

## EFL Teachers' Challenges and Insights of Online Teaching amidst Global Pandemic

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### Abstract

The unexpected shift of English language teaching from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning activities using digital platforms has resulted in a number of challenges for English teachers and students. Hence, examining the teachers' challenges and their insights of the online learning activities is highly required. The present study sheds some light on university EFL teachers' challenges and insights of online learning activities amidst global pandemic. Drawing on the data collected using self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews from 17 Indonesian EFL teachers, the results revealed that the absence of an e-learning platform, lack of students' motivation and engagement, and time consuming to prepare online learning materials became the primary challenges of the teachers. The results further portrayed that developing a representative digital platform, designing online learning materials, and improving the quality of teaching method were several valuable insights from the teachers. The results of this study contribute to providing fruitful advices for English teachers, students, and school authorities to enhance the efficacy of online teaching and learning activities, particularly during the global pandemic.

**Keywords:** Teacher Challenges, Teachers Insights, Online Learning, Global Pandemic

### Introduction

Global pandemic caused by the outbreak of Coronaviruses disease (Covid-19) around the world in 2020 has changed how human behaves in daily life. Most of countries that are affected by this contagious diseases have their society performed



social distancing, a control action to avoid infectious diseases transmission by minimizing contacts between susceptible person and infected person that may pass on the diseases (Reluga, 2010). As a result, people are encouraged to do their activities from their own houses (e.g. working and studying) by using the advanced of technology. In Indonesia, the global pandemic significantly affects education system, in which the government establishing public policy to shift face-to-face learning in formal classroom into online learning beyond classroom, including English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching.

The change of face-to-face learning inside classroom into online learning outside the classroom has resulted in several consequences. First, the sudden alteration of face-to-face to online learning has shocked both teachers and students since it has not been predicted previously (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Second, teachers and students have to adapt to some changes in their teaching and learning activities, such as use of technology, designing online materials, and assessing students' works online (Lai et al., 2015; Yamagata-lynch, 2020). Third, shifting from inside to outside language classroom provides a number of challenges and difficulties, particularly for the teachers (Satar, 2018). Therefore, examining EFL teachers' challenges as well as their suggestions toward online teaching during the global pandemic is crucial.

In the recent decade, researches on online learning of English beyond classroom by means of digital technology are being received enormous attention from English language teaching (ELT) scholars (Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2020; Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Cole and Vanderplank (2016) examined the correlation between autonomous out-of-classroom language learning and Brazilian EFL learners' language acquisition. They compared the language proficiency of a group of Central Brazilian classroom-trained learners (CTLs) and fully autonomous self-instructed learners (FASILs). Using a set of proficiency test, they found that FASILs scored significantly higher than CTLs on all assessments. The results of questionnaire and interviews data further depicted that FASILs experienced better motivational development and mode of learning which correlated significantly with grammatical and lexical knowledge. The results reveal how the affordance of independent and naturalistic learning by means of digital technology in informal learning beyond classroom contributes to language learners' ability to achieve outstanding levels of language proficiency.

In a similar direction, Jensen (2017) investigated how gaming, which was performed beyond a formal classroom, influenced young English language learners' competence in Denmark. Data on the participants' extramural English habits were gathered with a one-week language diary in the forms of self-report with parental guidance. The participants reported minutes spent each day on several extramural English activities, i.e. gaming, reading, watching English contents, listening to music, talking informally in English, writing English contents, and others. The results of data analysis showed that gaming with both oral and written English inputs and gaming with only written input were positively correlated to the learners' vocabulary proficiency, which was tested using Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPTV<sup>TM</sup>-4). The results of inquiry provide fruitful insights for language learners that a simple thing performed informally out of classroom (e.g. gaming) can potentially enhance their language proficiency.

Moreover, Lee and Drajeti (2019) shed some light on how EFL students engage autonomously in informal digital learning of English (IDLE) activities



contributed to their perception of English varieties and cross-cultural communication strategies. Drawing on a mixed method study, they sought the empirical relationship between IDLE activities and two aspects of English as an international language (EIL). The results revealed that receptive IDLE activity (e.g. watching videos online) positively correlated to the perception of English varieties and productive IDLE activity (e.g. chatting in English) significantly predicted the development of cross-cultural communication strategies. The results indicate that informal learning of English using digital technology is a promising activity to enhance language proficiency, particularly socio-cultural competence.

