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## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE LEARNING IN RURAL AREAS DURING COVID-19: VOICE OF RURAL ENGLISH TEACHERS

By

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### Abstract:

*This research investigates the rural teachers' voices related to implementing online learning during covid-19. Due to understanding the schools' readiness in remote areas, it is essential to carry out English learning activities in emergencies. The subject of this research was 6 English teachers from two schools. Three were from SMAN 1 Ruteng-Anam, and three other teachers from SMAN 1 Lelak Manggarai regency, Nusa Tenggara-Timur. This research is categorized as qualitative research. The data were explained descriptively. In collecting the data, a questionnaire and interview were used. The questionnaire consisted of 3 main questions involved. They covered the teachers' enthusiasm for Teaching English Using Technology, the Implementation of Online Learning During the COVID-19 Epidemic, and the obstacles that English teachers faced during the pandemic. The teachers' additional information was gathered in the interview section. The data were analyzed and explained descriptively based on the result of the questionnaires and interviews. The result of the research showed that teachers at SMAN 1 Ruteng Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak during the pandemic still adapted to the situation. The limitations of*

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*technological facilities during the pandemic are not able to prevent teachers from teaching English activities. However, English teachers experienced many issues during the pandemic. The issues are related to teaching planning, delivery, and evaluation of the material. Those problems implicated the quality and intensity of learning activity, in which many English teachers assessed the students' improvement subjectively.*

**Keywords:** *Implementation, online learning, teachers' voice, rural area*

## INTRODUCTION

One topic that has lately gained attention and is still being hotly debated nationally and worldwide is industrial revolution 4.0. The ability to survive in the age of technological transformation is a necessity in this period. Onyema (2020) on his research stated that technology has changed the education structure. This research has proved how technology affects a country's human resources and the commercial sector. Moreover, Vinner & Whittaker (2020) found that the result and the reaction of the student's learning process depend on the interaction between the teachers and the students. Besides that, they found that the influence of the learning environment is a significant indicator of the success of the learning activities, and technology was one of the most significant factors. An educational engagement is produced by combining these two human factors and using materials as the medium. Scholars analyzed and investigated about learning model (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). The research result indicated that the achievement of learning objectives depends on the strategies, techniques, material, and media used in running the activities. Media use help and guides the teachers to set and prepare teaching material.

Besides, using media in teaching and learning makes teachers more creative. (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015) Their research about teaching and learning by technology found that Social media groups like WhatsApp (WA), Telegram, Instagram, Zoom, and other platforms can be used by teachers to do classroom instruction simultaneously. As a result, the instructor can guarantee that students simultaneously participate in the learning process across multiple locations. The everyday use of technology helps teachers and students adapt to emergencies such as a pandemic.

Previous research has investigated technology's role in classroom activities and how technology affects students' capability, especially in learning English (Hockly & Dudeney, 2018; Turmudi, 2020c, 2021). The similarity between the previous and current research lies in how technology is used massively in schools. However, this current research emphasizes the

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effectiveness of technology in online learning, specifically in improving English as a foreign language, becoming a top choice in remote schools during the pandemic.

Moreover, the significance of the current research is expected to help teachers in rural areas reexamine how they measure equality and equity. It is also to take the step to ensure that all the students are taught by qualified educators who are fully prepared to support their development in mastering English. In addition, the students are provided access to high-quality learners, ready for the new curriculum, and up-to-date instructional materials and tools, including technology.

This research is one of many and the only one. Some previous researchers investigated a similar topic. Izhar et al. (2021) investigated the role of online learning and the goal of education. Ty found that online learning can implement information and communication technologies in the educational sector (Izhar et al., 2021). For online learning, teachers and students can interact directly in the classroom. Recently, all countries, including Indonesia, have been feeling the effects of the coronavirus. This virus has impacted and harmed every safety net and barrier in the nation's economy and educational system.

