

**UNDERSTANDING ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS' EMOTIONS
AMIDST THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC**

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Received: 20 February 2024

Reviewed: 24 February 2024

Accepted: 28 February 2024

Abstract

This qualitative research is geared towards examining EFL students' emotional experiences of online learning during pandemic COVID-19. Eight students in the 8th semester from the English Education Department at a private university in Surabaya participated in the research. They shared their story through personal interviews which were conducted by the first author. Their shared stories transcribed in text and analyzed using content analysis. The results of the data analysis indicate that the pandemic COVID-19 remarkably influenced the students' emotions. Further data analysis suggests that feeling pride, pleasure, and satisfaction by the use of sophisticated learning platforms during online learning help the students to get new insights of utilizing technology to enhance language learning. Arguably, the data analysis also shows that online learning potentially disrupts the students' success of language learning noting that online learning can prevent the students from being more active, participative, and agentive. In this sense, the students tend to be lazier, getting more bored, and feeling more angry and hopeless when the learning is conducted through online platforms. Several identified factors notably contribute to their negative feelings - unstable internet connections, more spare money, and uncondusive surroundings. The results of the current study imply that in some aspects, depending only on one method of learning (online) can put the students in precarity.

Keywords: emotion; online learning; Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

Emotion is the shape of feeling irritated, sad, disappointed, anxious, stressed, satisfied, excited (Fitriani, 2017). Noyes (2015) asserts different feelings and emotions such as enjoyment, inspiration, anger, and frustration. Technically, emotions are feelings in human behavior shown by the thought activities that overflow and are unplanned (Wahid,2013). Sutapa (2020) mentions that there are two kinds of emotions, the positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions are emotions that everyone wants, such as happiness and satisfaction while negative emotions are emotions that refer to many people's experience and never be expected to happen in their life. The rest type of emotions is generally and mostly caused by conflict and stress (Nadhiroh, 2015).

In the last few years, emotions are also attributed to educational practices in this current pandemic COVID-19. Mostly the teaching and learning activities are conducted virtually, and potentially these types of learning can disrupt the students' emotions. For example, during online learning, it is found that the students' emotions are associated with many negative thoughts, such as anxiety and stress, which are influenced by hoax news (Fadlilah, 2020). Online learning also makes students feel bored while studying at home (Oktawirawan, 2020). The application of online learning in the pandemic COVID-19 situation can minimize interactions between students and teachers or their friends, which can impact students' emotions because students have to be individual in almost all activities (Wulandari, 2020). Online learning during pandemic COVID 19 makes students less cooperative in complementing tasks given by the teacher (Pekun, 2014). In addition, pandemic COVID-19 is a new challenge for students and teachers to run online learning because there is no preparation in the government's learning plans and human resources to encounter online learning during pandemic COVID-19 (Salmon, 2013).

By definition, online learning is a method of education where students learn in a virtual environment with various media and electronic devices, such as smartphones, laptops, and computers (Sutapa, 2021). Combining traditional learning and technology can increase students' potential to learn anytime and anywhere. Moreover, flexibility is another interesting aspect of online learning, and students can manage their time to join the online classes (Dhawan,2020). However, on the other hand, online learning leads to boredom, which is the situation of online learning typically the same with every day activities, so students feel bored while studying at home. In this sense, online learning puts the students in a ritual where the activities and the platform used are similar. Students can only study at home with assignments given by the teacher, which may not all the students understand the explanation from the teacher (Oktawirawan, 2020). In addition, some students are worried about online learning, even people acquainted with social media. They see decreased social contact in learning contexts as an actual danger. They are annoying about the lack of stimulus and fun from 'friends' and the ability to lose a unique

relationship with their teachers (Salmon, 2013). As has been aforementioned that online learning implicitly can lead to the situation where the students are not active, participative, and agentic, there should be research which can help illuminate the aspect of emotions that the students' experience during the online learning. This is crucial since the emotional dimension of the students plays an important role in the success of language learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative case study that is a case study which allows researchers to improve and observe their interpersonal and subjectivity abilities to their research exploratory approaches (Alase, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative research includes the studied use and collection of various cases such as personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe ordinary and difficult moments and meanings in people's lives (Aspers, 2019). A case study is qualitative research methodologies that occur in real-life contexts, such as history, experimentation, and surveys cannot investigate cases of interest to the researcher (Yazan, 2015).

