

# English Teacher's Responses to the Government's Policy on Online Learning Activities During Covid-19 Pandemic: A Case Study at SMPN 2 Mataram

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**Abstract.** This research aims to investigate English teachers' responses to the government policy in online learning activities during Covid-19 pandemic at SMPN 2 Mataram. The study involved 4 English teachers and six students from 8 and 9 grades as participants of the study. This is a case study qualitative research. The data were collected by interviewing the teacher about their experience in implementing the policy to find out their response, obstacles, and how they overcame them. Documentation is conducted to see their preparation for teaching online. Then, audio and visual materials were necessary to see how they implemented it. The data were analyzed by using the following procedure: (a) identify teacher response to the online learning policy, (b) identify teacher's obstacles during the implementation of the policy (c) identify the way teachers overcome the obstacles. The result of this study showed that English teachers' responses to the government policy in online learning activities during Covid-19 pandemic at SMPN 2 Mataram were not too surprising because they have experience in using online media and were also supported by digital facilities at school. However, the teacher state that the process is not optimal when compared to offline learning. As a follow-up to improvement, it is necessary to evaluate and develop parents or stakeholders to be actively involved in assisting students.

## 1 Introduction

In the last two years, Indonesia, as well as other countries in the world, has been experiencing Covid-19 pandemic. The government issues a new policy for schools as a guide during special conditions like Covid-19 pandemic. The policy is Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture number 4 of 2020, concerning the implementation of educational policies in the emergency period of the spread of the corona / Covid-19 virus [1].

Ali [2] stated that Education policy includes the entire education system starting from the activities of the national education department. In that case, the government policy was an online learning system where studying was done by using e-learning. This process is

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carried out in a digital system, where the teacher presents every learning activity through electronic media.

In general, an online learning system makes it easy for anyone to study at any time and at anywhere. It is because neither teachers nor students must go out of their homes to school. Nevertheless, there are several different reactions to the whole elements of this policy; teachers and students have experienced many difficulties in carrying out remote teaching and learning activities. Most of the teachers and students complained about them.

The reaction shown by teachers during the implementation of an online learning system is called response. According to J.B. Watson [3], a response is every behavior, which is essentially a reaction to a stimulus because the stimulus greatly affects the behavior. The meaning of response in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) is a reaction or answer to a symptom or event that occurs. Kartono [4] states that "responses can be identified as memory images from observations." Meanwhile, in Suryabrata [5], responses are images that remain in memory after one's observations. Thus, the response is an image that stays in our memory after going through the observation process first. In the process of observation, responses are not bound by place and time.

Several theories can be used as references to study the teacher's responses to education policy. In general, the theory used is called Stimulus Organism Response (SOR). A stimulus is a stimulus provided by the government through educational policies in special conditions, such as online learning policies during a pandemic. Organisms are individuals or communicants who will be the object of the persuasive communication process. The organism is processing the stimulus. There is a willingness to act for the stimulus it has received (attitude). Effect (Response) is the result or impression obtained from observations about subjects, events, or relationships obtained by inferring information and interpreting messages.

The focus of this study will be dedicated to studying teachers' responses to this pandemic to the implementation of educational proses and activities, identifying the obstacle they faced and how they overcame the obstacles.

## **2 Method**

This study is a qualitative case study in online learning activities as it explores teachers' responses in implementing the policy, identifies teachers' obstacles, and how they overcome the obstacles. According to Yin [6], a descriptive case study is a study approach to discover relatively new phenomena because of its early stage based on the existing body of knowledge. The study was conducted in SMPN 2 Mataram, which is the respondent is an English teacher at each level. Data were collected by documentation and interviewing 4 English teachers and six students. Additionally, the analyses of audio and visual materials were also used to confirm the teacher's responses through interviews.

## **3 Finding and Discussion**

### **3.1 Teacher Responses**

As an unfamiliar learning method, online learning activities during Covid-19 pandemic has raised various response toward the implementation of this new system in school. An in-depth interview has conducted to investigate the teacher's reaction to the policy. In interviewing the teachers, James's [7] theory was used as a guideline to know what should be asked in the interview process.

1. *Do you think online learning during the pandemic can be carried out properly?*
2. *Are you able to use digital devices proficiently to be able to carry out online learning activities during the pandemic?*
3. *Is the online learning policy during the Covid-19 pandemic appropriate as an alternative step in certain conditions such as the Covid-19 pandemic?*

The result of this interview has pointed out three themes referred to in RQ1: teachers' responses, teachers' knowledge, and teachers' opinion. It was found that the English teachers at SMPN 2 Mataram accepted the online learning policy during the Covid-19 pandemic as the best step in this situation. The transcript below is the teachers' answer related to question no.1.

*"Because the conditions forced us to study online, we must try to do it. To be honest, we are in SMPN 2, and we are not too surprised because previously, we also used e-learning. Here, in SMPN 2 is digital base learning".*

Moreover, the next question about teacher knowledge or their ability to use online learning media confirms their statement in accepting the policy. Here is the collection of teachers' talk about their experience.

*"Initially facilitated by the school through workshops and mentoring. Then for those who don't understand, some of them are self-taught and are helped by our friends who have better in IT (Information and Technology). So, teachers help to teach each other."*

*"Personally, I can because I used it too in the past time. The school has also held trainings for all teachers."*

Furthermore, the teacher's opinion regarding the appropriateness of online learning policies as an alternative step in learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic or in other special conditions. Based on the results of the interview, the teacher stated that this online learning policy was the right step to continue to activate learning activities during the pandemic or in other special conditions, but there needed to be improvements had to be made to increase the expected effectiveness. The following is the transcript of the teacher's interview:

*"It seems that we are here feel it is not as difficult as the people out there. In SMPN 2, Almost all both students and teachers have facilities. For children who do not have an Android phone or laptop, we lend them a tab. But there are difficulties because children need to be accompanied. If we teach online, we don't know how the children pass the process; the teachers only receive the results of the assignments given through these platforms."*

The interview results indicate teachers' acceptance that the online learning policy during the Covid-19 pandemic is the right step with experience and assistance facilitated by schools and the ability of other teachers to help them adapt well to the policy implementation process.