More recently, Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) scrutinized how EFL teachers conducted online learning and some challenges they encountered amidst the global pandemic. 16 Indonesian EFL teachers participated in the study upon invitation. They were asked to make written reflections about their teaching practices and challenges they faced during online teaching. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to reach an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The results depicted that the teachers carried out some activities during the online teaching using a range of online resources such as social networking sites, applications, internet sites, and online quizzes. Notwithstanding the fact that teaching activities could be conducted by means of technology, a number of challenges was still encountered by the teachers, especially in terms of their communication with students and/or parents. The study suggests that online learning beyond classroom has both potentials and challenges that should be considered and therefore, immense studies are encouraged to address this issue.

Having explored these above-mentioned previous literature, two research gaps are observable. First, the studies of Cole and Vanderplank (2016), Jensen (2017), and Lee and Drajadi (2019) examined the contribution of autonomous English learning beyond classroom to language learners' proficiency in a structured and well-planned learning environment, which puts contextual differences with the sudden online learning policy caused by a global pandemic as contextualized in the present study. Second, the study of Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) has initially inspired the current study. However, it forgets to examine EFL teachers' insights and suggestions during the online teaching outside the formal classroom. Exploring EFL teachers' suggestions is crucial to provide valuable insights for the success of online English language teaching. Therefore, the present study aims to close the gaps by investigating EFL teachers' challenges and suggestions toward the implementation of online language learning beyond the formal classroom. The results significantly contribute to enhance the efficacy of out-of-class online learning of English using a range of available digital devices. To ensure the objectives, this study is guided by two research questions: (1) what are EFL teachers' challenges of online teaching beyond classroom amidst global pandemic? and (2) what are EFL teachers' insights to enhance the efficacy of online teaching beyond classroom amidst global pandemic?

## Method

### Rationale of the method

The present study is at the cutting edge of examining English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' perspective on challenges and insights of online teaching and learning activities in the age of global pandemic. To this end, a descriptive approach was followed by employing self-written reflections and



semi-structured interviews. This kind of research approach offers researchers to portray, depict, and describe an in-depth understanding about a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2015). In the context of this study, the EFL teachers' perspectives on challenges and insights of the online learning during the global pandemic were scrutinized by following this approach. The contextualization of the data is an important aspect (Harding, 2018). This study does not intend to result in a generalization, but concerns on portraying the accuracy of the on-going phenomenon being studied. Hence, the data were only interpreted in the context of Indonesian university EFL teaching where the data were gathered.

### **Participants**

The in-hand study was carried out in the context of Indonesian EFL teaching in university level, where English is taught as a foreign language. With this context, it is undeniable that the most available place for the learners to gain maximum exposure to English was in the language classrooms (Nugroho & Rekha, 2020). This study involved 17 Indonesian EFL university instructors (7 male, 10 female, namely P1-P17) of a public university at Surakarta Central Java province Indonesia. The participants voluntarily participated in this study upon invitation, and recruited based on two primary criteria, (1) having experienced online teaching during the global pandemic and (2) using a digital platform(s) as media of online teaching. Their age ranged between 28 and 40, with the average was 34. In terms of qualification, the participants had experienced professional training in both master program (14) and doctoral program (3).

### **Instruments and data collection**

The current study made use of self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews to obtain the required data. First, self-written reflection, a written story template consisting of questions (Barkhuizen, 2014), was distributed to the participants to reveal their perceptions and experiences about online teaching activities during the global pandemic, specifically in terms of teaching challenges and insights. The participants were required to write their responses and answers of the questions in the blank spaces provided in the self-written reflection. The data collection using this instrument was administered from June to August 2020 when teaching online was the most possible alternative to conduct learning activities due to the global pandemic. Considering the pandemic situation, it was conducted online using Google forms which the link was delivered to the participants by means of WhatsApp, the most frequently used social media in Indonesia. The self-written reflection consisted of 5 questions examining the participants' views about challenges and insights during the online teaching (see appendix). The primary advantage of self-written reflection as a means of data collection was the participants could freely express intelligible answers and responses to the questions based on their experiences and reflections (Hollweck, 2015).

Second, semi-structured interviews were employed following the results of self-written reflection that was firstly administered. The interviews were conducted with four participants, namely P1, P4, P11, and P16, who were invited to follow up their fascinating experiences and stories written in their reflections, thus the researchers considered that they were worthy of more in-depth exploration. The interviews were conducted one by one participant and last about 30 minutes



each minutes by using call phone. The main advantage of semi-structured interview is that this method of inquiry allows the new ideas and questions to be come up during the interview (Harding, 2018). Additionally, the interviewers brought a guidance in hands, but still possible to extend the guidance when a new issue raised during the conversation (Nugroho et al., 2020). In this study, the interviews were recorded using an audio recording and transcribed for the sake of data analysis. As an effort to ensure the validity, the researchers also took some notes during the process of interviews. Ethical approval and consent were sought from the participants before conducting data collection.