Instruments and Data Collection

The researcher collects data in one or more ways to get the results. The researcher uses an interview for a data collection technique. However, interviews for producing performance texts and performance fieldwork about self and society (Alsaawi, 2014). According to O' Cathain (2014), interviewees defined the added value of qualitative research for the trial, explaining how it solved issues, defined findings, and helped to increase the application of the validity generated by using the trial.

Furthermore, interviews are divided into four types, there are structured interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and group focus interviews. (Alsaawi, 2014). The researcher will use semi-structured interviews to collect the data in this study. (Morse, 2015) explains that a semi-structured interview is a conversation with questions pre-planned before the interview, but the researcher gives the interviewee a chance to explain particular issues through open-ended questions.

Data analysis

The data of the study was analyzed by using content analysis as a methodological technique for the most effective device of the researcher. Morse (2015) defines content analysis as flexible enough to use textual, visual, and audio records. Furthermore, the records can take the form of text and visual data along with pictures and videos. However, content analysis of photos could contribute an incredible amount to our knowledge of the dynamics of interpersonal interactions in a native context (Stemler,

2015). Furthermore, the researcher uses content analysis in this study by reading all the participants' responses to the same question, using standard coding procedure, highlighting important words or phrases, and making notes that show that emphasize important features in each response.

The first step after taking the data is listening to the interview carefully then transcribing it into text form that is entered into the table to make it easier for researchers to determine each sentence. Then write for each participant's data, where there is the name, age, educational program, a batch of years in the table to make researchers and readers not confused. The second step determines the theme of the findings under the questions and answers conducted by researchers through interviews in which each theme contains answers from several appropriate interviews. The third step is to explain each theme in more detail and is supported by a citation from the interview results followed by the name to strengthen the answer. Finally, the researcher analyzes the results of the study by examining each theme that has been explained in the form of text.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Online Learning is an Arena of Learning for EFL Students to Improve Their Knowledge on Technology Usages.

Data analysis of the current research shows that online learning for participants is a place to learn many things, including learning a variety of online learning platforms, learning digital business, and learning how to improve life skills. Regarding learning various online platforms during online learning, the participants said they learned many ways to conduct online learning.

In addition, online, the participants also obtained beneficial experiences of empowering features in a digital platform. The participants can now use editing programs available in the **PicsArt** and **Kanva**. These editing programmers can increase students' ability to change a picture in a new style. One of the participants explains succinctly in the following.

Extract 1.1

Elsa “I can learn more about technology at home, before online learning, after college, join UKM and then I have a meeting, so time to do other things are limited if at home I have a much free time after the online class start from that I start to open YouTube, how to edit using **PicsArt** or **canva**. I think "I am an English student, but if I learn other ways, it can be”

In addition, online learning for the participants is the place to combine technology and language learning. Important to learn more about language through the digital platform in this digital era. Meanwhile, implementing the English language has more variation to explore by watching videos from

Youtube, Google, and another application. Hidayat argued that applying technology is a demand because he needs to finish the project and look for more information he needs. Undeniably, activities will be easier with the presence of digital media.

Extract 1.2

Hidayat “I feel a combination between technology and language learning, so when online like this, before I rarely opened YouTube or Googling, now it is easier to search anything in Google. And then, search for information online. At the first "Chapter" now it's a claim, for example we have a project to make video of course we need to combine technology and language.”

However, the usages of technology in online learning are not far from problematic. There are several disadvantages perceived by students, which will be explained in the next section.

Online Learning Perceived by Students to be Disadvantages

Data analysis of the current study indicates that instead of being an arena of learning, the students perceive online learning as destructive. In this regard, the students see that online learning brings many disadvantages, ranging from spending many data packages, poor internet connection, an unsupported situation at home, and lack of motivation to study.

Attending online learning for many students is a burden leading to annoying. One of the burdens is mostly about the data package. Using it for hours automatically will consume a lot of data. Therefore, it is not easy to spend money on data packages as a student. Moreover, parents also need to spend more money installing WiFi at home, aiming to reduce poor signals when online learning. The internet connection impacts the students' understanding of the material delivered by lecturers. This condition is well narratively told by one of the participants, named Elsa.

Extract 2.1

Elsa “I should set WiFi at home, if using a data package at home is extravagant. That is the drawback, moreover when use cheap data packages, it is very difficult to get a signal. So, when class is online, the time to give a presentation is very dangerous. I am scared my lecturer thinks I am lost.”

