THE CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL LITERACY PROGRAM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract
School Literacy Program is expected to be able to develop students' interest in reading. However, in practice, schools can still not achieve these goals indicated by the existence of challenges in its implementation. Thus, this study aimed at describing the challenges faced by EFL teachers in implementing school literacy programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting a descriptive qualitative study, four EFL junior high school teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview. The results of the study show that the EFL teachers were challenged by four factors in implementing the school literacy program during COVID-19, namely 1) students' interest in reading such as students read in order to fulfil the obligation to fill out daily journals, not because of their own desires, 2) the technical challenges such as technological illiteracy, and inadequate source of online reading 3) the teacher's lack of understanding about the school literacy program, 4) time management. Therefore, the practitioners of activities in schools should respond and take thoughtful actions regarding the problems they face in implementing the school literacy program. One of the solutions that can be done by teachers is providing appealing reading material and activities which combine multimedia that attract student's interest to read as well as train the teachers in mastering technology.

Keywords: school literacy program; challenges; EFL teachers

Introduction
The former learn English in non-English speaking countries, and are therefore called English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, for example Indonesian people who learn English in their country are defined as EFL learners (Iwai, 2011). There are challenges that students face in using English especially in learning English in non-English speaking countries, the potential challenges of learning English may appear even greater than in English countries (Hibatullah, 2019). Challenges are basically stretched situations and sometimes blocks the achievement of goals and is also required to carry out social policies that involve strategies to be achieved in the future to achieve goals (Jayaputra, 2016). One of the main problems that exist in Indonesia is the people's low interest in

reading. Meanwhile, reading habit is one of the characteristics of modern civilization (Dewayani, 2017). The reality in Indonesia shows that people's interest in reading is very low. This is evidenced by data from the World's Most Literate Nations conducted by Central Connecticut State University in 2016, Indonesia ranks 60th out of 61 survey participating countries regarding literacy skills (Miller & McKenna, 2016). A survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015 placed Indonesia in 61st place out of 72 survey participating countries (OECD, 2018). In line with this, the data from National Library in 2017 shows that the average reading frequency of Indonesians is only three to four times per week (Pratiwi, 2018). Meanwhile, the average number of books read is only five to nine books per year. The results of these various surveys show that literacy is a serious problem in the world of education in Indonesia (Research Division of the PPI World Education Commission 2017/2018)

In response to the above findings, the government, through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 23 of 2015, carried out one of the programs, namely the School Literacy Program (SLP). It is an activity in providing opportunities for students to express their thoughts and feelings about the book being read (Wagiono, Offeny, & Karliani, 2020).The purpose of this program, in general, is to cultivate a school literacy culture. To improve the reading ability of Indonesian students, especially in reading comprehension skills, the School Literacy Program was rolled out since March 2016 (Permatasari, et all 2020). Thus students become lifelong learners. The implementation of the school literacy program is certainly expected to overcome the low interest in reading in Indonesia. Through habituation at school, a reading habit will emerge in students.

The implementation of the school literacy program, which is expected to be able to develop students' reading interest, encounters various obstacles (Mirwan, 2017; Setyaningrum, 2017; Tryanasari, 2017; Harjatanaya et al., 2018; Ramadhani, 2018; Shoimah, 2018; Mustadi, 2019). Furthermore, The outbreak of the COVID-19 has resulted in the policy by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture in *Surat Edaran Nomor 4 Tahun* 2020 to conduct emergency remote learning where the teaching and learning should be conducted in online classrooms through synchronous and asynchronous platforms which cause the interactions between students and lecturers are limited by the distance (Shih et al., 2003). Communication in face to face compared to on-screen caused misinterpretation for students. Moreover, the struggle was felt by those who only use asynchronous learning (Brink & Lautenbach, 2011; Kearns, 2012), where the only way to communicate with the students is with words. Thus, sometimes, students misinterpret the instruction given due to unclear expressions. As a result, the objectives of the school literacy program cannot be achieved, and the benefits to students are not felt to their full potential.

