Online Assessment during Covid-19 Pandemic: EFL Teachers’ Perspectives and Their Practices

Dedy Yulianto
ddy45425@gmail.com
Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Nito Majid Mujtahid
majidnito29@gmail.com
Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract
The Covid-19 pandemic made a change in learning activities from face-to-face into online distance learning. Meanwhile, teachers need to evaluate student achievements weekly even during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to find out about teachers’ perspectives and their practices on the use of online assessment during Covid-19 in the context of ELT classroom. A case study design was used to answer the purpose of this research. An open-ended questionnaire and online interviews were performed to collect the data. This study revealed the teachers had a negative perception about online assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic. They had some obstacles while conducting the assessment test such as (1) the internet connection; (2) the validity of the assessment; (3) and the low of students’ enthusiasm. However, in practice, during Covid-19, the use of online assessment helps the teachers in distributing the material and assessing students’ achievement. Implications for perception and practice are also discussed.

Keywords:
Covid-19 pandemic, online assessment, teachers’ perspectives, teachers’ practices,

How to cite:
INTRODUCTION
The Covid-19 pandemic has spread rapidly around the world (Boopathi, 2020) and had interrupted many activities. To prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government regulated the school closure as a part of a broad range of quarantine and social distancing (Viner, 2020). The regulation has an impact on education, especially in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context. It has changed the education system from face-to-face classrooms into an online classroom (Moorhouse, 2020). However, this sudden change of teaching-learning method forces the teachers to teach while measuring students' achievement periodically.

This situation happens around the world including in Indonesia. As quoted by Mardika (2020) students around Indonesia have been staying in their home as large-scale social distancing (PSBB) on 30 March 2020 from Indonesian President, Joko Widodo. It changes the activities of teaching and learning in Indonesia into an online classroom. However, Indonesian teachers have limited experience in the use of technology. As an immigrant of technology, the teachers need to implement their pedagogy skills into an online class. They also need to consider students’ learning styles so that the students could understand the materials given by their teachers. Moreover, in the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers need to assess students' achievements weekly. To assess student achievement during the Covid-19 pandemic, the teachers used online assessments as their test items.

The result of the assessment of the test can be used to help the students to understand the materials better and assist in planning instruction for teachers. Barootchi (2002) stated that assessment would contribute to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners’ achievement and their responsibility towards monitoring their progress. In the same view, Stiggins (2002) stated in the design of educational programs and assessments are considered essential because it is a way of monitoring how well the goals of education are being met. However, in measuring students' achievement, test items must be constructed with an appropriate principle and procedure. Subsequently, after administering the test, it can be judged whether it has good quality or not.

There are some studies related to assessment. The first study talked about the contribution of portfolio assessment in Tehran EFL learners which is conducted by Barootchi (2002). Portfolio assessment is one of the traditional approaches, far more than a procedure for gathering evidence of learners’ achievement. However, assessment should engage teachers and students to occur the students' achievement and to take it to a further level. The second study talks about modern assessment using a computer-scored language test through the Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic (Wei, 2017). PTE Academic includes 11 elements that measure student communication abilities either on their own or in conjunction with other abilities. First, task analysis helped to define skills that are necessary for listening comprehension in academic settings. The last study delivered by Roohr (2016), evaluated test accommodation for ELT learners to reduce the language barrier and allow ELT learners proficiency.

This study would dig into the ELT teachers’ perspectives and their practices on the use of online assessment during the Covid-19 in Indonesia. This study formulates the questions as follows:
1. What are the teacher's perspectives of online assessment to measure student achievement during the Covid-19 pandemic?
2. How do the teachers practice online assessment to measure student achievement?
LITERATURE REVIEW
Teacher’s perception of online assessment during Covid-19 pandemic
Teacher’s perception of the Language Teaching-Learning Process is very important to improve the educational process. Fauziati (2007) stated that teachers play an important role in the teaching-learning process, especially in the classroom management system. Moreover, different teachers have different assumptions and perspectives on classroom management, also in the view of the students’ assessment. Because of that, teachers should create conducive classroom management. There are some crucial factors to consider the success of the management include teacher talk, teacher talking time, physical presence, and feedback. Taylor (2007) claims that feedback is an important thing on assessment because it helps students learn from their mistakes.

Therefore, assessing students’ learning is crucial in any educational environment, especially in online assessment. Through regular testing, teachers can monitor the students’ progress and further offer required material. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the conduct of assessment has been changed from traditional test items into online assessments. For instance, traditional test items cannot provide continuous measurement of the students’ achievement (Barootchi, 2002). While traditional test items using paper-and-pencil, then online test items are reproduced as a form on an internet page (Buchanan, 2002).