Meanwhile, poor internet connection can disturb student activities in the final semester which are very crowded. Lost connection suddenly makes participants feel "gopoh kabeh" in various online learning activities. However, it can disturb student concentration in the learning process. One of the participants, named Kris, felt this situation showed her scare when online learning. Besides that, she feels worried when her internet connection is bad.

Extract 2.2

Kris “I have, first is really scary is absence, because sometimes my signal is bad, and then when presentation my connection is unstable. Oh ya, when microteaching needs a lot of time, not my time, my data package finished first, hmmm *gopoh kabeh*.”

However, online learning has many obstacles. The problem of the data package and internet connection influences students' emotions in online learning. Furthermore, drawbacks in online learning direct into negative emotions because it changes students' motivation to learn.

Online learning is becoming a surprising habit.

Data analysis presents several students' habits during online learning. Therefore, online learning forces students to adapt to a new situation. The purpose of online learning is to prevent the spread of the virus; online learning is hoped to reduce this issue. Almost all students assume that online is a new habit that they have to do in an uncertain time.

This condition provokes the students to familiarize themselves with online learning. Although, many facilities do not support online learning because of the unpredictable pandemic. Include technology, human resources, and platform. In addition, unpreparedness can disturb the teaching and learning process. This issue illustrated one of the participants, named Hidayat. He feels online learning is not done yet. Drawbacks in technology make him shocked by this situation.

Extract 3.1

Hidayat “I, as a student in this pandemic, really shocked with the situations that all of them don't have already yet. Starting from our lecturer preparing the material, LMS supports online learning. We need to be up to date to learn about technology.”

In this regard, involving technology shocked the participants when the first-time online learning was held. The participants feel that they are "gaptek", which means that they are not up to date using a platform for learning. Therefore, online learning is alien to students who have never used online learning platforms. Almost all of the participants are confused about operating applications used in online learning because offline learning uses only technology. In contrast, when online learning uses technology it is dominant for the learning process. This new habit is eloquently illustrated by one of the participants in the following.

Extract 3.2

Elsa “Shock because of less blend only sih, because I am “gaptek” ya when I open zoom I am so confused how to mute, share screen sharing when presentation, nah in offline class usually we use LCD only need to connect.”

Explanations showed that the participants have different emotions to face surprising habits. This situation can change mood fluctuation', it will be discussed in the next section.

Online learning is associated with mood fluctuation.'

Data analysis of the current study indicates that online learning impacts fluidity students' emotions. Therefore, the fluctuating mood of the EFL students during online learning can be a challenge for them. However, many challenges affect mood swings for the students instead of a device, signal, and internal factors. Mood someone cannot control when the online learning is not according to their expectations. One of the participants expressed his experience when encountering a constrained device. In this condition, Setyo excites his emotions by hitting his laptop. Meanwhile, that action showed his anger caused by a constrained device during online learning. Eventually, all of the participants' difficulty to face bad situations influenced their activities.

Extract 4.1

Setyo "I have ever hit my device, because my device is lacking, nah old people said if we hit it will be fluent."

Besides being caused by an external factor, mood is also caused by internal factors. The participants can experience mood swings quickly when they have an internal problem. Their mindset can cause it because, during online learning, everything has changed. One of the participants, named Dyatma, illustrated his activity during online learning briefly. He feels lazy during online learning, so he does another activity. For instance, eating, sleeping, and only listening. Although he joined the class, he was doubtful about his learning understanding. However, it will be a challenge for students to remove internal factors.

Extract 4.2

Data "obstacles from myself, sometimes I am lazy, sleepy, only sit down while listening, or eat."

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

It can be concluded that there are two emotions related to EFL students' emotions amidst the global pandemic, namely positive emotions and negative emotions. It can be recognized that negative emotions that arise regarding EFL students online learning are more than positive emotions. In this regard, online learning is perceived by students to be disadvantageous, Online learning is becoming a surprising habit, and Online learning is associated with fluctuating moods. The factors can be associated to spending many data packages, poor internet connection, the situation at home not support, lack of motivation to study,

many facilities do not support online learning, including technology, human resources, and platform, challenges that affect mood swings for the students, instead of device, signal, and internal factor. Meanwhile, the positive emotions that emerged, among others, online learning for participants being placed on learning many things, including learning a variety of online learning platforms, learning digital business, and learning how to improve life skills.

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