### **Data analysis**

The data were analyzed by referencing to the procedures of sequential explanatory strategy by Creswel (2009). First, the data obtained both from self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews were tabulated. Second, the data were classified based on several themes based on the research questions, i.e. EFL teachers' challenges and insights. Third, the researchers coded, reviewed, analyzed, and integrated the emerging themes as reflected by the 17 participants that led to the finals results of data analysis and further used as a basis of conclusion drawing. To ensure the validity and reliability, the researchers individually coded and reviewed the data from both self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews. Thereafter, several stages of discussion were conducted to achieve the consensus on the final results. The most relevant excerpts as the empirical answers of the research questions in this study were presented in the result section.

### **Findings and discussion**

This section presents the results of data analysis with regards to the two research questions about EFL teachers' challenges and insights of online teaching amidst the global pandemic. The most representative quotes from the participants' responses in both self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews are presented to support the description of the findings. The quotes from written reflections are coded as "WR", while the semi-structured interviews are signed as "Int". The elucidation of the results and how they relate to current theories and previous studies are further presented as a discussion.

#### **EFL teachers' challenges of online learning amidst global pandemic**

##### ***The absence of a representative e-learning platform***

Based on the results of data analysis obtained from both self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews, almost all participants stated that the university did not have a representative e-learning platform. Through the semi-structured interview, one of the participants told that the university was developing a digital platform (e.g. Moodle) to conduct online teaching and learning. However, at the time of the data collection, the development was still on going and the instructors as well as the students were not familiar enough with the platform.

*"The main challenge of online teaching during this Covid-19 pandemic is the fact that our institution has not yet developed a representative e-learning platform. Consequently, I should try to look for available digital platforms that can help me conducting my writing class. In this case, I use Google classroom as a platform of the online learning". (P3. WR)*



*“Actually, the institution is developing a digital tool for online learning namely Moodle. Unfortunately, the development has not finished yet and the lecturers and students have not been familiar with the e-learning media”. (P4. Int)*

Another participant revealed that the sudden implementation of online teaching and learning as a result of the global pandemic seemed to give a significant impact on the readiness of the university to facilitate an online learning activities.

*“For me, the problem of the online teaching in the age of this Covid-19 pandemic is that the university seems does not ready to facilitate an online learning activities. It may be caused by the sudden implementation of online learning in this pandemic era”. (P13. WR)*

Additionally, the condition was undermined by the fact that the instructors did not have adequate knowledge and skills of technology integration to conduct an online teaching since they performed face-to-face classroom interaction before the advent of global pandemic. One of the participant stated:

*“To be honest, I am confusing when the government establishes the policy to conduct online teaching to stop the spread of Covid-19. I am not well-equip with sufficient skills and knowledge about digital platforms to conduct the online teaching. Therefore, I decide to use WhatsApp, the most frequently used social media in Indonesia because I believe that my students are familiar with the mobile application, so that I use the application only to share materials and having discussion with my students”. (P1. Int)*

### ***Time consuming to prepare materials of online learning activities***

Through the self-written reflections, the teachers confess that they encounter difficulties in creating materials that suit the learners' needs and are easy to learn via online learning setting. Most of the participants inform that they have to invest a lot of time thinking and designing appropriate materials of the online teaching.

*“Since the implementation of online learning, I face many difficulties in designing suitable materials for my students. In my mind, I have to create easy and effective materials that are still in accordance with the subject I teach, and they should be easily understood by my students through an online learning. This is not an easy task and believe me it consumes my time”. (P16. Int.)*

The teachers also encounter a problem when they have to provide feedback to the students' assignments. During the online learning, they tend to give an assignment which the students have to submit it in a particular deadline. However, based on the results of data analysis obtained from self-written reflections, the



teachers did not have enough time to check and evaluate their students' assignments.

