a result, and in line with the study by Amiruddin and Jannah (2021), this attitude may lead to a decrease of English learning achievement in online learning during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Teachers in rural and urban areas employed questioning strategies in class management and enhancing students' active participation using *Whatsapp*. It confirms the study by Sugianto and Ulfah (2020) who found that *Whatsapp* voice-note feature can raise students' enthusiasm in learning. Moreover, Fitriati, Isfara, and Trisanti (2017) supported that questioning strategy is crucial to successfully have the students engaged in the learning activity, enhance students' verbal response, and bridge the students' comprehension. As mentioned in the interview, another technique offered by teachers to enhance students' engagement in learning is to provide attractive learning media. The teachers from urban schools admitted to having designed video-based materials. The use of video as a source of language teaching has been argued to significantly enhance students' engagement and provide a broad area as material alternatives (Trisnawati, 2010). However, unlike teachers in urban areas, teachers in rural areas were reluctant to develop a specific learning media to have students more engaged in learning activities. They had limited time to prepare the media as it is argued by Mudra (2018) that teachers in rural areas gain minimum chance to access up-to-date materials and the outside world. In addition, some rural EFL teachers had been aware of the importance of digital-based learning media, but they lacked time

management and preparation and felt reluctant (Nugroho, and Mutiaraningrum, 2020; Windiarti, Fadilah, Dhermawati, and Pratolo, 2019).

Other issues on class management as proposed by urban and rural teachers were that parents support and knowledge on online learning should be adequately developed. Moorhouse and Beaumont (2019) found that parental involvement in language learning significantly contributes to students' discipline and language competence. Parental involvement could be utilized by providing the students' parents with access to particular online learning software in which they may contribute to monitoring their children's participation. Furthermore, parental involvement was proven significant to help create conducive learning at home, collaborating with neighbors and relatives, sharing experiences, and reviewing materials. Another importance of involving parents in the students' online learning is that they could control the students' daily activities, which are not academic-related but may distract the students' focus on learning (Borup, Chambers, and Srimson, 2019; Dawadi, 2020).

Additionally, the teachers from urban and rural areas admitted that they did not face significant English micro and macro skills development and assessment problems. Confirming this study is the previous findings that digital learning provides English teachers with various alternatives in developing students' macro and micro-skills. Some options available included using audiobook to develop fluency (Ayunda, 2013), Instagram to enhance reading and grammar skills (Yudhiantara and Nuryantini, 2018), blogging to teach writing (Mabuan, 2018), Edmodo to enhance learning comprehension (Insani, Suherdi, and Gustine, 2018), and Google Classroom to enhance text-based discussion (Mutiaraningrum, and Nugroho, 2020). In response, the teachers from urban areas employed Google Meet, Google Classroom, and video presentations to develop students' English skills.

Specifically on speaking, a recording video presentation was one of the favorable options of the urban teacher. Recording video presentations had been considered significant to develop students' confidence. It is further argued that video making in language classes benefited the student in the form of four components; social, language and literary, psychological, and technical (Riyanto, 2020; Azkiyah and Rahayu, 2018). Moreover, teachers from rural areas employed a Whatapps application to develop students' English skills. As revealed by (Dewi, 2019), this application was viewed possible to develop listening and reading materials by simply uploading the materials and discussing them with the teachers and students. As for writing and speaking, teachers can first give instructions on what students have to do and assign them to upload their work, written or spoken, to the Whatsapp group class to discuss.

Finally, the EFL teachers from rural and urban areas claimed to need more workshop training on conducting online English language teaching and learning. It is in line with the study by Triana and Nugroho (2021) that found determining a model of learning model can be challenging, but a significant comprehension on it can result in a meaningful online teaching and learning. Moreover, The Indonesian government has held workshop training on online teaching. However, it was viewed as less crucial by the urban and rural EFL teachers since the training focuses on creating the online class application as learning media and technical operation. Moreover, it is argued by Lamy and Hampel (2007) that technical and