Moreover, (Larsen-Freeman, 1990) describes the learning model as a pattern or plan that can be used to shape the curriculum, design instructional materials and guide the teaching process in the classroom or different settings. This learning model is used to develop teaching patterns by teachers in preparing materials, teaching materials, and methods used in teaching and learning activities. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the learning model is a plan or guideline teachers can use to prepare learning components, including strategies, techniques, methods, materials, media, and learning assessment tools. In this study, the learning model is a development pattern that the teacher arranges in preparing all the components used in teaching and learning activities.

According to the previous description, it can be inferred that learning is a state or process of interaction between teachers and students who use the environment as a learning resource to accomplish learning objectives. In order to guide the interaction between teachers and students learning model is needed in the classroom.

The Ministry of Education and Culture developed a policy following a letter of provisions to prevent COVID-19 in the environment released by (Kemendikbud) Number 2 of 2020. Regarding the prevention of COVID-19 in educational settings, Ministry of Education and Culture Circular Letter No. 3 of 2020. From kindergarten through university, learning

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activities should be stopped in schools, according to the circular, until the subsequent alteration is announced. All parties are required to abide by the guidelines when Work From Home (WFH) is implemented. It is a call to teachers to keep monitoring and giving online learning tasks to students. An internet-connected personal computer (PC) or laptop is used to implement this learning method Ministry of Education (Belay, 2020). Previous study reported that starts studying through video chats with the teacher in question, where questions are asked once and attendance is taken using VoiceNote, a feature of WhatsApp. It has become a necessity of technology in education (Izhar et al., 2021). Videos under two minutes are another format in which the materials are offered. The internet network and online education are inextricably linked. One of the challenges experienced by students is an internet network connection. particularly those students who live in rural, isolated, and underprivileged locations. Even when someone is connected to a cellular network, there are occasions when the network is unreliable due to the geographic distance from the cellular signal coverage.

On social media, many people discuss their pleasant and negative experiences accompanying their children to school. It turns out that some parents, for instance, cannot bear it when their kids act up and want them to return to school since they are frequently upset about it. Because of their rowdy children, this occurrence made parents aware that raising their kids was not easy. As a result, they could not bear it and wanted to send their kids back to school (Andoh Charles, 2012). It should be acknowledged that teachers' and students' lack of readiness for online learning is also a problem. The transition from traditional to online learning systems happens quickly and without adequate planning (Viner & Whittaker, 2020).

Nevertheless, all must be done for the learning process to proceed without hiccups and for the kids to engage in class actively, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Not just in one or two schools but across numerous Indonesian provinces is the stalling of Online Education on display for us. It is necessary to improve key elements of the online learning experience continually. The most important thing is a reliable internet connection, followed by a capable device or computer, programs with an intuitive interface, and practical, ongoing, and integrated online socialization for all parties involved in schooling (Mauliya et al., 2020).

The government must establish a strategy to help this online learning process by establishing free online application services in partnership with internet and application providers (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020). Additionally, the government must provide a curriculum and online education syllabus. Schools must perform online technical guidance on the

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implementation process and notify parents, students, and the public through print and social media about the steps for implementing online learning and their responsibilities. Including information on the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in the online learning process for parents and students is crucial. As a result, we discover that the same learning can be online-based yet face-to-face (Dubey & Pandey, 2020).

The program is on point, the effect is excellent, and the learning objectives are met. This situation represents a fresh challenge for teachers at all levels, from elementary to high school, whose institutions have never used online learning. With WFH in place at the educational level, it is intended that teachers will be able to continue observing the growth and activities of students at home and interact with both students and parents (Dubey & Pandey, 2020). All educational institutions must innovate in their teaching and learning methods to address the issues above without meeting their pupils in person. The application of technology and communication in education is indeed familiar. However, the problem is that not all schools in Indonesia apply online learning, especially for areas that are still categorized as remote areas.

