

INVESTIGATING EFL SECONDARY STUDENTS' PERCEPTION IN LEARNING ENGLISH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

A research study that raises issues regarding the challenges faced by students regarding the online learning system due to the pandemic. There are two participants who will be interviewed in this study. Semi-structured interview is the type of interview chosen in this research study there will be three indicators in making interview questions; emotional experiences, the challenges faced, how to deal with the problems. Phenomenology is the research design chosen by the researcher to conduct this research study, and thematic analysis is the method used to analyze the data. From the data that has been taken, the results describe that students are not happy to take part in online learning, because of several obstacles felt by students.

Keywords: Students' Perception, English Learning Strategies, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

Global education delivery has already been significantly impacted by COVID-19 (Fischer, 2020). Alarming information regarding how students are coping with and adjusting to school closures, physical separation, and home quarantining has emerged in recent studies and surveys undertaken across the outbreak. According to Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya, and Jha (2021), education and students are beginning to look for ways to overcome the current pandemic situation as well as finding ways to complete the prescribed syllabus in a time frame that fits the academic calendar. This is because schools and colleges will be closed for an unknown amount of time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students' voices, according to Mailizar et al (2020), are crucial to explaining this predicament. Every effort made to improve online learning needs to be seen by its intended audience, which are students. Additionally, numerous studies have demonstrated that interactions between instructors and students significantly affect how students see online learning (Swan et al. 2000). Therefore, the purpose of this research project is to investigate how students see and express themselves when engaging in online learning. According to Dabamona & Rahanyamtel (2020), EFL students in Indonesia prefer offline learning over internet learning because the latter bores them. The pandemic significantly affects the learning and wellbeing of students. It widens the gap between wealthy and less fortunate pupils' access to high-quality education in Indonesia (Pasani, 2020). The educational system is affected by this epidemic because students at all grade levels, from kindergarten to postgraduate, are required to take distant learning courses through web-based programs. There are various problems that arise since not all students have the resources and infrastructure needed for remote learning, which could lead to casualties (Rulandari, 2020). Children who often participate in learning in class with classmates must be pushed to study at home alone, which results in them becoming bored, according to a different study from Mastura and Santaria (2020). In light of this justification, it is crucial to discuss how Indonesian students handle their

emotional experiences, difficulties, and coping mechanisms. Several platforms are used to assist learning activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic, including Zoom, Google Meet, and a specialized e-learning tool to enable teaching and learning activity in EFL Classrooms. 2020 (Pramesti).

In Indonesia, many schools have adopted blended online and offline learning strategies. As opposed to those other schools, one secondary school in Indonesia has implemented learning methodologies using a fully online learning system and without a full face-to-face learning system. 20221 (Syarafina). As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, online learning is now being used practically everywhere in the world (Goldschmidt, 2020). There are numerous ways to carry out the learning process when learning at home. Some people use Whatsapp, Zoom, or online learning systems to share material. There are numerous online courses that focus on teaching and learning processes, including Rumah Belajar, Kahoot, Edmodo, and Google Classroom, one of the most well-known learning tools right now (Okmawati, 2022). Other challenges faced by EFL students learning English during the COVID-19 Pandemic include the learning activity being conducted only through the distribution of materials and assignments, as well as the students participating less actively in the learning process (Illahi, 2021). There is a research questions that will be answered in this research study; what are the challenges do EFL students feel in the English learning during pandemic condition? The research questions are aims to find out the challenges that have been facing during pandemic. These earlier investigations on the subject showed that EFL classrooms were exposed to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in many Asian nations. Investigating EFL students' emotional experiences while taking online English classes in the context of Indonesia, however, has received little attention. This study's objective is to ascertain the emotional reactions of secondary Indonesian EFL students to online English instruction during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study also tries to determine how individuals' current emotional circumstances impact their language acquisition when dealing with online learning. The Introduction presents the purpose of the studies reported and their relationship to earlier work in the field. It should not be an extensive review of the literature. Use only those references required to provide the most salient background to allow the readers to understand and evaluate the purpose and results of the present study without referring to previous publications on the topic.

