Investigating Students` Competencies of English through Online Learning: Does It Jeopardize Students` Psychological Needs?

*[1]Indrawati
[2] Heleni Halfiziya

[1,2] State Islamic Institute of Syaikh Abdurrahman Siddik Bangka Belitung
*Corresponding Author, Email: Indrawati.fr@gamil.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Covid-19 pandemic has totally transformed how teaching and learning implemented in the classroom. It urged the teachers to use technology in their learning. It's not only about moving the offline class to the screen-tech class but it's more about the capability of delivering the lesson through online platforms, such as Google Classroom. In fact, the problems encountered by teachers and learners are very complexed. It deals with the internet connection, teachers' competencies in using the online platform, proper gadget, and students' difficulties in customizing themselves to a new learning era. The latest is indeed affect their psychological need; their learning anxiety increased and some factors might influence the effectiveness of learning itself. This study discussed how anxiety in learning can be a significant issue in creating a cozy learning atmosphere which is barely needed in making meaningful instructions.

Introduction

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 was spread out in Indonesia, the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, issued a policy to carry out online teaching and learning activities start from March 2020. This is one of the efforts to reduce the spread of the Corona virus that is getting bigger. Online learning is tasks and courses taken online instead of in a physical classroom. It is held with a far distance between the teacher and the students. It convinces by many institutions as the best option for the education field in Indonesia within the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak. According to Suartama, through online learning, the sources that are provided to the students can be accessed anytime and from anywhere (Suartama, 2015), additionally to getting material which will be enriched or equipped with a spread of supporting learning resources including the media which will be supported by the teacher. Furthermore, Siswanto stated that online learning offers effective pedagogies, like practicing with related feedback, personalizing learning paths supported student needs, combining collaborative activities with independent study, and using simulations and games (Siswanto, 2020)

Based on the first preliminary research that did on August 28, 2020 and observe the students at SMP Negeri 1 Pangkalpinang, the writer found that the teacher had some problems in teaching English through online learning because it was too hard to teach the student intensively when the teacher and the student don't meet in person. There must be some students who will need to get repeated explanations to understand a material during the learning process. However, during this study, the researcher also pays attention of how the teacher conducts the English online learning to the students.

The second preliminary research was conducted in MTs N 1 Bangka is one of many schools that abide by the government's rule of school and work from home while the other few came up with the idea where students of each grade have to take turns to goto school. How this works is by letting, for example, 7th graders attend school one day and 8th graders the next day and so on. That's only one example each school has its own ways to execute their ideas. Because of the pandemic, the freshmen of MTs N 1 Bangka don't have the opportunity to meet their teachers. And they started the first day of school with Google Classroom. This

116

matter challenges their adaptation skill to a new level. As freshmen, students naturally have to adapt to their new school environment, but because of the pandemic, students not only have to adapt to a new school, new teachers, and new classmates but also a new way of learning and communicating with their teachers and classmates.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the learning process has totally changed. The curriculum becomes simplify but unfortunately the rapid transformation makes the students and teachers are not ready yet. The learning media, the online learning platforms, the learning material and the ways of testing and evaluation which are totally new to them create uncomfortable situation, moreover to the students (Kolyada et al., 2021). Given many homework and assignments everyday while not every student has supporting online learning tools and telecommunication problem create psychological problems for students (Ansong-Gyimah, 2020; Aydin & Ustuk, 2020).

The other study conducted by Siti Fatimah and Umi Mahmudah in 2020. They did a survey to some university students, SMU dan SMP students, and overall there were 210 students who become the sample (Fatimah & Mahmudah, 2020) . The findings show that e-learning or online learning plays a very important role in mental health disorder during Covid-19 outbreak. In general, the results of observations and interviews related to learning from home produce several important things, namely 1) lack of time to sleep due to the large number of school assignments; 2) too much time in front of a cell phone or laptop which results in a lack of quality interactions with family, 3) increased laziness and motivation to learn; 4) difficulty concentrating and losing focus on the lesson; 5) Feeling tired quickly; and 6) Not able to share time. In addition, almost all respondents stated that the internet network is often an obstacle in the home learning system.