software-specific skills are not sufficient. Instead, it is further elaborated that the concerns on ICT-based language teaching and learning should rely mainly on the ability of the practitioner to identify significant differences and similarities between traditional and ICT-based learning, a teaching context and teaching strategies, and techniques which are possible to facilitate and exploit both learners' independent and collaborative learning. Salmon's (2003), as cited in Lamy and Hampel (2007), suggested that practitioners need to go through a gradual build-up of competencies as online learning progresses. For example, to bridge the technological gap among English teachers, Kurniawati (2018) implemented a project. The project involved ICT university students who had a high interest in ICT and self-confidence to share their skills with others. They were responsible for sharing their knowledge of ICT with teachers coming from different backgrounds. The result of the study confirmed that a well-prepared workshop, starting from the need analysis of the teacher and adjusting the materials about online learning with participants backgrounds, could benefit significantly from the participants' views and practices on online learning.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study was objected to understanding EFL teachers' perception, those teaching in rural and urban areas, towards implementing online teaching activities amidst the outbreak of covid-19. It was revealed that teachers from urban and rural areas have significantly similar perceptions towards online English teaching and learning. The slight differences are in the ease of access, material development, and teachers' willingness to teach, shown by the relatively lower index for the rural teachers. Both rural and urban EFL teachers are equipped with efficient knowledge of ICT-based English language teaching and learning. However, it is suggested that more workshop training that focuses on classroom management and teacher-student interaction on online learning should be held in the future. This can also be considered in designing a national curriculum that appreciates the different conditions of online learning in rural and urban areas. Finally, future researchers can focus their research on one of the specific aspects offered in the study, such as the different teaching and learning methods appropriate for rural and urban teachers, proposing an implication that uncovering the uniqueness among teachers' teaching methods over the two different areas may contribute to the better learning and teaching atmospheres during the remote learning.

REFERENCES

- Adnan, M., & Anwar, K. (2020). Online Learning Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: Students' Perspectives. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, 2(1), 45-51.
- Al-Munawwarah, S. F. (2014). Teachers' Perceptions on The Use of ICT in Indonesian EFL Learning Context. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 3(1), 70-80.
- Amiruddin, M., & Jannah, U. R. (2021). The Effect of COVID 19 Pandemic on English Proficiency Level in Higher Education. *JELTL (Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics)*, 6(1), 45-56.

- Ariyanti. (2020). EFL Students' Challenges towards Home Learning Policy During Covid-19 Outbreak. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(1), 167-175.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2010). Introduction to Research in Education (Eighth Edition). United States of Amerika: Wadsworth.
- Ayunda, A. N. (2013). The Effect of Audiobook Use on EFL Students' Fluency Development. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 3(2), 85-91.
- Azkiyah, S. N., & Rahayu, R. (2018). Examining The Role of Video-Recorded Speaking Task in Enhancing Students' Oral Productive Skill. *Indonesian Journal of English Education*, 5(2), 204-218.
- Borup, J., Chambers, C., & Srimson, R. (2019). Online Teacher and On-site Facilitator Perceptions of Parental Engagement at a Supplemental Virtual High School. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 20(2), 79-95.
- Bouck, E. C. (2018). How Size and Setting Impact Education in Rural Schools. *The Rural Educator*, 25(3), 38-42.
- Cheng, X. (2020). Challenges of "School's Out, But Class's On" to School Education: Practical Exploration of Chinese Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *SIEF*, 5(2), 501-516.
- Churiyah, M., Sholikhah, Filianti, & Sakdiyah, D. A. (2020). Indonesia Education Readiness Conducting Distance Learning in Covid-19 Pandemic Situation. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 7(6), 491-507.
- Dawadi, S. (2020). Parental Involvement in National EFL Test Preparation. *RELC Journal*, 51(3), 427-439.
- Demuyakor, J. (2020). Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Online Learning in Higher Institution of Education: A Survey of the Perceptions of Ghanaian International Students in China. *Online Journal of Communication and Technologies*, 10(3), 1-9.
- Dewi, S. R. (2019). Utilizing Whatsapp Application For Teaching Integrated English. *Refleksi Edukatika: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 9(2), 164-171.
- Dutta, A. (2020). Impact of Digital Social Media on Indian Higher Education: Alternative Approaches of Online Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 10(5), 604-611.
- Endriyati, Prabowo, Abasa, & Akmal. (2019). Challenges In Teaching English At Rural And Urban Schools And Their Solutions. *International Journal Of Scientific & Technology Research*, 8(10), 3706-3710
- Fadoun, H. M., Cipres, A. P., & Jambi, K. M. (2014). Educational Curriculum Management on Rural Environment. *Procedia; Social and Behavior Science*, 112(14), 421-427.
- Farrell, T. S. C., & Stanclik, C. (2021). "COVID-19 is an Opportunity to Rediscover Ourselves": Reflections of a Novice EFL Teaching in Central America. *RELC Journal*, 00(0), 1-13, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220981778>.
- Fitriati, S. W., Isfara, G. A. V., & Trisanti, N. (2017). Teachers Questioning Strategies To Elicit Students' Verbal Responses In EFL Classes At A Secondary School. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 5(2), 217-226.
- Hartnett, M. (2016). *Motivation in Online Education*. Singapore: Springer