METHOD

The researcher's choice of research methodology for this study is phenomenology research. To arrive at a description of the nature of the specific phenomenon is the approach's primary objective (Creswell, 2013). The qualities and consistency of the issues that have been researched are what led to the selection of this research methodology. Because the COVID-19 phenomena are still relevant to be discussed utilizing this phenomenology research design, the phenomenology research is also crucial for this research study. Twenty-two junior high school children, each between the ages of 13 and 15, will take part in this study. The research study will take place in one state Junior High School 64 Jakarta. In this research study, semi-structured interviews will be used to collect the data. After the school day has completed, the interview will take place. Each participant will be interviewed during a face-to-face online session that lasts for roughly an hour, in-depth questions being asked in a kind manner. Interviews are also used as a method of data collection in this study so that the results may be analyzed and understood more deeply and sharply through the use of the research design that has been chosen. The interview will be performed in Bahasa Indonesia and a voice recorder will be used by the researcher. Interview guidelines and a questionnaire will be the research instruments used in this study. In this research project, a semi-structured interview will be used.

The semi-structured interview guide's script will be centered on how EFL secondary students feel about the present COVID-19 pandemic situation and how to handle it while engaging in educational activities. There will be roughly sixteen questions for the participants. The interview instructions will include three indicators: (1) Emotional Experiences, (2) Challenges Faced, and (3) How to Deal with Problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on interviews conducted by researchers during one session with two respondents, in general both respondents revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the problems that could make them feel shocked because of the changes in the learning system they experienced while studying in a pandemic situation. In the interview session, there are three indicators for each interview question. In the first indicator, it discusses the emotional experiences of students related to the online learning system due to the pandemic.

“I feel very surprised, because at first I could ask the teacher directly for learning materials that I didn't understand, now I can't ask the teacher directly about difficult subject matter and can only ask via Whatsapp, but this is not effective, because it will there were a lot of other students asking about difficult subject matter, so my chat was definitely disappear.”

“I was very surprised, because I am not used to doing online learning, but suddenly everything turned into an online learning system due to the pandemic, I was very shocked at that time..”

The results of the interview in the first session for the two respondents can be interpreted as the feeling of a student experiencing a new thing about the online learning system due to the pandemic, the feeling of shock arose because previously the student was one of the students who was quite active in asking learning materials when in class. , students very often ask about difficult material directly to the teacher, but after the pandemic students become unable to ask questions directly to the teacher. This, of course, made students feel that the pandemic that occurred made students feel a very significant difference in the learning system that occurred.

“There are so many differences. When the learning system is offline (face to face), the explanation of the learning material is explained directly by the teacher, and the explanation is very detailed. So that there is no interference in face-to-face learning activities. However, the learning system has now completely changed to an online learning system, so the material is only explained via zoom, and the learning material is only given in PDF form”, so now there is no material explained in detail by the teacher directly.”

“Of course there are many differences. The most prominent difference is regarding the understanding of the learning material. When the learning material is explained directly, it will be easier for me to understand the learning material, but when the material is explained using an online learning system, then I cannot understand the learning material as a whole.”

In the next interview question, the results show that there are many differences when studying with a face-to-face system and using an online learning system. Some of these differences were expressed by respondents, the difference was that the explanation of the material provided by the teacher was not conveyed in detail, so there were a lot of students who did not understand the learning material provided by the teacher, and also the learning material was only given in PDF form, so it is not uncommon for students to ignore the learning material. The students also felt that the explanation of learning material that was explained in person would be easier to understand than the explanation of learning material online.

“I prefer offline learning rather than online learning.”

“In my opinion, I don't like the learning from home system, I prefer the direct learning system at school.”

From the two participants' answers, both revealed that participants preferred online learning, both agreed to choose the face-to-face learning system. Both participants also had the same answer that participants did not like online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting from the perceived differences, the many obstacles experienced, and not running smoothly from the online learning process, this is the cause of the two respondents who both dislike the online learning system.

“Despite the fact that I dislike studying online, my grades have improved. It was probably because of the present learning system (online learning), which allows my friends and I to collaborate and ask each other questions about content we don't understand in order to share ideas and solutions.”

“Karena penjelasan guru tentang konten yang tidak saya mengerti, dan masalah lain, seperti sinyal yang menantang, nilai saya di sekolah menurun.”

“Due to the teacher's explanation of the content, which I don't understand, and other issues, such as the challenging signal, my grade at school has decreased.”

In the next interview question, the two respondents had different answers, the first respondent had a very significant increase in grades in school, although the respondent stated that the respondent did not like online learning. The increase in grades in school by the first respondent was due to a tendency to be able to exchange ideas and thoughts with fellow classmates about material that was difficult to understand. So all students in the class who experience the same thing, namely learning online during a pandemic, tend to work together with each other to solve subject matter problems that are difficult to understand. The second respondent stated that the respondent had a very significant decline in grades in school, this was because the explanations of the learning materials delivered online tended to be less understandable by the second respondent, besides that there were also other problems experienced by the second respondent, namely there were difficult problems. get a good network to support online learning activities.