That study above has confirmed the research done by Purwanto, et al. which states that the existence of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic causes children to feel bored, the loss of children's social life, namely reduced interaction and communication between peers and teachers (Purwanto et al., 2020). The differences from these studies and the writer's study is the writer will focus more on the psychological need in learning languages while the previous ones discuss

the general majors while the similarity is all researches talk about psychological factors contributed in online learning during Covid – 19 pandemic.

The next study has done by Irawan, et.al showing that most students get bored after some weeks having study-from-home activities, the anxiety becomes higher, and they are given too many homework and assignments which make them feel exhausted (Irawan et al., 2020). The differences from these studies and the writer's study is the writer will focus more on the psychological need in learning languages while the previous ones discuss the general majors while the similarity is all researches talk about psychological factors contributed in online learning during Covid – 19 pandemic.

The other previous study was introduced by Jiang & Feng focus on students' anxiety during online language learning (Jiang & Feng, 2020) . The result of the survey shows that the students who become their sample are in high level of anxiety when they speak English and answer questions. This study suggests the teachers of English not become too firm when the students make mistake, focus more on the aptitude and always try to trigger the students' self-confidence. The writer's research also discussed about anxiety and the instrument used is the same. The writer measured the students' anxiety using Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) proposed by Horwitz. Last but not least, the previous related study which focuses on learning anxiety also conducted by Pratika Ayuningtyas, she explores the learning anxiety in English for Specific Purposes. The findings shows that the general level of the students (samples) are moderate to high (Ayuningtyas, 2020) and she proposes the teachers should try to lower the anxiety by creating a cozy learning atmosphere. The difference is the writer will not focus on anxiety only but also measuring the students' attitude and motivation using AMTB questionnaire (adapted from Attitude and Motivation Test Battery).

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020, the government started to declare a new rule stating that from then on, teaching and learning activities which are usually done in school have to be done from home instead. How can that be achieved? That's when technology comes into play. Nowadays, in the age where technology is really reliable, a lot of online teaching and learning media rise to the surface (Fitria, 2020; S. Permadi &

Rahmani, 2020).One of them is Google Classroom which is the media that is going to be used in this research.

This study is focused on the effectiveness of online teaching and learning process while using Google Classroom as the media in teaching English. The psychological problems that discussed in this study anxiety factors in learning. Leaning is indeed a complex process, it involves technical, psychological, and pedagogical aspects (Birdsell, 2018).When it comes to students' psychological needs, it covers several terms such as anxiety, aptitude, attitude, motivation, affective factors (Getie, 2020). The writer limited this study; for the psychological aspects the writer focus on learning anxiety in learning.

Covid-19 outbreak is believed to be one of the causes why learning anxiety increases significantly during online learning in high school students and more over, children. As we know that a comfortable, cozy learning atmosphere and a lower level of affective filter are prerequisite conditions that must be fulfilled in order to make the students learned. The learning anxiety in this study will be measured by Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

From the background of the study above, four research questions are formulated: 1. How is Google Classroom utilized in teaching English? 2. How is the interaction between teacher and students during the teaching-learning process while using Google Classroom as media in teaching English? 3. How does anxiety influence the students' competencies of English during online learning? 4. What are learning strategies and techniques that can lower the students' anxiety during online learning?

