Learning Loss Mitigation: The Perspectives of Senior High School English Teachers in Indonesia

Diana Hildianti[a,1], Puji Rahayu[b,2*]

[a] Universitas Islam Indonesia, Jl. Kaliurang KM 14,5, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55584, Indonesia
[b] Universitas Islam Indonesia, Jl. Kaliurang KM 14,5, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55584, Indonesia
[1] 20322092@students.uii.ac.id; [2] puji.rahayu@uii.ac.id
* corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Teachers play a critical role in addressing the learning loss due to the Covid-19 school disruption by creating various strategies to overcome the loss. This paper aims to investigate several factors which impact to student's performance and teachers' efforts in overcoming the learning loss during Covid-19 pandemic. In a qualitative method with an open-ended survey and interview, 35 high school English teachers with at least 3 years of experience shared their experiences to overcome the learning loss. 10 teachers are clarifying their strategies to cope with learning loss due to Covid-19 school disruption by inadeptly interviewed. The thematic analysis of the data found that the teachers' strategies to overcome learning loss, teacher-student interaction, curriculum adaptation, and support from the government and school [1]. Most of the English teachers perceived that learning loss happened due to the lack of teacher-student interaction, inadequate facilities, and inauthentic writing skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. To overcome this, teachers adapted English modules with media technology to simplify English lessons and build learning independence despite the incomprehensive lessons. The support from the government and school-ICT training, technology teaching tools, internet, and E-learning sources - helps teachers reduce the learning loss possibility. The findings indicated the importance of supportive and adaptive English teachers in mitigating learning loss due to Covid-19 school disruption.

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I. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impactful change on the educational system around the world, including in Indonesia. A sudden shift from the "normal" learning to remote learning/online learning, which has presented various challenges among teachers, students, parents, and governments. These challenges have included limited access to technology facilities, the lack of interaction, and a new era of study for both students and teachers. There are approximately 1.2 billion students in 186 countries who have been affected by this issue, and the duration of it has led to learning loss [2]. In Indonesia, 68 million students reported across the country were affected by school closures, including senior high school students [3]. As a result, there has been a significant concern regarding the learning loss experienced by students during the Covid-19 pandemic on 31st of March 2020 until 30th of December 2022.

The school closure caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is also not limited to the period of it on March 2020. Despite the easing of pandemic restrictions and the return

of students to offline learning, the issue of learning loss continues to be a significant challenge for teachers and governments in Indonesia. The continued nature of the pandemic and the disruptions has caused the educational system in a need for long-term strategies to address this learning loss. Senior high school English teachers in Indonesia are taking steps to mitigate the impact of learning loss on their students. The updated research found that Indonesian students faced 11.2 months on math and 10.8 months on language learning loss [4].

One of the most significant challenges facing senior high school English teachers in Indonesia is the way we approach education has changed, and we need to adapt to new and innovative ways of teaching and learning. Remote learning has become a part of the new normal in education, and we need to find ways to incorporate it into our teaching methodologies. To overcome learning loss during the 2020-2022 academic years, senior high school English teachers in Indonesia had to prepare for a range of challenges. They had to adapt to new teaching methodologies that focused on online learning, develop engaging online learning materials, and find ways to provide feedback and support to students remotely. These challenges were compounded by the need to address the socio-economic and emotional impact of the pandemic on students. Teachers had to find ways to support students who were struggling with mental health issues, economic hardships, and other challenges that arose as a result of the pandemic. To address these challenges, senior high school English teachers in Indonesia have developed a range of strategies to mitigate learning loss. These strategies include using technology to support remote learning, providing additional support to struggling students, and adjusting their teaching methodologies to be more adaptable to online learning. They have also collaborated with other stakeholders in the educational system, such as parents and policymakers, to address the issue of learning loss.