“It was very impactful because I am passionate about learning, but when the learning activity is done through the Zoom Meeting application, sometimes I am having the difficulty by the bad signal, I can't understand of material easily, and also sometimes has problems learning because I don't meet my friends at school.”

However, if the learning is carried out online, I can't understand. I am one of the students who is highly active in class when doing face-to-face learning because I frequently ask the teacher for content that has not been immediately grasped. However, I stopped participating as much in class after the online learning system was introduced.”

“If the teacher does not directly explain the material, I find it very challenging to understand. In addition, I frequently experience signal issues. My performance in class and grades are both significantly impacted. Despite the fact that my value has improved since I can collaborate with friends and share ideas and opinions because we are in a similar situation. I used to be a really active student in class when I took courses in person, but since the learning system has entirely shifted to online learning, I am no longer as engaged in discussions or even asking questions about the topics I don't understand. tend to remain silent and concentrate just on listening to the teacher discuss the course topic.”

Respondents revealed that there are many things that become complaints for respondents in conducting online learning, often problems occur in the poor internet connection, even respondents also state that another obstacle is when they do not meet friends at school within a sufficient period of time. long. These obstacles turned out to be very influential for the rest, when doing direct learning (face-to-face system), the students tended to be one of the active students in the class, however, since the COVID-19 pandemic with various kinds of obstacles, students tend to be inactive when in class (Zoom Meeting) to carry out online learning activities.

Discussion

The results of research conducted by researchers regarding the issue of challenges faced when learning English during the COVID-19 pandemic, the results show that there are many challenges faced by students when carrying out learning about the COVID-19 pandemic, ranging from very general problems that are certain often experienced by students when doing online learning, namely the difficulty of getting a good internet connection to support online learning activities. An internet connection is one of the important things and also part of a set of online learning activities that cannot be underestimated, the state of the internet connection in every student's home must be supported by a good connection, but unfortunately there are a lot of homes of students who have not been able to connect by the network. good internet connection, this often hinders online learning activities for students who are listening to teacher explanations through various platforms. When the internet connection is disconnected, the explanation given by the teacher to students can be immediately stopped and result in students not getting a maximum explanation of the learning material. The next problem experienced by students when doing online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is the problem regarding students who are unable to understand the learning material explained by the teacher through online learning platforms, such as Zoom Meeting, Google Meet. The students complained that the explanations explained by the teacher online could not be fully understood by the students. The students also prefer to explain the material directly because if there is learning material that is difficult for students to understand, they can be asked at the same time to the teacher who explains the learning material. The differences in the explanations given directly and online are felt by the students, starting from how students understand the learning material provided by the teacher, then students also cannot ask learning materials that are difficult to understand because there will be other students who ask the teacher the same question. through personal chat on whatsapp, and it is very ineffective for students to be able

to quickly understand the learning material. The problem faced by students when doing online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not being able to meet with school friends directly. Missing school friends turns out to be one of the most important problems faced by students. When students study with friends at school, the resulting learning activities will seem exciting and not monotonous. Students can also chat and interact with each other at school. However, when doing online learning at home, students tend to do learning activities alone, there is no fun and other activities that trigger the enthusiasm of students to continue to study hard, this turns out to have an effect on grades and also student activity in class, learning activities that done alone will cause feelings of loneliness, as well as a reduced sense of enthusiasm for learning for students in carrying out online learning due to COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from this research study is that online learning activities result in the emergence of several challenges that must be faced by students. These challenges are also very influential on the feelings of students when doing online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The problems faced are starting from the difficulty of getting a good internet connection, the lack of students' ability to understand learning materials, and feelings of loneliness because they are far from school friends. These problems are very influential for students so that they can reduce the value of the activeness of students when they are in class. There is one research question in this research study, namely what are the challenges do EFL students feel in the English learning during pandemic conditions?. This research question produces an answer that there are approximately three challenges faced by students when doing online learning, namely the problems that have been mentioned in the results and discussion section of this research study, the challenges are as follows; the difficulty of getting a good internet network to support online learning activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the explanation of learning materials provided by teachers is only through online learning platforms, thus making it difficult for students to understand all of the learning materials and also limited access for students to ask questions directly. directly to the teacher regarding learning materials that are difficult for students to understand. In addition, there are also problems such as feeling lonely because students do online learning activities alone, previously students underwent learning activities at school with friends, and created an exciting, fun and enthusiastic atmosphere. Since the pandemic, the atmosphere and excitement has disappeared, making students feel lonely in carrying out online learning activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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