The research design of this study is qualitative-descriptive. This research method is also called survey research because this research describes a person's opinion (respondent) on a problem (issue) by giving a question in a questionnaire, as cited in (Maican & Cocoradă, 2021).Based on the research design, the research data was obtained before being described qualitatively, the percentage is calculated first. This percentage result is used as a basis for data qualification. In addition, this study focuses on the collection and analysis of data about the responses or answers given by students to questionnaires given through Google Form. So, this study employs questionnaires for the survey. In addition, the data was obtained also through recorded interview

with some teachers. English teachers in MAS Al Islam Kemuja, MAS Sabilul Muhtadin, MAS Nurul Falah Air Mesu, MAN IC Bangka Tengah, MAN I Pangkalpinang, MA Darussalam Pangkalpinang, SMA Negeri I Tempilang, and MTS 1, Bangka became the sample of this study for interview and the students of 7th grades of MTS 1 Bangka were the respondents of learning anxiety questionnaire (171 students)

Discussion

Google Classroom has been around since 2014. It was created to give an opportunity for teachers and students to have a taste of blended learning experience. Not many people in Indonesia used it until the working/learning from home regulation was announced in 2020, hence, not many people in Indonesia really know what is Google Classroom, how it works, and how to use the mentioned platform.

English teachers in MAS Al Islam Kemuja, MAS Sabilul Muhtadin, MAS Nurul Falah Air Mesu, MAN IC Bangka Tengah, MAN I Pangkalpinang, MA Darussalam Pangkalpinang, SMA Negeri I Tempilang, MTS 1 Bangka predictably faced difficulties while using Google Classroom as a platform to teach their students. The experienced teacher professed that the first problem she had to deal with is that she could be considered blind when it comes to technology. She had to learn how to operate Google Classroom, what features are available, and how to utilize those features to deliver her teaching materials to her students. She said that it felt like she had two jobs; to teach her students English, and how to utilize technology to help her do her main job which is teaching in the pandemic situation, therefore dividing her focus.

There were also difficulties encountered by the new teacher. She revealed that the students seemed lacking in enthusiasm while learning with Google Classroom. Sometimes the internet connection is not the best, hence, causing delay when posting the materials and this is also a problem for the students, making them late when submitting their assignment. One of many differences between offline teaching/learning activities and online teaching/learning while using Google Classroom is how in Google Classroom, there is no way to teach or assess the students' speaking and listening skills since there is no available feature in the platform that support the act. In offline face-to-face learning, teachers can see and hear the students, therefore teachers can teach and assess those skills with ease

while with Google Classroom alone it is impossible (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020).

To conclude, based on the interview done by the writers, the teachers were not implementing blended learning in their teaching. The teachers taught their students online throughout the semester which make the activities cannot be classified as blended learning. Blended learning requires the mix between online and offline classroom experience. Those findings mentioned before also supported by some studies related to online learning flatforms (Carlsson, 2021; Destianingsih & Satria, 2020; Efriana, 2021; Okmawati, 2020; Raharjo et al., 2020; Suhada et al., 2020).

The second finding related to the student's learning anxiety in experiencing the online learning during covid-19 pandemic. Research on students at MTS Negeri 1, Bangka found that 34.7% of respondents experienced mild anxiety, 32% experienced moderate anxiety, and 12% experienced severe anxiety. The primary factors triggering anxiety were inadequate facilities and unstable internet access. Similar findings were observed in various regions, indicating that limited internet access, academic challenges, and environmental factors significantly contribute to student anxiety. The study indicates that online learning methods impact the anxiety experienced by students at MTSN 1 Bangka. During the pandemic, online learning became widespread, utilizing the internet and social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, and e-learning systems. This mode of learning allows students to access materials anytime and anywhere with an internet connection, offering greater flexibility in study times. However, online learning also has negative effects that can influence academic performance and lead to anxiety (Haider & Al-Salman, 2020; Salikhova et al., 2020; Yazdi & Zandkarimi, 2013)**.**

Anxiety is characterized by feelings of unease or nervousness, often manifested through physical symptoms like a racing heart, rapid pulse, increased blood pressure, and digestive issues, as well as cognitive and emotional symptoms such as difficulty sitting still, restlessness, and irritability . The study found that students who perceived online learning as effective experienced mild anxiety. This mild anxiety often arises from daily stressors, such as the increased workload and tight deadlines associated with online learning.