Furthermore, based on the Covid-19 situation, the teachers should produce assessment test items to measure students’ achievement in an online form and offers innovation for teachers who design and students who take the test. In the education view, conducting online assessments may improve students’ autonomous learning style. However, on the other hand, another student who lived in remote areas lacks internet connectivity and makes it difficult to take the tests. Then, teachers who are an immigrant in technology also face difficulty in online assessment.

Teacher’s practice in online assessment during Covid-19 pandemic
The practice is a need for someone so they can do well at the activity. Moreover, as for teachers, the practice itself offers an experience in the real teaching and learning context (Kiggundu, 2009). In the era of the Covid-19, many teachers changed their way of teaching from traditional to online learning. Due to quarantine and social distancing periods that take a long time, even assignments are given online to the students. The practice of online assessment during Covid-19 had offered its challenges for the teacher. In line with Oncu & Cakir, (2011) who explained that some evaluation practices for online assessment for the teachers may be difficult because of the absence of face-to-face contacts.

Not only the lack of face-to-face contact but the value of authentic assessment activities is another issue listed in the online learning evaluation (Kim et al., 2008). In the term of practical use of online assessment, Gaytan & McEwen, (2007) have asked online instructors to define methods for online evaluation that have been especially successful. This included tasks, portfolios, self-assessments, performance evaluations, peer reviews, graded tests and questionnaires, interactive conversation. Based on the results, they proposed that many tasks be performed regularly and that substantive feedback be received on time.
METHOD
Research Method and Participants
This study used a case study design. It was conducted in one of the universities in Surakarta, Indonesia. The case in this study is the online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Yin, (2018), a case study examines the current phenomenon in-depth and in its reality. Furthermore, the survey was conducted with an open-ended questionnaire and online interviews. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions and ten semi-structured interviews, it was intended to find out the teachers’ perspective and practice of the implementation of an online assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic. The target of the online survey was English teachers working in Surakarta, Indonesia.

Furthermore, a total of 12 English teachers were selected by using purposive sampling to get a better result. The advantage of using purposive sampling lies in in-depth study cases rich in information. The focus is on selecting rich cases of information whose analysis illuminates the questions under research (Patton, 2015). By integrating surveys and interviews, it would help us to examine the perspective of teachers and their practice on the online assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data Collection
To gather information related to research questions, an interview and questionnaire instruments were designed. The questionnaire contained items to assess two variables: the perspective of teachers and their practice. For each item, the participants were asked to answer open-ended questionnaires related to the teachers’ perspective and their practice of online assessment during Covid-19.

The interview was conducted to support the data to get better and qualified data. The interview was conducted using WhatsApp chat and it took around 10 to 15 minutes for each participant. The interview was conducted by using WhatsApp because it is not possible to conduct the interview face-to-face in this pandemic. The interview was carried out in Bahasa Indonesia to get a better graph of the information given by the interviewee.

Data Analysis
The data collected have been analyzed using the framework proposed by Miles et al. (2014). First, data condensation, the information gathered from the questionnaire and interviews is simplified and distinguished to obtain the information required for analysis. Second, the data is presented in an order that allows inference and action to be taken. Furthermore, the data in this study are presented in the form of tables. As a result, it assists researchers in clearly understanding and interpreting the data. Third, drawing conclusions is the final part of data analysis which determines the meaning of the data submitted. In addition, the researcher reviewed again the data collection, data condensation, and data display to avoid data loss while concluding.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
Teachers’ Perspectives
Tinoca (2013) stated that online assessment as a teacher's professional development should aim at the development and use of metacognitive skills. However, some of the teachers participated in the questionnaire giving an opinion that online assessment was considered less effective due to internet problems.
The participants in this study have different perspectives when implementing the online assessment during Covid-19. The findings have been categorized into four points: (1) teachers’ perspectives in online assessment; (2) students enthusiastic in online assessment; (3) the effectiveness of online assessment; and (4) the advantages and disadvantages of an online assessment.