The current situation is a highly remarkable thing that must end entirely in school activities because it has never been considered by the educational community (Elmagzoub Ahmed Babiker & Mohd Elmagzoub Babiker, 2015). It is to sustain and stop the COVID-19 virus transmission cycle, and distance learning must be used in every educational setting, from PAUD to higher education levels. All habits change, and lessons that must be learned and applied must go on for pupils to continue learning and advancing their academic skills. The teacher's provision of learning activities to students is a fundamental entitlement. Teachers, students, and parents are encouraged to keep up with IT advance due to the more complex technology. Children in high school have the right to continue participating in educational activities throughout the COVID-19 virus pandemic since they must attend school and have their rights upheld. Although it is difficult, it is possible to accomplish.

Additionally, teachers must be more creative when putting together learning steps due to the deployment of online learning from home. Teachers and students must adjust to the new teaching methods, replacing in-person classroom instruction with online learning (Onyema, 2020). Earlier studies asserted that face-to-face and online learning were equally successful, despite other studies suggesting that face-to-face learning was superior to online learning. Access to mobile devices and internet connections is necessary for online learning. Those previous researches motivated the researcher to investigate three points. They are:

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- 1) How the teachers' Enthusiasm for Teaching English Using Technology.
- 2) The Implementation of Online Learning During the COVID-19 Epidemic.
- 3) the English teachers' obstacles during the pandemic.

## **METHOD**

### ***Design***

This research is qualitative, in which the explanation of the data is descriptive, and it does not use statistics to explain the research result. The areas focused on 1). how the teachers' express their enthusiasm for Teaching English Using Technology. 2). How they implemented the Online Learning During the COVID-19 Epidemic, and 3). How they solved obstacles in learning English during the pandemic.

### ***Participant***

The subject of this research was six (6) English teachers of SMAN 1 Ruteng-Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak. Researchers chose the researchers based on four criteria. First, the subjects use technology directly, and second, the teachers who apply online learning during the pandemic. Third, those teachers are affected by the pandemic. Furthermore, this research was carried out at SMAN 1 Ruteng-Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak, Located in Anam, Bulan village, Ruteng sub-district, and in Rejeng, Lelak sub-district, East Nusa Tenggara.

### ***Instrument***

The instruments that were used for this research were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were used to get the teachers' responses and voices related to implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the interview was used to clear all the teachers' responses written in the questionnaire.

### ***Data Collecting***

Under the research instrument, the data were obtained through questionnaires and structured interviews. In this step, the researcher directly went to the schools concerned and provided the questionnaire sheet consisting of three main questions. The questions were about the teachers' enthusiasm for teaching English using technology, the implementation of online learning during the covid-19 Epidemic, and the obstacles faced by the teachers. In this part, the researcher interviewed six teachers—three teachers from SMAN 1 Ruteng-Anam and

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three other teachers from SMAN 1 Lelak. The interview was done to clarify all the teachers' answers.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

There was some procedure used in analyzing the data of this research:

First, the researcher classified the teachers' voices from the observation sheet. We employed criteria content analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis steps followed the model by Turmudi (2020c) by recording, understanding essences, categorizing, and concluding (Turmudi, 2020b). Second, the researcher explained the findings to answer the study's objectives. The last was the researcher's conclusion from the findings and discussions. The arrangement of cited works in the text and reference list employs the model of the Mendeley site (Turmudi, 2020a).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The findings of this study are illuminated in the form of a result description. It covered the teachers' enthusiasm for Teaching English Using Technology way in running learning activities, online teaching application during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the encounters in directing the students' accomplishments. The findings were summarized in the form of participants' answers.

#### ***The teachers' Enthusiasm for Teaching English Using Technology***

The brief from the first theme, the readiness to teach English using technology, is presented in Table 1. The following data show the response of two teachers, A, involved teacher one, and teacher 2.

**Table 1. The summary of the data analysis from the first theme of Teachers A.**

Subject	Sorts	Participants' answer
A passion for using technology to teach English	acquiring technology-related knowledge through self-directed learning	"I can understand applying technology in my teaching activity because I got the knowledge when I worked in another school."
	learning about teaching with technology through workshops	"During the pandemic, I usually joined seminars linked to the technology used in teaching and learning activities."
	Knowing how to teach with technology	"I use WhatsApp because most students know how to use it."