### **3.2 Teachers Obstacle**

From the teacher's statements, it was found that the learning target could not be achieved optimally, so many teachers lowered the standard of student learning mastery. This is caused by the level of difficulty faced by teachers and students. Some of the obstacles faced by teachers are illustrated in their statements as presented below.

- (P1) The teacher is constrained by the internet network.
- (P2) The teacher has difficulty designing practical learning in English.
- (P3) Teachers have difficulty controlling students in video conference learning activities.
- (P4) Teachers have difficulty motivating students to be disciplined in doing assignments.
- (P5) Teachers have difficulty in preparing learning materials.

From the findings above, it can be explained that although English teachers at SMPN 2 accepted the online learning policy as the right solution during a pandemic and can be implemented in SMPN 2 Mataram, in the implementation process, many obstacles were encountered, which caused the results to be not optimal.

### 3.3 Way to overcome the obstacles

Teachers need alternative steps to overcome the abovementioned problems to continue the online learning process. In identifying the problem-solving strategies used by the teacher, the same method was used in collecting data, namely interviews and narrative analysis.

From the results of these interviews, the four teachers gave similar answers regarding the problem-solving process they were doing. The steps mentioned above really need to be done to keep the learning activities in the school alive.

1. Are there any obstacles during the online learning process (such as network errors or suddenly disappearing), and how do you solve them?

*"Sure, although here there is Wi-fi in several rooms, such as the hall, the computer laboratory, and the teacher's room, each has its own Wi-fi. Other teachers also teach at the same time, so they fight over the network. So, the network suddenly disappears, suddenly hangs, and we who are learning suddenly stop. Yes, we have to switch to WA chat, etc."*

The four teachers who were respondents gave similar answers regarding the network constraints they experienced during the online learning process.

2. Given that learning English contains four skills that must be achieved, there are several activities that direct students to practice, such as speaking, listening, and reading. How does it design the activity?

*"I personally try to stay there, even though they will practice on their own; for example, when speaking, they have a conversation, and then it will be recorded and then sent to me. Or sometimes, I take audio from native speakers, and then I send the file, and I am given the task of listening and making a transcript. Then they have to send it in the form of a soft file, or it can be via a private WA message to me."*

*"Because we didn't meet the students, we didn't see them at that time, we didn't see the students directly, so we focused more on teaching materials. So, for some materials, such as introducing yourself and descriptive text, we need to see the presentation, maybe the speaking and pronunciation, so make assignments by audio or video. So, we'll see them from there to find out their skills"*

3. Online learning is something new, ma'am, and you can't interact directly with students. Can you handle all of your students during the video conference learning process?

*"If you meet face-to-face through Zoom meetings and something else, it's rare, Ms. At most, it's been twice, and I feel less effective for me. Sometimes have to wait for the children to reconnect because sometimes the signal suddenly disconnects, and sometimes the children are less focused. The children saw their friends on the laptop screen chatting with each other. For that, I switched to the WA group and delivered the PPT material through Edmodo. For assignments, I insert Student Worksheet."*

*"From my experience, it's not optimal because sometimes the children, when they should have an English lesson schedule, there are obstacles that they can't follow. Well, you can't force your children to take classes. If that's the case, then they can't listen to the explanation of the material. Later asks his friends what tasks are given. Well, I prefer to present the material on Edmodo at the same time"*

*as the assignment. In Edmodo, students can see the material; even if they are late, they can still read it and can even watch it repeatedly. And the teacher can also monitor how many students have accessed the material there; their names will appear later."*

4. What about students who lost their motivation to learn during the pandemic, ma'am? What actions did you take against children like that?

*"There's something like that. Not all children are enthusiastic, right? Well, at times like that, there is a role for our counseling guidance teacher to involve. So, the counseling guidance teacher will do a home visit to the house in question. They visited the home to see what the real problem of this student was. Some say this because his parents are in Malaysia. So, they don't have money to buy internet quota, they don't have anything. The teacher fills in the quota; sometimes, we fill it in privately. Or told to just come to school, tell your family to deliver. At school, there is already a tab, and there is already Wi-fi. Many students worked on those porches. The tab is given by the school to be used."*

5. What is your strategy in preparing material with a short time limit?

*"For learning preparation, we are starting with preparing the device. Preparation of online learning materials takes longer than offline. Sometimes I make my own videos and then edit them and share them with the students. After that, they are discussed together. Or sometimes grab material on the web."*

*"Well, that's it; I feel dissatisfied with providing the material so that it is not optimal. Almost all teachers feel that way. We're just trying to explain the points. For speaking or listening material, I use various sources. There is a radio application, but I forget what it is called; I often download material there for listening. I look for materials that are suitable for learning then I share them with students through the Edmodo application or through WA. So the kids can listen to the audio. The learning content can continue even if the students are not in the classroom; that is very helpful."*

## 4 Conclusion

The result of this study showed that English teacher's responses to the government policy in online learning activities during Covid-19 pandemic at SMPN 2 Mataram were identified that with the support of facilities and the ability of teachers to use online learning media was not too surprise for them, because they have the experience and digital-based learning concepts. However, the teacher state that the process is not optimal when compared to offline learning. As a follow-up to improvement, it is necessary to evaluate and develop parents/stakeholders to be actively involved in assisting students.

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