1. Teachers’ perspectives in online assessment

The participants claimed that the online assessment helps them in assessing students’ achievement during the Covid-19 situation. In contrast, online assessment has less effectiveness because there are some obstacles during conducting the teaching-learning process. Both teachers and students face connection problems, consume a lot of internet data, and students' economic problems, as indicated in the following excerpt:

Students have difficulty in accessing online assessment due to living in a remote area and limited students' understanding of the assessment application used. (P1)

Online assessment in Indonesia is a new challenge for ELT teachers in the situation of Covid-19 because the online assessment was effective to reduce social meeting activities but less effective to assess students’ achievement due to their lack of understanding of the online assessment. The participant said that:

“In the Covid-19 period, the use of online assessments is effective to reduce direct social meeting activities. However, online assessments are less effective at assessing the extent to which students understand results.” (P2)

Moreover, the teachers’ lack of technology experiences becomes another difficulty in online learning. Therefore, it impacted students’ understanding when learning in an online environment, as indicated in the following excerpt:

“...there are still many teachers and students who lack knowledge and experience in using technology” (P3)

One of the participants stated that online learning is difficult because it was different from his experience in traditional teaching-learning methods. Furthermore, collaboration among teachers, students, and parents is needed to succeed in the learning process. Therefore, there is a teacher who claims that the teacher should make online learning fun. The participant said”: The teachers must be creative and proactive so that online learning feels fun and does not burden students.” (P4)

As a result of online assessment, the teacher faces some problems due to the teaching practice. The immigrant teacher who is unfamiliar with technology cannot serve online material and assessment well. The limitation of internet connection also took apart to make learning activities less effective.

On the other hand, some teachers who could adapt to educational technologies can make the students having fun in learning. When conducting online learning and online assessment, the teachers collaborate with student-parents by using WhatsApp Group.
2. The students enthusiasm in online assessment

The use of online assessment during Covid-19 is an option to measure students’ skills and knowledge. The effectiveness of online assessment can be seen in the students’ enthusiasm for doing the assignment. Moreover, the teachers use online assessment regularly at the end of an instructional chapter that the teachers would give feedback to the students. However, the students who lived in rural areas got problems with internet connection. This problem had an impact on the students’ enthusiasm in online learning and assessment. Subsequently, the students do not submit their assignments until a due time expires. The teachers cannot directly monitor the students’ performance, besides, the parents who should act as teachers, at home, to accompany the students have a limited time because of work from home.

To attract the students enthusiastically, the teacher tries a rewarding method by giving an internet voucher. Sometimes, the teacher also gives some materials in the form of video before giving the online assignment. However, monitoring students’ progress by teacher and parent becomes another method to improve students’ enthusiasm. Moreover, parents cannot fully support students due to their work time, as indicated in the following excerpt:

“The teacher gives a reward to the students through the activeness and accuracy of students in answering assignments given by the teacher. Moreover, the teacher only uses WhatsApp Group to share online assignments with students then if there is a video the teacher links it to the google drive.” (P2)

Based on the result above, from the teacher’s perspective, the students are less enthusiastic about doing online assessments because of their lack of internet connection. However, to complete the proposed task from the teacher, the students need support from their parents as learning support. The participant stated:

“The problem is that not all students have good internet access. Not all can collect tasks according to the schedule, lack of active parents to support online learning due to work constraints.” (P4)

3. The effectiveness of online assessment

Online assessment becomes an option to measure students’ knowledge during the Covid-19 to support physical distancing and social distancing from the government. However, there are levels of effectiveness in doing an online assessment, such as align constructively, instill student confidence, personalize feedback, harness the power of learning analytics, and check access and accessibility.

However, both teachers’ and students’ experiences in using technology become another opportunity in the effectiveness of doing the online assessments. The participant said:

Even though online learning existed before covid 19, there are still many teachers and students who lack knowledge and experience in using IT” (P6)

The teacher has a problem while conducting online assessments due to the students’ lack of technology and internet data during doing their tasks and assignments. Therefore, the teacher makes some quizzes for students through google form that is related to the material. For this reason, the teacher would give a reward to the student
who did their task with a high score and submit it in time. The reward such as internet data or internet vouchers. The participant said:

“As my experience on using online assessment to measure students’ achievements in daily or weekly, it did not give good feedback because a lot of the students did not do their task. Furthermore, I use other methods like giving punishment and reward to attract students on doing daily and weekly tasks.” (P5)

The assignments and tasks that the teacher prepared were based on government regulations and the teachers use the accumulation score from daily and weekly exams as a final score. The participants said:

“I give an assignment to my students related to the government regulations. The use of online assessment also helps me during COVID-19 physical distancing and social distancing periods. For the final examination, I accumulate students’ scores from odd and even semester.” (P7 & P12)

Based on the result, the teacher and some of the students who lived in a rural area had connection problems while conducting online assessments during school break due to the Covid-19. Moreover, the teachers should focus on the use of online assessment so that the technology can support the assessment process, produce digital feedback, and increase student's ability, and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the assessment (Nicol and Milligan, 2006). Another thing that the teachers can do is to send a private text to the students and parents who do not finish their assignments or tasks in the due time.