***The Implementation of Online Learning During the COVID-19 Epidemic.***

Table 2 presents the condensed findings from the second subject, the practice of online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional face-to-face classes were immediately converted to online classrooms when the Indonesian Ministry of Education decreed that all teachers and professors perform remote education via online learning. The results of the interviews showed that some participants used LMS, and however, some of them substituted WhatsApp for LMS. The simplest way to explain these is through Teacher B's experiences, which involved Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3.).

**Table 2. The summary of Teachers' Response**

Themes	Aspects	Participants answer
the use of online instruction during the COVID-19 Epidemic	Teaching listening with technology	"I do not utilize an LMS platform. The school does not provide it, which is new for the children".
	Teaching speaking with technology	"I asked my students to record Their voice explaining a topic that I recommend to them and uploaded them on WhatsApp."
	Teaching reading with technology	"I engaged WhatsApp during my teaching, especially for sending The texts for my students.
	Teaching writing with technology	"I asked my students to write something related to the topic I gave them. Sometimes, I asked them to write A short essay.

***Discussion***

This section describes the results of the findings in this study

***Teacher A***

The readiness of teachers to use technology in the teaching and learning process is obtained in different ways. Some were obtained through self-study, and some because they previously worked in a massive school with technology. Some others were from the workshop. It certainly helps them in carrying out online learning activities during the pandemic. It can be seen from the response of those two teachers that stated:



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*“I can understand applying technology in my teaching activity because I got the knowledge when I worked in another school.”*

*“During the pandemic, I usually joined the seminar that links with the technology used in teaching and learning activity.”*

The limited technology available in this school motivates the teachers to continue applying online learning during covid-19. Empowering knowledge of technology through the workshop is an effort that helps teachers to understand the benefit of technology itself. Identifying various learning applications is a must for teachers to compete globally and renew their knowledge because it changes every era. Emergencies such as covid-19 situation force humans to be able to adapt and be creative to find solutions to survive.

The same case is also found in Dhawan (2020), that states that technology provides innovative and resilient solutions at times of crisis to combat disruption and helps people to communicate and even work virtually without the need for face-to-face interaction. The pandemic crisis makes teachers face a new phase for online learning and allows them to look at the fruitful side of e-learning technologies. Moreover, it also emphasizes Ghavifekr & Rosdy (2016) that teachers' well-equipped preparation with ICT tools and facilities is one the main factors in technology-based teaching and learning success. Professional development training programs for teachers also play a crucial role in enhancing students' quality learning, and the teachers' preparation on technology usage helps the teachers face the urgent situation.

*Teacher B*

***Teacher 1***

Teacher 1 has been around five years teaching in this school. She stated that she learned to apply appropriate technology from her college and the seminars she attended before the pandemic. Teacher 1 taught eight classes during the pandemic, and each class consisted of 30-35 students. She repeatedly faced challenges with internet speed or connections while teaching speaking skills. These challenges frequently occurred because of the students' positions, which needed to be maintained by a durable internet signal, as most lived in areas with limited internet availability. Consequently, she applied another tool with low bandwidth as an additional, as she testified:

*“I uploaded the speaking materials via Google Classroom as I used this LMS platform in my classes. Nevertheless, I also uploaded the materials via WhatsApp if the students could not open Google Classroom.”*

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However, she commonly used WhatsApp more than Google Classroom during the teaching speaking process. She recorded her voice explaining the materials to the students and sent them via WhatsApp. Somehow, to get the student's response, the teacher must waste her time waiting because the students have yet to respond immediately. She stated: "what do you think if some of my students did not respond to the assignment immediately? The other students reported that they did not know about the assignment because they had no internet connection or gave many other reasons."

### **Teacher 2**

Teacher 2 has been a teacher for eight years. She was instructing ten classes with between 25 and 28 kids each during the COVID-19 Epidemic. Teacher 2 has similar technological knowledge to Teacher 1, who learned how to use it via seminars and workshops. He was using WhatsApp and Google Classroom to teach reading. Regular reading materials sent between Teacher 2 To transmit the texts to the pupils as an image, copy and paste them into a pdf document.