Taking into account of these findings, an analysis of the problems of implementing the school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be carried out. This study aims to determine the factors that become obstacles in implementing the school literacy program from the point of view of the teachers. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the challenges faced by EFL teachers in implementing school literacy programs during the pandemic. Through this study, it is expected that the practitioners of school activities can respond and take thoughtful actions regarding the problems they face in implementing the school literacy program.

Method
This study applied a descriptive qualitative design according to Miles and Huberman (1994) in order to gain more in-depth information that might be difficult to convey quantitatively. The analysis of the data was presented in the form of a narrative or words instead of the number. It means that the results of qualitative research rely more on the interpretation of the researcher. Thus, qualitative methods were appropriate in situations. Four EFL teachers of junior high school in Singaraja were involved where they are qualified with a minimum of five years' experience in teaching. The schools have been implemented the program for around four years. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the information on the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing school literacy programs during the pandemic. Using interviews allows the researcher to get a clear answer and broaden the scope of understanding that investigated phenomena. The interview was conducted online through Zoom meeting application considering the physical distancing and minimizing the risk of spreading the virus. To make the data in this research more comprehensive, interview was conducted along with observation technique.

The data analysis involved in this study is data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/ verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data analysis was conducted until the data were saturated. The researcher conducted the interview with the four EFL teachers in collecting the data. The interview session was recorded and then transcribed. In data reduction, the researcher classified the data based on the categories towards the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were selected in which the relevant data were used, and the irrelevant data were eliminated. The selected data then were put in the table identification, which gives the possibility of drawing conclusions and taking action. Looking at data displays helps the researcher to understand what is happening and to do something for further analysis or caution on the understanding. Finally, conclusion drawing was done to formulate research results that answer the focus of research based on the data analysis result. Conclusions were presented in the descriptive form of the research object based on the research study. To ensure the validity of the data obtained, data triangulation technique was implemented through cross-validate the result of the interview and observation.

Findings and Discussion
The result of the interview shows that the teachers faced some challenges in implementing school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic. The identifications of the challenges can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. The identification of the challenges faced by EFL teachers in implementing school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic

No.	Challenges	Identifications
1	Students' interest in reading	the lack of awareness among school members about the importance of literacy
		Inadequate source of reading
		Students read in order to fulfill the obligation to fill out daily journals, not because of their own desires
2	Technical Challenges	technological illiteracy

		inadequate access to technology
3	Teacher's lack of understanding towards the program	lack of understanding of the teachers regarding the steps that must be taken because they have not attended the school literacy program training
		the school literacy program is still not integrated with the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom
4	Time Management	The allotted time is too short to assess students' reading progress
		The habituation program is not consistently implemented due to a lack of support from teachers, especially those who teach in the first hour of teaching and learning activities

Table 1 shows the challenges faced by EFL teachers in conducting school literacy programs during the pandemic. The results identified four challenges, namely, 1) students' interest in reading, 2) the technical challenges, 3) the teacher's lack of understanding about the school literacy program, 4) time management. Each factor was described as follows.

Students' interest in reading
The first challenge identified from the result of the interview was the student's interest in reading. Students' interest in reading is the factor that hinders the implementation of other school literacy programs. One of them is the literacy climate which still does not attract students' interest. One of the teachers stated that "the monotonous activities of the school literacy program make students' interest in reading which is done at the beginning of the lesson considered less interesting."Interest is a very significant characteristic that occurs in every human being and may be found in any situation Mirwan (2017). Despite the fact that the motivation is quite powerful, we will not do something that we are personally inspired to accomplish if there is no interest. Reading interest also occupies a prominent role, as it is impossible to engage in reading activities if one does not have a strong desire to do so (Mirwan, 2017; Saepudin, 2015).

Besides, the teachers also reported that their students read in order to fulfill the requirement to fill out daily diaries on a daily basis, not because of their own desires. Reading activities are no longer fun because all they feel is a burden. Gradually, if this continues, students will view reading as a compulsion. The goal of the 15-minute reading program then shifts, slowly but surely, from habituation to compulsion (Antoro, 2017). The 15-minute reading activity, by some teachers, consciously or subconsciously, was carried out to achieve the target of reading as many books as possible. The child who reads the most books is considered great. The school praises and rewards the student who reads the most books. As a result, their students read as many books as possible and put aside their understanding of the books they read.