4. The advantages and disadvantages of the online assessment.

Online assessments have an impact on learning progress. There are advantages and disadvantages which respondents experienced. Student measurement is not effective due to the teachers' inability to monitor the students. Sometimes, the students do not submit their assignments, the reasons are gadgets and internet connection.

The online assessment could cover scoring students’ achievement during the Covid-19 situation. However, sometimes, the measurement is invalid due to the students not submitting the test or the submitted test having been helped by parents.

“The online assessments help me to assess students in pandemic situations. In doing so, I use WhatsApp Group and Google Form.” (P8)

“The use of online assessment is flexible and accessible to my students, sometimes, I give more time to submit the assignment.” (P9)

The online assessment system would help the teachers to evaluate at any time and place, and the teachers can follow students’ performance at another time (Seifert, 2018). Moreover, the online assessment helps the teacher assess the students' achievement during the Covid-19 pandemic, as indicated through the following excerpts.

“The online assessments are not optimal, because I cannot monitor the students when doing the assignment.” (P10)
“Some of my students had bad connectivity and limited internet access, so they cannot do the assignment in time.” (P11)

However, the teachers should provide more time for the submission task because of the students’ connectivity problem. And due to the teachers' inability to monitor the students on doing their assignments, there is a validity issue when the teachers assess the students' achievement.

**Teachers’ Practice of Online Assessment**
The results of the questionnaire related to the teaching practice in implementing online assessment during Covid-19 were divided into some categories, those are: (1) how teachers conduct an online assessment; (2) online media used by teachers to assess students; (3) teachers’ practice in online assessment, and the constraint.

1. **How teachers' conduct online assessment**
   There are many ways used by the teachers to assess the students using online media but most of the teachers prefer to use a test like multiple choice to assess the students’ competence in terms of understanding the materials. The participant said:  
   “*In online assessment, we used essay, fill in the blank, multiple choice by using social media such as google form, WA. We also use video calls or voice notes to assess speaking skills and get immediate feedback. We send the audio through the WA group. It enhances the multimodal learning activities*” (P3)

   The teachers use students’ performance during online class and assignments for assessing skills. However, some teachers thought of using Google Forms, WhatsApp, and other social media to assess students' understanding. (see Table 1.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies used for online assessment</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving tests (multiple choice) and students’ performance or initiative during online learning.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using online tools like google form, WA, and social media</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving motivation for students</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, the participant said:

“*... I used the same test to assess my students like multiple choice and essays, but I delivered the test online. Besides, I asked my students to make video recordings, it makes the students more creative ... it more efficient to use online assessments because it saves paper usage and test results can be seen quickly*” (P1)  

Based on the result above, when testing the students’ achievement, the teachers used tests such as multiple-choice, essays, fill in the blank then sent the test to all students with the help of social media. By using the online assessment, the teachers
get many advantages for the teachers such as: more efficient; more effective; and enhances multimodal learning (Geoffrey Crisp, 2011).

2. Online media used to assess students

In this era, many online platforms can be accessed freely by teachers. Some platforms are special for chatting only, sharing pictures or videos, and status. Furthermore, in this pandemic, the use of online media as a teaching and learning platform has become more popular, as shown by the following excerpt:

“Because of the Covid-19, I used online media to teach and assess students. Because it will be easy for the parents to watch over their children and easy to use especially for teenager learners” (p2)

These platforms have been used by many teachers around the world to upgrade distance-teaching-learning activity since they cannot meet the students in the classroom. This research found that there are six online media which often used by teachers to teach and assess their students. (see table 2.)

Table 2.
Online media used for assessing students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Online Media</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Forms.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mails.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Classroom.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes and Module.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmodo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, some platforms are used especially for education such as Edmodo; google classroom; etc. All the participants mentioned some online media to assess the students. Google forms are most highly used by teachers. Six out of twelve teachers used Google Forms to assess their students.

“I use google form. Because I used Google form to give an exercise or quiz efficiently for the students and I can get the result automatically”. (P4)

“When I wanted to conduct a test, I used Google form because it is very easy for students and me, as a teacher. Students only need to click the option for multiple-choice and for essays we can set the minimum words in the google form. So, it is very useful for me.” (P5)

The second choice is WhatsApp (WA). WhatsApp is a messaging app for smartphones that can send messages online, share files, exchange photos, and others. However, some teachers used WA to assess students by creating a class group and they can share the material or assignment in it.
WhatsApp was chosen by the teachers not only because many students used it but also WA offers an easy interface for the teachers to share the materials and information related to the subject they taught. By using this, teachers only need to share the info once and all the students will receive it. It can also be used to share the google form’s link which contains the assignments.