- Hermansyah, & Aridah. (2021). Teachers' Perception toward the Challenges in Online English Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 6(1), 63-77.
- Hidayati, T. 2016. Integrating ICT in English Language Teaching and Learning in Indonesia. *JEELS*, 3(1), 38-62.
- Insani, H. N., Suherdi, D., & Gustine, G. G. (2018). Undergraduate Students' Perspectives in Using Edmodo as an Educational Social Network. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 6(2), 61-68.
- Juliaty, H., Yuyun, I., Pattiwael, A. S., & Mau, E. C. N. (2019). Examining EFL Students Response to Student-Centered Classroom Instruction. *Journal of ELT Research*, 4(1), 53-63.
- Kohnke, L., & Moorhouse, B. L. (2020). Facilitating Synchronous Online Learning through Zoom. *RECL Journal*, 00(0), 1-6, journals.sagepub.com/home/rel.
- Kurniawati, N. (2018). Bridging The Technological Gap Among English Teachers Through Digital Squad Project. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 7(1), 41-50.
- Lamy, M., N., & Hampel, R. (2007). *Online Communication in Language Learning and Teaching*. USA: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lekawael, R. F. J. (2017). The Impact of Smartphone And Internet Usage on English Language Learning. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 5(2), 255-262.
- Mabuan, R. A. (2018). Using Blogs in Teaching Tertiary ESL Writing. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 6(2), 1-10.
- Marwan, A. (2017). Implementing Learner-Centered Teaching in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Classroom. *A Journal of Culture, English Language, Teaching & Literature*, 17(1), 45-59.
- Moorhouse, B. L., & Beaumont A. M. (2019). Involving Parents in Their Children's School-Based English Language Writing Using Digital Learning. *RELC Journal*, 52(2), 259-267.
- Moorhouse, B. L., Li, Y., & Walsh, S. (2021). E-Classroom Interactional Competencies: Mediating and Assisting Language Learning during Synchronous Online Lessons. *RELC Journal*, 00(0), 1-15, DOI: 10.1177/0033688220985274.
- Mudra, H. (2018). Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Experiences in Teaching Practicum in Rural Schools in Indonesia. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(2), 319-344.
- Mukhtar, K., Javed, K., Arooj, M., & Sethi, A. (2020). Advantages, Limitations and Recommendations for Online Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic Era. *Pakistan Journal of Medical Science*, 36(COVID-19-S4).
- Mulyadi, D. (2018). EFL Students' Teachers' Perception and Challenges Toward Online Platforms in Language Pedagogy. *Ellis Journal*, 2(1), 321-323.
- Munir, S., Erlinda, R., Afrinursalim, H. (2021). Students' Views on the Use of WhatsApp during Covid-19 Pandemic: A Study at IAIN Batusangkar. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(2), 323-334.
- Mutiaraningrum, I., & Nugroho, A. (2020). Social Construction of Knowledge In Synchronous Text-Based Discussion During English Language Learning. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 10(2), 315-336.