The results of the study also show that inadequate reading sources become one of the challenges in implementing the school literacy program. Good online reading sources and websites sometimes require the reader to be a member and need to pay to access their website. Thus, it was found to be difficult for teachers to find reading sources that are good and can be accessed freely. Besides, since the teacher's presence was not there to

assist the students in online reading, the teacher could not control what their students read and the source of their readings. Along with online reading sources, the printed reading sources were also limited. There is little variety of books compared to the student ratio (Shoimah, 2018). Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, the total population of Indonesia in 2015 was around 255,461,700 people. Compared to the number of books released each year, the number of new books published per one million population is only eight books for one million people. Still far behind in comparison to Thailand and the Philippines, even by Kenya.

Reading should be a pleasurable activity. The development of interest in reading from an early age can help a person to always open the gates of knowledge through books for his future. Thus, teachers should apply strategies to motivate students. Let them know that reading is not just independent reading. There are various reading activities that involve the teacher, such as reading aloud and guided reading. If the reading sources are diverse, the students will be more enthusiastic in implementing the school literacy program.

Technical Challenges
The second challenge identified from the result of the interview was the technical challenges faced by the EFL teachers. The results of the interview revealed that the EFL teachers faced some technical challenges during implementing the school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We are aged and have to deal with technology which is new to us. Thus, sometimes, we need more time to adapt and guide our students to the online reading activities". This finding was in line with Kearns (2012), who found that due to the emergency remote teaching, the teachers were faced with the adaptations in using technology to communicate with their students. It affects their anxiety since they are not used to facilitating and conducting online learning before. As Brown (2016) reported, both the teachers and students experienced technological anxiety due to technological illiteracy. The result of the present study also revealed that technical challenges were experienced both by the students, e.g. (Broadbent, 2017; Prasad et al., 2018) and the teachers, e.g. (Medina, 2018; Ocak, 2011). The students were challenged in handling different user interfaces (Prasad et al., 2018). Adult learners also seemed to face the challenges of learning new technology and intimidation by learning technologies (Lightner & Lightner-Laws, 2016; Salim et al., 2018; Zacharis, 2015).

The illiterate technological and competency factors also arose from the unsupported learning facilities, such as inadequate access to technology (Gopalan et al., 2018). External factors seemed to give a contribution to the challenges as in Akçayır & Akçayır, (2018), Henrie et al. (2015), and Safford and Stinton (2016) that the lack of technological accessibility, internet connection, and stability, as well as the outdated technology, challenged the students and teachers in conducting online learning.

Teacher's lack of understanding towards the program
The third challenge identified from the result of the interview was the teacher's lack of understanding of the program. The results of the interview show that most of the teachers argued that the teacher's lack of understanding towards the program was one of the challenges in implementing school literacy program. Quoting from one of the teacher's statements, "mostly, other teachers do not understand what they should do since less socialization toward this program." This finding was in line with Tryanasari (2017), who revealed that the inhibiting factor for implementing the school literacy program is the lack of understanding of teachers about the school literacy program. Based on these findings, teachers should not only encourage students to read but also give examples. The teacher's

lack of understanding about the school literacy program is one of the inhibiting factors because the teacher's mindset will affect the implementation of the school literacy program. The teacher only encourages students to read a lot, while the teacher does not give examples of reading habits in their daily lives. So this is only considered a program that is part of the learning process.

This then becomes an obstacle because, according to Syafii (2015), teachers should act as educators and role models for students as the implementer of the school literacy program. When students read,) requires the teacher to be in class when the 15-minute reading program runs. The teacher's role in the classroom is not just to supervise students' reading activities. They should also be holding books and reading along. Thus, the atmosphere of teaching and learning activities is clearly visible; students and teachers are in an equal position, that is, both gain knowledge from books (Maryati in Antoro, 2017). The teacher also gave an example of how to enjoy reading a book. Therefore, even though the 15-minute reading activity is aimed at students, the teacher is a complementary and inseparable component of the regulation.