*"I conduct my teaching activities using WhatsApp group. During the online learning, I encounter difficulties in giving feedback especially assignment of my students. It really consume my time, and I have also to prepare other materials for the next classes". (P17. WR)*

#### **Unstable internet connection and limited quota**

Internet access and network connection become the primary needs to conduct an online teaching and learning activity. The data analysis revealed that one of the challenges encountered by the teachers was unstable internet connection and limited quota, especially experienced by their students. One of the participants said that the online teaching activities could not conducted punctually according to the meeting schedule because of internet connection problem.

*"Most of my students return back to their hometown since the global pandemic. As we know that every region has different demographic situation, and some of my students are coming from disadvantage areas where internet connection is unstable. This situation results in ineffective online learning activities of my ESP classes. What I can do is only to give assignment through social media WhatsApp and let the students submit it whenever they have stable internet connection". (Int. P11).*

In addition, the financial condition of the students and their family also generated another problem. Some of the students confessed that they could only afford limited internet quota that was not sufficient to comfortably join the online learning activities. One of the participants stated that:

*"I often find my students say that they do not have sufficient internet quota to join online learning activities. According to them, they have to join several classes of different subjects so they spend a lot of internet quota for joining these online classes. For the solution, I convert my materials into pdf file, since I teach grammar, and post it in the Google classroom to let my students learn about the topic. Then, I give them exercises in the end of the meeting." (P9. WR)*

#### **Lack of students' motivation and engagement**

Moreover, lack of students' motivation and engagement in online learning activities seemed to be a serious problem that should be solved. From the data analysis it was scrutinized that the students could not understand the teachers' instructions although the instructions were given, even written clearly. It was simply because they do not carefully read and understand the teachers' instructions. They sometimes skipped the instructions that have written a bit longer.

*"In my opinion, my students are lack of motivation and engagement during the online classes. They often fail to understand my instruction,*



*for instance when I am giving a project or assignment. I try to evaluate my teaching method and strategy. Besides various problems of the online learning, my teaching method may not attractive and interesting for my students". (P2. WR)*

*"I must repeatedly provide the same explanation or information during the learning process to my students. I am using Google classroom platform and the discussion is conducted in a written way through the comments. It becomes a problem where only few of my students pay attention and follow the discussion". (P1. Int.)*

It was also found from self-written reflections that some students are not punctual to attend the online learning based on the schedule. It was not only because the unstable internet connection, but also because they did not have high motivation and engagement to join the online learning activities. One of the participants confirmed that:

*"I sometimes think that for my students online learning from their own houses is like a holiday. My students often come late to join our WhatsApp group to conduct an online teaching, especially the morning classes. In addition, many of my students do not submit their work on time". (P8. WR)*

#### ***Needs for professional developments and trainings***

Most of the participants stated that they needed professional development programs and training, especially with regards to the knowledge of technology integration in English language learning. Therefore, they would not encounter technical problems when they have to conduct online teaching like what they did during this global pandemic.

*"As an English teachers in this twenty-first century era, we need some professional development trainings about how to integrate technology in language classroom. Thus, we are ready to conduct an online learning in our regular class or in the case of this Covid-19 pandemic". (P5. WR)*

Some of the participants informed that they had obtained some professional trainings about digital technology in language learning when they attended undergraduate and master programs. However, they argued that the trainings were not enough, especially when they encountered a sudden implementation of online learning as a result of the pandemic.

*"I think we need some development programs to enhance our capacity and knowledge about e-learning and how to conduct an online classroom. I have got it in my master program, but it is not enough since we learned about the theory and some current issues in digital language learning". (P16. Int.)*





*“In response to this current situation about online learning, we have to join as many as possible professional trainings about technology in ELT. So, as English teachers, we can still provide the best services to our students in terms of learning English”. (P12. WR)*

The results of this study depict EFL teachers' challenges of online learning amidst a global pandemic. Different from the face-to-face classroom, online learning open a new challenge where the teacher has to be a creator, a presenter, and a guide to their students (Gjelaj et al., 2020). In the context of technology, the e-learning platform has become one of the crucial accelerators. However, this crucial accelerator is not ready yet in the university where this study was conducted. The absence of a representative e-learning platform impedes teaching and learning activities. Additionally, the instructors slightly have adequate knowledge and skills of technology integration to design online teaching since they performed traditional classroom interaction before the global pandemic. The second challenge is designing materials for online learning that is different from traditional classrooms. It consumes a lot of time to prepare materials for online learning (Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). The EFL teacher showed an awareness of designing an interactive, simple, and appropriate material to improve students' abilities. Nevertheless, the teachers tend to give their students assignments that have to be submitted in a particular deadline. Soon, it becomes another great challenge, to check students' tasks daily, give score and feedback is hard for the teachers (Sun et al., 2020).