The issue of learning loss is a complex one that requires the collaboration of all stakeholders in the education system. Senior high school English teachers in Indonesia are working alongside administrators, policymakers, and parents to address this issue. Their experiences, practices, and challenges provide valuable insights into the mitigation strategies needed to support student learning during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

II. Literature Review

In late 2019 to the beginning of 2020, a Covid-19 pandemic spread across the world and was impactful to many sectors, including education. This issue has disrupted education methodology around the world and led to the largest disruption of education in history [2]. It is affecting around 1.2 billion learners in more than 186 countries. Most of the education institutions are forced to close or switch to online learning. This phenomenon showed many challenges for students and teachers to adapt with this fast change. It affected the teaching and assessment methodologies at school. Online teaching methods were more easily adopted by some private schools by taking online classes [5]. On the other hand, low-income private and public schools have complete closure and do not have the access to e-learning solutions. It is disrupting the learning of students especially for disadvantaged families. Thus, it creates the negative impacts of school closure which is known as learning loss.

Learning loss refers to the gap between the learning goals and learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many students are incapable of reaching their learning goals during the Covid-19 pandemic from 2019 until 2022. However, achievement gap is highly shown with children from families with financial resources receiving the additional learning provided by camp, travel, lessons, and other activities to support the learning during Covid-19 pandemic [6]. Meanwhile far too many of them lack access to these opportunities. This led to learning loss for many students around the world. This issue happens because of two factors, first

internal factors which refer to students' characteristics like attitude, motivation, and interest in what they learn in the classroom; second external factors related to the instructional process, instructional strategies, media and technology used to deliver the materials and learning environment [7].

In Indonesia, a research indicates that students made little or no progress while learning from home and suggest losses even larger in countries especially with weaker infrastructure or longer school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic [8]. This is a proof that there are a lot of challenges that should be overcome by the local government, teachers, and parents related to this issue. Learning loss in Indonesia is kind of different between developed countries around the world. Indonesia still lacks infrastructure, teacher's capability, learning facilities, school readiness, and the local regulation for facing the Covid-19 pandemic era in 2019 until 2022. Many researchers highlight the effect and mitigation strategies from teachers in Indonesia especially in high school.

Teachers are taking a big role in this Covid-19 pandemic's effect which is the learning loss. Teachers are the core of learning nature for students in the school. The changes of this especially in English teaching caused Covid-19 pandemic to make teachers adapt with technology and online platforms which have never been used before [9]. It has an important role during online learning to keep delivering lessons properly and appropriately. Most of the student's learning loss effects are students unmotivated to learn, unwillingness to work due to lack of internet connection, less of writing or keeping notes, and students are needed to accept the changing learning conditions. Therefore, teachers are required to modify their teaching strategies. Teachers are obliged to develop creative initiatives that assist to overcome the limitations of virtual teaching [10]. Teachers are actively collaborating with one another at a local level to improve online teaching methods. Many educational organizations are offering their tools and solutions for free to help and support teaching and learning in a more interactive and engaging environment. Online learning has provided the opportunity to teach and learn in innovative ways unlike the teaching and learning experiences in the normal classroom setting.

Teachers who are technologically backward are required to have proper professional development and training in order to orient themselves towards their students [10]. In addition, there are unique findings which are severe and worrying non-academic forms of learning loss (decreased motivation and positive character), the importance of increasing teacher capacity in conducting online learning, the importance of technological literacy for parents to be able to provide adequate assistance for students during distance learning, learning loss for students with special needs, as well as network constraints and unnecessary involvement of parents (finishing student assignments) contributing to learning loss [11]. Those are some of the solutions for the mitigation of learning loss during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. All institutions need to collaborate for a better result. Parents, teachers, and the local government should create a numerous discussion about this issue and make a solution together.

III. Method

In this study, the researcher used descriptive qualitative research to investigate several factors which impact to student's performance and teachers' efforts in mitigating the learning loss during Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. This is the reason for the researcher using descriptive qualitative research which is to investigate the participants indepthly and in more detail. The focus of this research is senior high school English teachers' perspectives on students' learning loss in English subjects.