“... I used WA because we can conduct the learning activity and a test easily by using a video call, voice note or simply reply to the message” (P7)

“Because WA is widely used by students so I can easily share the materials and information such as the deadline and google form’s link” (P9)

In the process of sending and receiving worksheets, teachers and students are more accessible due to online platforms. It creates a stimulating, interactive learning environment and saves time by preparing workbooks through Google form (Faisal, 2018). WhatsApp is also used to deliver the materials and tests for the students. Baguma et al., (2019) said that WhatsApp has a great potential to support the development of HOTS due to its affordances. It is also easy to use for the teachers and most of the students have a WA application.

3. Teacher practice in applying online assessment

In real practice, there are many ways of conducting an online assessment. The result of the questionnaire showed that the teachers have their way to assess the students. They asked the students to finish the assignment and send them via video, voice note, or photo. The assignments are given time so that the students should finish them before the due time. Moreover, some teachers asked their students to do the assignment through google form or google classroom. But this practice also did not give maximum results since many of the students are late to submit the test. (see Table 3.)

Table 3. Teacher practice in applying online assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Practice</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students do their tasks and send them via video/ voice notes/photo</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students do their tasks in google forms or google classroom.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In real practice, students are late in submitting the test.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher gives the materials and then shares the link to the test.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students active in class and submit the test on time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from the result of the interview that the teachers were not only using Google Forms as a medium to assess the students’ understanding of the materials but also as a place to share the materials. The teachers in assessing speaking also created a task to make the students enjoy online learning through video calls or voice notes (Nurazizah et al., 2019).
“For example, speaking, I gave the materials and the task to the students with the help of their parents to print the materials so they do not have to look at the phones all the time and they can submit the task via video, sound recording or even photos before the due time.” (P10 & P12)

“I created the task and the time to submit by using google form and gave the link to the students through the WA group. For example, in song lyric material, I asked the students to make a sing-a-song video ...”

4. The constraints in implementing online assessment

Due to the spontaneous transfer of ways of teaching students from traditional to digital-based teaching, there must be some problems that could arise caused by this sudden change. Here, the researcher tried to find out and list the kinds of constraints that the teacher faced during the implementation of an online assessment. (See table 4.)

Table 4. The constraints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Constraints</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late in collecting assignment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of understanding of applications.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of control from the teacher.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lack of supervising from the teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the teachers felt that the students were late in collecting their tasks. It happened for many reasons such as internet connection was not good in their home, sometimes the students were asked by their parents to help them at work or simply because they do not understand the materials given by the teacher. It is in line with, Park & Bonk, (2007) who stated that online learning has some disadvantages such as delay in giving feedback, very expensive, and difficulty to control a large group of students.

“Because the teacher was not there with the students and the problem with the time and connection, the students are hard to understand the materials and it also makes them late in submitting the assignment ...” (P8)

“the technical obstacle which I found is that not all the students’ houses have a good internet connection. So, I need to consider that to give the task for the students.” (P11)

Up to now, the problem of internet connection still became a hot topic when the teacher wanted to conduct online learning. Not all students are having Wi-Fi in their homes especially for the students in rural areas. Sometimes, they need to go to a higher
place to get the signal. Moreover, the amount of internet quota just doubled ever since online learning was conducted, it happened for both the teacher and the students.

CONCLUSION
The discussion revealed surprising results that most of the teachers thought that online assessment was hard to conduct because many problems are rising during this implementation. Nevertheless, the teacher does not deny that online assessment is very useful for delivering learning material and giving assignments to students during this pandemic.

This research suggests that the teacher must be stricter in giving time to submit the online assessment, but the teachers should give attention to those who have an internet problem. Subsequently, when conducting tests or assigning tasks can be done synchronously. This is done so students can collect on time and the teacher can supervise students while doing assignments.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

REFERENCES


Yulianto & Mujtahin (2021). Online Assessment during Covid-19 Pandemic: EFL Teachers' Perspectives and Their Practices. DOI: 10.33541/jet.v7i2.2770
Kim, N., Smith, M. J., Maeng, K., Dong, J.-S., & Gu, J. (2008). Assessment in Online Distance Education: A Comparison of Three Online Programs at a University. 16.