Since internet access and network connection become the primary needs to conduct online teaching and learning, unstable internet connection and limited quota invite another challenge. The teachers confess that the internet connection problem hit student-teacher engagement in delivering materials. Additionally, the financial condition generates student's problems in participating in online learning. They could only afford a limited internet quota that was not sufficient to comfortably join the online learning activities. This result in line with Lucena & Leal (2020) who investigate teaching through technology in Amazonian. They found that the students are difficult to pay high-cost internet access. Moreover, the lack of students' motivation and engagement in online learning activities seemed to be a serious problem that should be solved. It happens regularly and continuously. The students tend to skip the teachers' instruction that has written a bit longer, the result is the outcome of the study is not maximal. This result confirms a previous study that found out the students with an instructor become a lot more effective than learning alone in an online condition (Lai et al., 2015). Furthermore, lack of student-teacher engagement and responsive feedback from the teacher can decrease the students' motivation. Although online learning allows improving the students' language skills, still, it needs teachers' presence (Malathy, 2019).

The sudden online learning policy caused by a global pandemic gives a different result with English learning beyond the classroom to language learners' proficiency in a structured and well-planned learning environment such as what have been conducted by some researchers (Cole & Vanderplank, 2016; Jensen, 2017; Lee & Drajadi, 2019). This condition needs professional development and



training. Previous studies in this field draw that digital devices offer EFL learners with various possibilities improving students' language skills and can be integrated into a language classroom. The tools such as WhatsApp (Ahmed, 2019); Instagram (Aloraini, 2018; Listiani, 2016); Facebook (Naghdipour, 2017; Slim & Hafedh, 2019); and Youtube (Alwehaibi, 2015) are successfully proven as a media to enhance language learners' proficiency. Most importantly, teacher professional development programs such as trainings and workshops are still needed to enhance the efficiency of online learning.

### **EFL teachers' insights of online learning amidst global pandemic**

Following their perception about challenges of online teaching, the participants were required to provide their reflections that related to insights and suggestions of the online learning implementation during the global pandemic. In relation to the absence of a representative e-learning platform in their university, the participants suggested that the university should continuously develop an e-learning platform. ICT integration in education, especially English language teaching, should not only perform during the global pandemic, but also should be conducted consistently since nowadays we are in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. In case of any global pandemic or a similar situation, a higher education institution is already having adequate resources and alternatives to conduct an online teaching activity.

*"Because our institution has started to initiate a representative digital platform, it is strongly suggested that the development should be continuously conducted. The digital platform will be the primary need of implementing an online learning in this technological era, not only in the situation of global pandemic. Anyway, in this current situation I can still use some other online learning platforms such as Google classroom and various social media". (P15. WR)*

*"The pandemic of Covid-19 happened around the world today is a 'wake-up-call' for universities especially in Indonesia to start developing a representative online learning platform". (P16. Int.)*

With regards to the time consuming in preparing materials of online learning, a participant conveyed his suggestion that EFL teachers, especially in university levels, ought to design a specific module for English online learning activities. So, that the module was not only used in the age of global pandemic but also in the future online learning activities. In addition to this issue, another participant argued that there is a necessity to integrate digital technology in the pedagogical programs and school curricula. It could be an alternative solution to avoid time consuming in preparing online learning materials.

*"Designing a specific book or module for English online activities can be one of the best solutions. EFL teachers in this university can use the module not only during this global pandemic but also in the next implementation of online learning". (P6. WR)*



*“In my opinion, ICT integration should be included explicitly in the school curricula. It will provide English teachers motivation to continuously develop representative materials for online teaching by integrating ICT. Therefore, they will be well-adapted to ICT and do not have to prepare materials for online learning in a few minutes before the class”. (P14. WR)*

ICT integration in education needs financial investments that not only include purchasing digital equipment and software but also building and maintaining digital infrastructures such as installing Wi-Fi and stable internet connection. The unstable internet connection and limited quota become one of the challenges that the teachers’ encounter as shown in the results of the data analysis. In this case, it was difficult for the EFL teachers to give an alternative suggestion since the unstable internet connection was caused by the advantage areas or regions where their students live in. From self-written reflections and semi-structured interviews, most of the participants suggest that it is the government domain to build and increase the internet facilities in every region. What can the university do is developing school infrastructures by installing Wi-Fi, adapting classroom settings with digital environments, and refurbishing existing equipment.