The researcher collected data through an open-ended survey with google form that has 15 structured-questions which divided into 3 components: first scooping English teachers' approaches for building persistent interaction with the students, second the way of English teachers adapts with the existing curriculum into suitable learning method for students, lastly find out resources and aids provided by government & school as solution during the Covid-19 Pandemic era. The researcher analyzed the data obtained from the participants using Thematic by transcribing the data, categorized into common themes, and analyzed it.
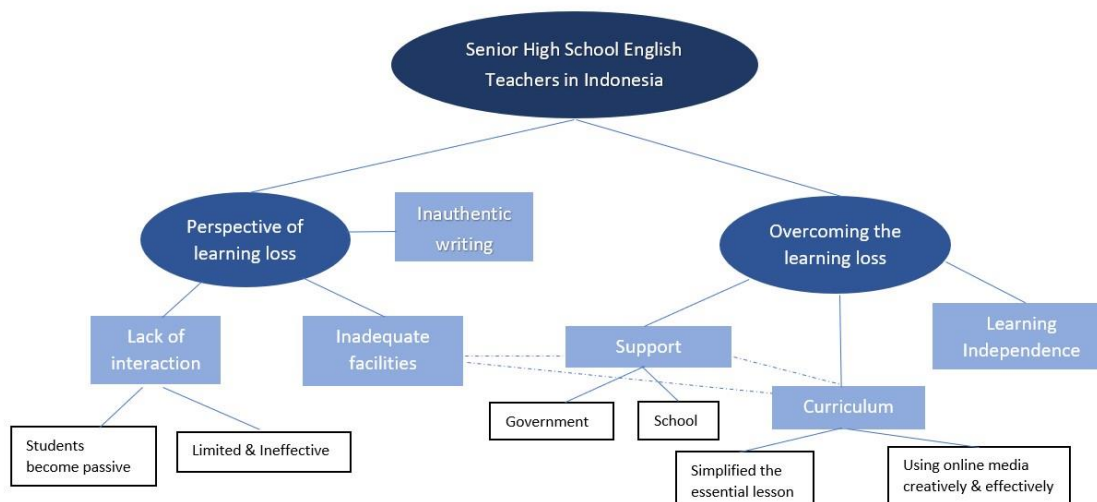
Picture 1. Thematic Analysis

The participants of this study were thirty-five Senior High School English Teachers with at least 3 years of experience and taught on 31st of March 2020 until 30th of December 2022. filled an open-ended survey. Then, 10 participants of it were randomly invited for an in-depth interview to clarify their strategies to overcome learning loss due to Covid-19 school disruption.

The open-ended survey was developed based on research findings with three components: student-teacher interaction, teacher's ability and/or willingness to adapt the curriculum, support from government & school [1]. This research is used because it has similar goals to investigate teacher's perception of Covid-19 Pandemic impact on students' performance. As the components added with two broader and wider aspects which are the effect of learning loss & solution of learning loss. Then all of the components were elaborated into eleven specific interview questions to get deeper understanding and clarification of teachers' perspectives.

IV. Results and Discussion

There were thirty-six respondents who participated in this research, but one was declared as invalid data because the teacher did not mention his/her specific school which only responded with *Paket C* teacher (a special pathway for obtaining high school diploma). Therefore, thirty-five respondents were counted in this research. Participants' demographics are widely spread throughout Indonesia. The thirty-five English teachers were; 15 from Java island, 15 from Sumatra island, 2 from Sulawesi island, and 3 came from Bali & surrounding areas. Those are recognized as the biggest islands represented in Indonesia. Thirty-four participants felt there was a learning loss among the students taught by them during the

Covid-19 Pandemic era on 31st of March 2020 until 30th of December 2022. The data provided below:

No.	Number of participants	Teaching location	Code
1.	15 participants	Sumatra Island	TL1
2.	15 participants	Java Island	TL2
3.	2 participants	Sulawesi Island	TL3
4.	3 participants	Bali and Surroundings island	TL4
5.	1 participant	**Invalid** (not teaching at school)	**-**
	36 participants		

Table 1. Demographic of the participants

They have a heterogeneity of teaching experience ranging from less than 5 years (minimum 3 years) to more than 20 years teaching English in schools. In detail, the participants' teaching experiences are as follows: (i) seven participants have 3-5 years of teaching experience, (ii) four have 5-9 years of teaching experience, (iii) seven with 10-14 years of teaching experience, (iv) ten with 15-19 years of teaching experience, and (v) eight with more than 20 years of English teaching experiences. This diversity in the amount of teaching experience opens up data about the different approaches taken by these English teachers. The data provided below:

No.	Number of participants	Teaching experiences	Percentage	Code
1.	7 participants	3-5 years	19%	TE1
2.	4 participants	5-9 years	12%	TE2
3.	7 participants	10-14 years	19%	TE2
4.	10 participants	15-19 years	28%	TE4
5.	8 participants	> 20 years	22%	TE5
	36 participants		100%	

Table 2. Teaching experiences of the participants

The open-ended survey and interview found that learning loss was experienced by Indonesian senior high school students in English subjects. There were 3 main problems caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic related to learning loss & 4 strategies that teachers conducted to overcome the learning loss. The further discussion explained as follows:

a) Teacher's perspective on the causes of learning loss

The lack of teacher-student interaction

Interaction is not limited to communication orally but may be through physical or emotional approach. Lack of teacher-student interaction is the most significant cause of a decreased students' academic performances. The interaction between teachers and students is very limited. They only meet and learn online through several platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, WA Group, and telephone. One of the participants feels that learning is ineffective because most students are passive, the teachers are stressed, and many assignments are not done according to deadlines.

> "We taught via E-Badu (a Learning Management System) and sometimes with Google Meet. It is truly non-optimal. Teachers were stressed, students were passive. If there is an assignment, they tend to upload it exceeding the deadline." (TL2 TE4)

As seen from the data above, Although the school provides a system for e-learning, due to lack of interaction, students still tend to be unmotivated. Motivation is needed during remote learning because the situation is different and students have to rise from it. A research reported that in some cases, intrinsic motivation is more impactful than extrinsic (facilities) during the learning in Covid-19 Pandemic [12]. Teachers have a significant role in developing student's motivation in schools [13]. Thus, it is necessary to create a learning environment in which students feel enthusiastic during this hardship.

Subsequently, other participants feel that there are many differences that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic where teachers feel that online learning is not ideal because of the lack of interaction between teacher and student. Some of it is that the teacher is unable to handle student characters directly which sometimes requires a personal approach.

> "Students have different characters. When managing a class, we will encounter several types of student characters. There are some students who can be supported with a physical approach. This usually happens to shy students. To support them to be active in the classroom, a physical approach needs to be given. So, during the pandemic, teachers couldn't do this because learning was done remotely." (TL2 TE5)
> "Students' character or behavior is less controlled, they tend to be lazy and do whatever they want." (TL2 TE5)
> "The Covid-19 pandemic period is a difficult time for me because learning takes place online. Synchronous meeting platforms such as Google Meet are not fully able to accommodate learning needs because in my understanding direct interaction is very important. Interaction felt a bit stuck and I wasn't really able to recognize and understand my students" (TL4 TE4)

These are examples of student needs that cannot be accommodated. When this interaction is reduced, a special approach will be required during the remote/online learning. A lot of material cannot be understood well by students, making students passive, lazy and not focused on the lesson. An acknowledgement about students' needs are important during this case. Along with a research that states understanding student's needs will lead to an effective teaching approach [14].

The teacher also felt that zoom is ineffective for students because many of them do not understand the lesson comprehensively. Students tend to be lazy and arrogant.

> "There is a lot of lesson material that students don't
> understand, even though teachers send modules or video links
> but in reality, they don't read or watch them for quota
> reasons." (TL1 TE4)

This situation has become problematic. Students may not have an internet connection for joining the class or it might be because they are unmotivated to join the zoom by lying

A participant said that when they returned to offline learning after the Covid-19 pandemic, students became more enthusiastic to study and teachers could easily see the character of them.

> "After the pandemic, PBM activities have returned to normal
> and students are more enthusiastic about receiving lessons.
> Apart from that, they have also been active in joining activities
> based on their interests and talents." (TL1 TE1)

As the data given above, we can draw conclusions that students require interaction among students and with teachers. Within massive teacher-student interaction, teachers contribute to student's positive identity as learners [15]. Then, Students become more confident and energized to learn and actively participated based on their interests.