### **Teacher 3**

She has four years of teaching experience in this school. She started working at this school precisely one year before the pandemic. She got to experience the LMS or teaching tools when she was still at her university. It means that the application of online learning during the pandemic was not a big deal for her. She stated:

*"I am accustomed to the use of google classroom, Skype, and other teaching tools, but in real implementation, those tools do not work well for the students because most students do not understand using all applications. Therefore, I tried to take the middle ground by using WhatsApp groups to teach speaking, reading, and writing."*

Teaching experience and the ability to adapt to the era is the main factor in accepting the change. The research result showed that all the English teachers in these two schools have different comprehension of online learning. When they learned about the modality, teachers felt anxious, astonished, and under pressure, but they also understood that it had to be included for learning to continue. Additionally, in order to be ready and efficient while implementing online instruction delivery, preparation and orientation are requirements.

The things found in this research align with the previous case's result(Brady, 2013). The study contributed to another significant issue related to classroom management, making the current scenario extremely difficult because some need to familiarize themselves with

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specific computer technologies. In addition, teachers need help with their usual work schedules and develop a new work schedule that they can quickly get used to. Since teachers are viewed by society to be individuals who are capable of modifying themselves to any changes, the research participants in this study also acted one. Since the research participants were previously instructed in a face-to-face setting and the change in modality occurred unexpectedly, they may be forced to adjust for practical reasons, given that looking for a new job is complex.

### **The challenges of applying online learning at rural schools.**

Groups A and B teachers faced similar problems and challenges during online learning. These challenges were categorized into three phases, as following explained:

#### ***Students' readiness and knowledge.***

Students sometimes perceive online courses as requiring less time and effort than conventional courses. The time commitment necessary for online coursework is frequently strict for students who have trouble with the demanding nature of traditional courses. In a traditional classroom, teachers typically have to set aside time each day to read assignments and finish quizzes and examinations. Along with completing assignments, papers, and projects, online students also have to participate in class discussions. The time commitment in some classrooms may also increase due to team projects when students frequently cooperate and communicate electronically with their classmates.

*"Due to the coronavirus outbreak, WAG and google classroom is helpful, but the students do not Only learn one subject, so they have to manage their time. But, as students, they are not able to; manage the time well".*

It suggested that having an excessive amount of commitments could result in lousy time management when learning online. The instructor establishes a predetermined schedule when students sign up for face-to-face lessons. There is much flexibility in the design of many online courses. The students will need to plan their schedule for doing the course work, even if there may be due dates built into the curriculum. One of the best things about online learning is its flexibility, which can be problematic for students who need help keeping to a schedule. For online learning to be successful, students must find a method to combine the convenience of the medium with a structured timetable.

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*"In distance learning, we cannot control our students all the time. Sometimes they face. Learning distractions and cannot concentrate on the learning activities".*

Distractions may entice online learners since they utilize their computers and the Internet to engage in online learning. While working on a difficult task, a student can find herself online browsing, checking social networking sites, or watching the newest trending video. Setting aside breaks between work hours is one-way students can combat these distractions and better manage their time. As a result, the online learner will be able to concentrate on her schoolwork while knowing that she can check her social media accounts after finishing it. Additionally, it is challenging for the students to converse with the tutor face-to-face, and issues appear when students need help to ask questions, receive spoken instructions, or receive instant responses from their tutor.

The problems that have been found in the result of this research are supported by the statement and findings of the previous researcher, namely the International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning suggests that online courses can create student/professor misunderstandings, which lead to misinterpretation of tasks. Doug Valentine of the University of Oklahoma says distance-learning tutors sometimes become demoralized from feeling isolated and professionally deprived.

Furthermore, the obstacles in online learning found in SMAN 1 Ruteng- Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak is a gap in the ability to understand the use of technology, in which, for senior and traditional teachers, online teaching is complicated to do well. Many educators spend much of their professional lives striving to engage, motivate, nurture and truly enlighten their students. Suppose educators are expertly trained to handle the technical details of an online class. In that case, many of the skills and tools they have developed to teach in a more traditional setting will prove valuable. For example, discussion boards are one of the leading technology tools to connect students and teachers online. If the instructor needs help navigating a discussion board, it will jeopardize the class's success.