In addition to the teacher's lack of understanding of literacy learning, another obstacle is the school literacy program which is still not integrated with the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. In addition to not integrating the school literacy program with the implementation of the teaching-learning process, the teachers encountered a lack of understanding of the steps that must be taken because they have not attended the school literature program training. If the teacher does not understand the technical instructions for the school literacy program, an error will occur so that the implementation will not be optimal. One of the causes of this non-optimality is the lack of understanding of the teachers regarding the steps that must be taken because they have not attended the school literacy program training (Research Division of the PPI World Education Commission 2017/2018). The training is aimed at preparing implementers to be able to carry out the school literacy program according to the steps set out in the guidebook.

As a result of teachers' lack of understanding of the steps that must be taken in implementing the school literacy program, only 16.8% of teachers asked students to write daily reading journals (Mustadi, 2019). In the guidebook for the implementation of the school literacy program, it has been stated that reading activities are integrated with reading journals. Students and teachers can monitor the type and number of books read for 15-minute reading activities with the daily reading journal. Teachers also know the achievement of reading activities carried out by students every day as well as their reading activities in a month or more (GLS Practical Guide, 2017).

Based on the description above, it can be said that the teacher's lack of understanding of the implementation of the school literacy program is one of the challenges faced by the teachers because the implementation of the school literacy program in schools will be influenced by the teacher's perception of their role and result in the non-integration of the school literacy program with the implementation of teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

Time Management
The last challenge identified from the result of the interview was time management. The nother challenge encountered in the implementation of the school literacy program was that the implementation time was deemed too short to assess student's reading progress.

The teachers stated that the duration of reading 15 minutes is too short for students to cultivate a reading culture. Furthermore, they have a lot of activities to do since the school was conducted online. In fact, Pilgreen (2000) assessed that the main problem faced by teachers so that their students love to read does not lie in the duration of reading time, but the frequency of reading activities. How much time students spend in one reading activity is not a problem. Most importantly, students do reading activities repeatedly and every day. According to Pilgreen, the main key to making students love reading is to put reading as a student's regular activity.

The allocation of 15 minutes for reading, as stated in Permendikbud Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Growth of Character, is only a minimum time for reading, not a requirement (Antoro, 2017). With this paradigm, schools are free to increase students' reading duration. Regular reading activities aim to instill reading habits in students. So it is irrelevant the assumption that reading is enough to be done several times a week as long as the amount of time to read it is long. It is better to read short but often and periodically than long but rarely do it. However, since teachers consider 15-minute of reading time to be mandatory at the beginning of the first hour, this habituation program is not consistently implemented due to a lack of support from teachers, especially those who teach in the first hour (Research Division of the PPI World Education Commission 2017/2018). The school literacy program implementer does not insist that the 15-minute reading program must be done before the first hour starts. It can be conducted at the beginning, middle, or end of the lesson. Therefore, time management was identified as one of the challenges in implementing the school literacy program during the COVID-19 pandemic.
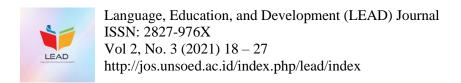
Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings, it can be concluded that the EFL teachers were challenged by four factors in implementing the school literacy program during COVID-19, namely, 1) students' interest in reading such as students read in order to fulfill the obligation to fill out daily journals, not because of their own desires, 2) the technical challenges such as technological illiteracy, and inadequate source of online reading 3) the teacher's lack of understanding about the school literacy program, 4) time management. Therefore, the practitioners of activities in schools should respond and take thoughtful actions regarding the problems they face in implementing the school literacy program. One of the solutions that can be done by teachers is providing appealing reading material and activities which combine multimedia that attract student's interest to read as well as train the teachers in mastering technology.
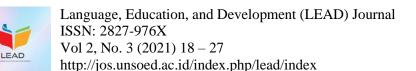
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