Some students reported that online learning was ineffective and experienced moderate anxiety. This level of anxiety involves a focus on important tasks while neglecting others, resulting in symptoms like fatigue, muscle tension, and fluctuating emotions. The study attributes this moderate anxiety to issues such as limited access to facilities (e.g., laptops) and poor internet connectivity, especially for students in remote areas. Technical difficulties during online learning, such as problems with task submission or participating in classes, exacerbate this anxiety.

Students who found online learning ineffective and experienced severe anxiety often felt isolated due to the lack of in-person interactions and collaborative opportunities. This severe anxiety is compounded by technical issues and the inability to engage in face-to-face discussions or group work. Additionally, first-year students, who have not experienced traditional in-person classes due to the pandemic, face heightened anxiety levels.

The research also notes that female students in this study tend to experience higher levels of anxiety compared to males (69%), potentially due to hormonal differences and greater emotional sensitivity. Finally, some students who found online learning effective still experienced severe anxiety due to the need to balance study with household responsibilities. Overall, the study suggests that the primary cause of increased anxiety in online learning is the limited availability of reliable internet services, which can lead to technical problems and academic concerns. This can affect students' preparedness for future academic or professional challenges.

Studies also revealed that anxiety is more prevalent among women and younger age groups. Research conducted in university students by Russel indicated that the majority of respondents were in the no anxiety category (73.8%), with 25% experiencing mild anxiety and 1.2% experiencing moderate anxiety (Russell, 2020) A systematic review and meta-analysis of 2 million people revealed that the prevalence of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic reached 35.1%. Another systematic review and meta-analysis of 53 longitudinal studies involving over 40,000 children and adolescents across 12 countries found an increase in depressive symptoms during the pandemic, particularly among females and those from higher-income backgrounds. Anxiety symptoms also showed a slight increase, especially among children and adolescents from higher-income

122

backgrounds (Budianto, 2011; Henter, 2014). To sum up, if we want to overcome the anxiety in learning we have to consider the significant factors affecting anxiety, those are

1. Internet Access: Limited access to reliable internet and technology contributed significantly to anxiety. Students faced challenges with unstable internet connections and insufficient digital devices.
2. Financial Constraints: Issues with paying for data packages were noted as a stressor.
3. Academic Challenges: Difficulty in understanding and following online lessons increased anxiety. This was compounded by lack of direct interaction with teachers and peers.
4. Age: Younger students were more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, aligning with findings that younger individuals generally have higher anxiety levels compared to older individuals.
5. Physical Health Issues: Problems such as eye strain and headaches from prolonged screen use were reported, affecting students' concentration and contributing to anxiety.
6. The effectiveness of online learning was compromised in developing countries due to technological and economic issues. A mismatch between students' learning styles and the online format contributed to dissatisfaction and increased anxiety

Conclusion

Online teaching is currently challenging for teachers because they are not used to doing their job virtually and they are not familiar with technology and what to do with it so they can deliver their material easily and effectively. Most teachers cherish the face-to-face time with their students, and it is also far easier for them to deliver their materials and discuss them with students.

Future research could further explore the causes of psychological conditions experienced by students, examining the relationships between different factors and their psychological impacts using correlation analysis. Identifying the causes or factors leading to depression, stress, and anxiety will facilitate the evaluation of educational activities. Enhancing educational programs, both offline and online, can lead to improved

educational outcomes in primary, junior, senior high schools even in higher education institutions.

References

Albashtawi, A. H., & Al Bataineh, K. B. (2020). The effectiveness of google classroom among EFL students in Jordan: An innovative teaching and learning online platform. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *15*(11). https://doi.org/10.3991/IJET.V15I11.12865

Ansong-Gyimah, K. (2020). Students' perceptions and continuous intention to use elearning systems: The case of google classroom. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *15*(11). https://doi.org/10.3991/IJET.V15I11.12683

Aydin, S., & Ustuk, O. (2020). The foreign language teaching anxiety scale: Preliminary tests of validity and reliability. *Journal of Language and Education*, *6*(2). https://doi.org/10.17323/JLE.2020.10083

Ayuningtyas, P. (2020). An Exploration of Anxiety towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP). *Tell : Teaching of English Language and Literature Journal*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.30651/tell.v8i1.4327

Birdsell. (2018). Understanding students' psychological needs in an English learning context. *Journal of Liberal Arts Development*, *2*.