### ***Technology***

In the current era, technology has become an aspect that requires everyone, including teachers, to understand and apply it in learning activities. However, in reality, not all teachers are literate about it. Of the 6 English teachers of SMAN 1 Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak, 50% of them could not comprehend the use of technology. As quoted, it can be seen in the statement of 3 senior teachers at SMAN 1, Ruteng-Anam, and SMAN 1 Lelak.

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*“We could only use WAG to be able to teach our students during the pandemic because we are not familiar with other learning applications.”*

Infrastructure, access, and the application being utilized are the three factors that need to be considered for this issue. Regarding the first point, the statistics indicated that teachers were primarily smartphone users. On their laptop, they were accustomed to producing the content. However, they primarily used their smartphones to communicate with and provide the material to their students. This situation is also supported by (Dhawan, 2020), which found that technology can enable and hinder online instruction.

In addition, previous study discovered that 71% of teachers frequently communicated with their pupils via online chat, such as WhatsApp. Due to the students' limited access to the Internet and lack of accompanying gadgets, these teachers did not use video conferences. Twenty-four percent of teachers used learning management systems (LMS), like Google Classroom and the school's e-learning platform. (Iskandar et al., 2022). The exchange took place in the comment or stream column. In contrast, 5% of professors preferred communicating with their students and explaining the topic through online video conferences like Zoom.

### **Content**

In addition to facilities, the fundamental component of learning is content. Teachers must pay attention to the content when creating and presenting lesson plans to assist students in understanding the subject. The findings demonstrate that many teachers experienced content creation, delivery, and follow-up issues. Teachers found it challenging to convert the offline lesson plan to the online lesson plan in the case of designing. Both the teaching process and lesson time had to be made simpler.

Additionally, they had to alter their methods of instruction. Additionally, they had to create an activity that would pique the pupils' interest. The teachers encountered two obstacles while presenting the content. The comparability of the material they utilized came first. At this stage, they needed to ensure that the content they provided to students via online learning was the same caliber as that provided in regular classes. The delivery method's utilization of the medium was the other issue. This case is in line with the findings of (Rahayu & Wirza, 2020) that eighty percent (80%) of educators acknowledged that it was not easy to explain the material to the students. There needed to be a match between their ideology and the online

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teaching condition. In their opinion, the best method was video conferences, and the students' condition did not support it.

According to the researchers' findings, teachers may encounter difficulties in online education's design, delivery, and follow-up phases. The teacher should provide a solid lesson plan, and they must understand how kids learn and what to provide to pique their attention and encourage participation. The teachers had to be able to convert the content into a suitable online format for distribution. To make it simple for the pupils to learn afterward, the teachers must develop an effective way to save the material during the follow-up step.

### CONCLUSION

They answered the first question about the teachers' enthusiasm for using technology during the pandemic. The research result shows that the teachers at SMAN 1 Ruteng Anam and SMAN 1 Lelak still adapted to the situation. The limitations of technological facilities during the pandemic are not able to prevent teachers from teaching English activities. Almost all teachers have adapted to the policy of the ministry of education to run online learning even though they only used makeshift applications such as WhatsApp groups. Besides that, many teachers participate in online workshops to improve their ability to comprehend technology.

Moreover, related to the implementation of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, the result shows that most English teachers at these two schools got new teaching experience and the ability to adapt to the technology era and accept the change. Furthermore, the research result showed that all the English teachers in these two schools have different comprehension of online learning. When they learned about the modality, teachers felt anxious, astonished, and under pressure, but they also understood that it had to be included for learning to continue. Additionally, in order to be ready and efficient while implementing online instruction delivery, preparation and orientation are requirements. In the case of the obstacles, the English teachers faced, students' readiness and comprehension in adapting to the situation still needed to improve.

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