Inadequate Facilities

The second factor that was mentioned most by the participants is inadequate facilities for students during independent learning (refers to students who come to school for assignments and do it at home independently, mostly happening in a village area) or remote learning on 31st of March 2020 until 30th of December 2022. The facilities were internet quota, any device for online learning, family's financial support, vehicle for mobility, etc.

> "Students with insufficient online learning facilities usually
> prefer not to join the online class but help parents to find
> additional income" (TL2 TE4).

> "Many students cannot participate in distance learning
> because some students do not have laptops or
> cellphones."(TL2 TE5)

> "Because there are no facilities, students have difficulty
> continuing their studies" (TL3 TE1)

From the data, many students were not from middle class families, they were struggling with school and added to the financial burden. Unlikely, when students should be focusing on school, they are instead struggling with their parents for daily needs. Whereas, facilities were the most significant issues during the remote learning faced by students [16].

Inauthentic writing

There is an interesting finding from the result of this study: after checking the students' work, most of their writings were good. It makes teachers unsure about the authenticity of its writing, especially because of less interaction and exposure.

> "Many things happened during the pandemic, such as students
> being late in the online class, not doing the assignments given
> by the teacher, looking for answers to assignments from

Google" (a teacher from Sumatra island with 5 years teaching experience).

"Most students do their school assignments not with their own ideas but using Google or the internet" (a teacher from Java island with 20 years teaching experience).

"They lack social interaction and also their creative thinking is decreased because tasks they do are mostly done via Google or the internet" (a teacher from Sumatra island with 10 years teaching experience).

"There is a lot of lesson material that students don't understand, even though teachers send module or video links but in reality, they don't read or watch them for quota reasons" (TL1 TE4)

Many of student's work was obtained from the internet without providing clear references. They were barely paraphrasing from the source. The effect of this lack student's literacy is that the students' writing skill in English is decreasing and even inauthentic. Surprisingly, a study found that 88% out of 540 respondents were committed academic fraud during the remote learning on Covid-19 Pandemic era such as copying and pasting other's work from internet without paraphrasing [17]. It leads to a loss of honesty for academic in high school context.

b) Teacher's strategies to overcome students' learning loss

Teachers adapted curriculum with technology to simplify English lesson

Senior High School English teachers in Indonesia mostly stated that the gap of learning loss and students' learning goals is substantial. The curriculum especially for English lessons used for students during the Covid-19 Pandemic has been simplified by the teachers itself.

"I tried to reduce the learning content/material and level of difficulty" (TL1 TE5).

"We used the emergency curriculum in which we delivered material that is only important or essential" (TL2 TE4).

The teachers simplified material to make it quick and easy to convey by teachers. They also make the material less stressful so students are more flexible and creative. It also found that it was very important to adapt the government's curriculum to the capabilities and facilities of each school. A study with 353 teachers in high schools around Aceh Province found that teachers are mostly independently adjust and simplified lesson into an easy-to-use material during the Covid-19 Pandemic era [18].

At that time the teachers were confused about bringing English material to students because it was the first time using online media as a whole. Many teachers have difficulty using online media such as zoom, google classroom, or Kahoot. It is a challenge and also a new opportunity in terms of education in Indonesia.

> "What are the advantages of the pandemic curriculum apart
> from the role of teachers being forced to understand online
> platforms?!" (TL1 TE5).

> "This may be simple for those who are used to technology, but
> difficult for those who don't understand technology like me"
> (TL1 TE).

> "The advantage of using this technology for both teachers and
> students is learning independently about the applications that
> should be used. We learn a wider range, because we can link
> to students from other parts of the world" Tl2 TE4).

> "With this we follow the digital era, the use of IT, and also
> make things easier for teachers and students" (TL2 TE5).

The main problem of this issue is teachers' adaptation to using online technology media. As many as 70% of the teachers who were respondents to this study said that they were trying to adapt to this change. They try to use and apply the use of technological media in learning even though it is still online learning. They also receive training from schools and the government frequently.