*“My suggestion to solve the problem of unstable internet connection is that the government should build and improve the quality and capacity of internet facilities in all regions. It is undeniable that there are still many of Indonesian regions are not well-equipped with the internet facility”. (P10. WR)*

*“If we talk about ICT integration in general, not only in the context of global pandemic, it is strongly suggested that the university should build digital infrastructures such as installing Wi-Fi, designing digital environmental classroom, and maintaining the existing digital equipment, so that the online learning activities can be conducted without any technical problem”. (P7. WR)*

The next challenge encountered by the EFL teachers was lack of students’ motivation and engagement to join the online learning activities. As for this challenge, the results of data analysis showed that almost all of the participants suggested to design more interesting activities focusing on the student-centered learning and to improve the efficacy of teaching method and strategy. According to the participants, the main reason of the students’ lack of motivation and engagement was ineffective learning activities.

*“In terms of students’ motivation orientation, learning activities play a crucial role. In my opinion, lack of students’ motivation and engagement is mainly caused by boring learning activities. Therefore, designing effective and interactive online activities is highly suggested to enhance the students’ motivation”. (P9. WR)*



*“Besides the learning activities, teaching method and strategy is also important”. (P1. Int.)*

Lastly yet importantly, the participants expressed that they needed professional development programs and trainings about technology integration in English language teaching. To deal with this issue, they suggest that the university have to conduct regular professional development programs such as workshops and seminars about ICT integration and how to carry out online learning by using various digital platforms.

*“I have to say that I had obtained professional trainings about ICT integration in English language teaching when I attended my master's degree about years ago. I barely join that kind of trainings since I teach in this university. In the recent years, the professional programs of this university have concerned on academic writing and journal publication. Therefore, workshops, seminars, and trainings about digital learning of English are highly suggested”. (P4. Int.)*

This study portrays that ICT integration and representative e-learning platform is needed to support online teaching. The bewailing teachers who stated it required a lot of time to design materials in online learning have to be fixed by constructing a specific module for English online learning activities and integrate it into the school curricula. Hence, the module is used not only in the age of global pandemic but also in the future online learning activities. Additionally, the absence of excellent digital infrastructures such as students' limited quota and unstable internet connection may attack during the teaching and learning process. The stunning materials and method cannot be interesting when the internet connection is not stanchion properly.

The global pandemic becomes the alarm to provide a mature e-learning platform that is suitable for both learners and teachers. Furthermore, Students' motivation in online learning seems to be the top challenge. The present study suggests that teachers are highly recommended to design more interesting activities focusing on student-centered. The appealing materials can boost students' motivation (Malathy; 2019) and increase students' positive experiences (Thadphoothon, 2020). The results of this study further reveal that the students confess that in online learning, the activities tend to be teacher-centered. They get bored watching and listening materials all of the time. On the other side, the teachers find some difficulties in designing appealing online classrooms and materials. The teachers state that workshops, seminars, pieces of training, and other internship programs about digital learning are highly needed, not only for creating gorgeous materials but also to encounter the problem caused by technology that commonly happens during online teaching.

## Conclusion

The in-hand study sheds some light on university EFL teachers' challenges and insights of online teaching activities during the global pandemic. The results reveal that the absence of e-learning platform, time consuming to prepare online



learning materials, and lack of students' motivation and engagement become the primary challenges of online teaching amidst the global pandemic. Additionally, the participants state that they encounter some problems of unstable internet connection, especially experienced by the students, and the needs of professional development programs about ICT integration. In light with the challenges, some insights and suggestions are also provided by the participants. The university is strongly suggested to continuously develop a representative e-learning platform to conduct an online learning activity. Integrating ICT in school curricula and designing interesting online materials and handbook should also be considered. Notwithstanding the compelling results, this study acknowledges that the participants' perception about online teaching challenges and insights depicted in this study do not represent the whole views of Indonesian EFL teachers. Therefore, future studies are recommended to conduct an immense project as an effort to generalize the results of this study by inviting greater number of participants coming from different backgrounds and regions.

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## Appendix

### *Questions in self-written reflection:*

1. What challenges do you encounter during the implementation of online teaching activities?
2. What are your valuable insights to deal with the challenges?
3. What do you suggest to your institution as an attempt to enhance the efficacy of online learning?
4. How do you conduct the online teaching amidst global pandemic?
5. What digital platform(s) do you employ to help you administer online teaching activities? Why do you use the platform(s)?