- Ningsih, S. R. J., & Fata, I. A. (2015). Exploring Teachers' Beliefs and The Teaching Profession in Aceh. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 2(1), 61-71.
- Nugroho, A., & Mutiaraningrum, I. (2020). EFL Teachers' Beliefs And Practices About Digital Learning of English. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 5(2), 304-321.
- Purwanto, A., Asbari, M., Fahlevi, M., Mufid, A., Agistiawati, E., Cahyono, Y., & Suryani, P. (2020). Impact of Work From Home (WFH) on Indonesian Teachers Performance During the Covid-19 Pandemic: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, 29(5), 6235-6244.
- Rahayu, F. S., Budiyanto, D., & Palyama, D. (2017). Analisis Penerimaan E-Learning Menggunakan Technology Acceptance Model (Tam) (Studi Kasus: Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta). *Jurnal Terapan Teknologi Informasi*, 1(2), 87-98. <https://doi.org/10.21460/jutei.2017.12.20>
- Rahimpour, H., & Kiani, G. R. (2015). The Difference Between Rural and Urban EFL Learners' Achievement Through Different Types of Task. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(4), 168-178.
- Rahmawati, N. I., Fauziati, E., & Marmanto, S. (2021). Investigating the Institutional Blended Learning Adoption Framework in Higher Education. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 6(1), 101-125.
- Rasmitadila, Rachmatatullah, R., Aliyyah, R. R., & Samsudin, A. (2020). The Perceptions of Primary School Teachers of Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Period: A Case Study in Indonesia. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 90-109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/388>.
- Rianto, A. (2020). Blended Learning Application in Higher Education: EFL Learners' Perceptions, Problems, and Suggestions. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, Vol. 5(1), 55-68.
- Richardson, J. W., Hollis, E., Pritchard, M., & Lingat, J. E. M. (2020). Shifting Teaching and Learning in Online Learning Spaces: An Investigation of a Faculty Online Teaching and Learning Initiative. *Online Learning Journal*, 24(1), 67-91.
- Riyanto, E.D. (2020). The Benefit of Integrating Video Making in a Speaking Class. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 3(1), 64-74.
- Rosayanti, N., & Hardiana, T. (2021). The Aftermaths of EFL Online Classroom During A Year of Covid-19 Pandemic: Perception and Score. *JELTL (Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics)*, 6(1), 225-238.
- Saehang, P. (2017). A Study of e-Learning, Blended learning, and Traditional Teaching Methods to Motivate Autonomous Learning in English Reading Comprehension of Thais Learners. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 2(1), 1-20.
- Sekretaris Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2021). *Petunjuk Teknis Penyaluran Bantuan Pemerintah Paket Kuota Data Internet Tahun 2021*. <https://kuota.belajar.kemdikbud.go.id/SALINAN%20PERSESJEN%20NOMOR%204%20TAHUN%202021.pdf>

- Sugianto, A., &Ulfah, N. (2020). Construing the Challenges and Opportunities of Intercultural Language Teaching Amid Covid-19 Pandemic: English Teachers' Voices. *JELTL (Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics)*, Vol. 5(3), 363-381.
- Triana, Y., & Nugroho, A. (2021). Brief ELT in Digital Classroom for Lazy Creative Lecturers (Option After Post Pandemic Recovery): Lecturers' Perspectives. *JELTL (Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics)*, 6(1), 70-99.
- Trisnawati, R. K. (2010). Authentic Video: An Alternative Teaching Material. *CELT Journal*, 10(1), 92-101.
- Usman, B., Silviyanti, T. M., & Marzatillah. (2016). *Studies in English Language and Education*, 3(2), 134-146.
- Wahid, R., Pribadi, F., & Wakas, B. E. (2020). Digital Activism: Covid-19 Effects in Campus Learning. *Budapest International Research and Critics in Linguistics and Education*, 3(3),1336-1342.
- Weeks, J. R. (2010). Defining Urban Areas. *ResearchGate*. DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4020-4385-7_3
- Windiarti, S., Fadilah., Dhermawati, E., & Pratolo, B. W. (2019). Teachers' Perception toward the Obstacles of E-Learning Classes. *Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 6(2), 117-128.
- Yudhiantara, R. A., & Nuryantini, A. Y. (2018). Instagram-Assisted Language Learning in Islamic Higher Education: Toward Online Collaboration. *JEELS*, 5(2), 109-210.