> "There is support for both teachers and students. Sometimes
> IT training is facilitated for teachers in facing the online era."
> (TL2 TE5)

As the data shown above, it can be seen that support from the government and school are important to prepare IT well-educated teachers.

Build learning independence despite the incomprehensive lesson.

Some of the participants stated that learning during a pandemic could not be delivered 100% which made students gain less knowledge. Teachers think that during a pandemic it was very difficult to deliver the English lessons due to limited facilities and teachers' abilities in terms of online learning. Although the curriculum and English modules have been simplified, some low-students are still left behind due to a lack of personal interaction and direct feedback.

> "For my students who live in rural areas where the level of
> independence in learning is low and they are very dependent
> on teachers in the learning process, online learning has a bad
> effect on them." (TL1 TE4).

This is one of the causes of learning loss that occurs in high schools in Indonesia. In order to overcome that, most of the English teachers created some innovation through engaging activities to build the learning independence of students. This is not an easy thing considering most of the students lacked literacy during the online learning.

All teachers try to provide independence activities such as quiz using Quizizz or Kahoot platform which can be accessed at certain times so that students will have a sense of independence to learn without any pressure at that time. They also collaborate with parents to supervise their children in learning activities.

> "Learning online means it is done at home, which also means there is full supervision from parents to children and communication between parents and teachers at school must still be carried out. Therefore, teachers must continuously innovate to provide a creative learning environment." (TL1 TE1).

The support from government and school

All of the participants received some support from the government and school. This assistance is very useful for teachers, especially in the form of direct assistance such as regular ICT training & technology teaching tools, computer/laptop facilities, E-learning sources, pulses/internet as well as health support such as medicines and financial assistance. They said that if they didn't get help from the government or school, they would have great difficulties in the learning process, especially because of online learning. The teacher will use up a lot of personal quota, unable to teach optimally, lack of enthusiasm, and even lack of interaction. Assistance that has a great impact on teachers is credit/internet facilities which are given periodically. This support helps teachers lessen the learning loss possibility.

> "Yes, schools provide affordable or even free internet access for teachers who need it. This will help teachers facilitate distance learning and increase student engagement" (TL1 TE1).

The respondents mentioned that students also got support from the government and schools related to online learning such as pulses/internet, digital library sources, access to school's Wi-Fi, devices, and vitamins.

> "Students receive internet data quota assistance from the government" (TL1 TE1).

> "Schools lend cellphones to students who don't have them on a limited scale for online learning" (TL3 TE1).

They stated that students will not attend lessons to the fullest and will not develop their own potential if they do not get help from the government or schools. However, respondents said that there were several students from low income families who preferred to help their parents work rather than having to study online during the Covid-19 pandemic. It made the English teachers sometimes help directly to students who need living expenses apart from online learning costs.

V. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, 35 Senior High School English teachers in Indonesia as the participants experienced students' learning loss. There are 3 major problems causing the learning loss in English lessons. (i) lack of teacher-student interaction, 80% of participants mentioned that online learning was a non-optimal option. Teachers stressed and students were passive. (ii) the inadequate facilities faced by students, more than 60% participants mentioned this issue as another significant problem. Students from low financial families have difficulty accessing online learning, some students even absent helping their

parents to work. Lastly, (iii) the minimum literacy skill impacts on students' inauthentic writing. 60% of participants were caught plagiarism on their student's writing.

There are 3 strategies used to deal with this learning loss. (i) the participants modified and simplified the English lesson. The teachers mentioned how they found difficulties in the beginning and gradually utilized the online platform/media perfectly. (ii) the participants involved parents to create an independent learning environment for students at home. Lastly, (iii) collaboration among parents, school, and government happened during the remote learning especially for those students who are from low financial status. Learning loss is unavoidable. Therefore, the government, schools, and parents in Indonesia are needed to work together to overcome or slightly mitigate the impacts that occur due to the Covid-19 pandemic on 31st of March 2020 until 30th of December 2022.

Suggestion

The researcher of this study understands this research has limitations with only thirty-five Senior Highs School English teachers, hence it requires in the future research to add more participants with a wider range of cities and backgrounds across Indonesia to enrich the data for a better result.

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