Budianto, L. (2011). STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN SLA: A DILEMA FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. *LiNGUA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa Dan Sastra*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.18860/ling.v5i1.614

Carlsson, H. (2021). Bridging the gap between policy and practice: Unpacking the commercial rhetoric of Google for Education. *European Educational Research Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904121997213

Destianingsih, A., & Satria, A. (2020). Investigating Students' Needs for Effective English Online Learning During Covid-19 for Polbeng Students. *ELT-Lectura*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.31849/elt-lectura.v7i2.4657

Efriana, L. (2021). Problems of Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic in EFL Classroom and the Solution. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*, *2*(1).

Fatimah, S., & Mahmudah, U. (2020). How E-Learning Affects Students' Mental Health During Covid-19 Pandemic: An Empirical Study. *DWIJA CENDEKIA: Jurnal Riset Pedagogik*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.20961/jdc.v4i1.41991

Fitria, T. N. (2020). Teaching English through Online Learning System during Covid-19 Pandemic. *Pedagogy : Journal of English Language Teaching*, *8*(2). https://doi.org/10.32332/pedagogy.v8i2.2266

Getie, A. S. (2020). Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language. *Cogent Education*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1738184

Haider, A. S., & Al-Salman, S. (2020). Dataset of Jordanian university students' psychological health impacted by using e-learning tools during COVID-19. *Data in Brief*, *32*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2020.106104

Henter, R. (2014). Affective Factors Involved in Learning a Foreign Language. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *127*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.274

Irawan, A. W., Dwisona, D., & Lestari, M. (2020). Psychological Impacts of Students on Online Learning During the Pandemic COVID-19. *KONSELI : Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling (E-Journal)*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.24042/kons.v7i1.6389

Jiang, N., & Feng, H. (2020). *Research on Students' Anxiety in Online English Classes during the Epidemic*. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201214.576

Kolyada, N., Shapovalova, L., Guz, Y., & Melkonyan, A. (2021). Distance Learning of a Foreign Language - Necessity or Future. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *16*(4). https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i04.18299

Maican, M. A., & Cocoradă, E. (2021). Online foreign language learning in higher education and its correlates during the covid-19 pandemic. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, *13*(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020781

Okmawati, M. (2020). The Use of Google Classroom during Pandemic. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, *9*(2). https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v9i2.109293

Purwanto, A., Pramono, R., Asbari, M., Santoso, P. B., Wijayanti, L. M., Choi, C. H., & Putri, R. S. (2020). Studi Eksploratif Dampak Pandemi COVID-19 Terhadap Proses Pembelajaran Online di Sekolah Dasar. *EduPsyCouns: Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, *2*(1).

Raharjo, D. H., Mayuni, I., & Emzir, E. (2020). Improving the Students' English Skills through Online Activities in Moodle Platform. *Langkawi: Journal of The Association for Arabic and English*, *6*(1). https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v6i1.1846

Russell, V. (2020). Language anxiety and the online learner. *Foreign Language Annals*, *53*(2). https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12461

S. Permadi, A., & Rahmani, R. (2020). Analisis Penerapan Media Pembelajaran Google Apps For Education. *Suluh: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.33084/suluh.v5i1.1314

Salikhova, N. R., Lynch, M. F., & Salikhova, A. B. (2020). Psychological aspects of digital learning: A self-determination theory perspective. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.30935/cedtech/8584

Siswanto, Y. O. (2020). Implementasi pembelajaran online di mi ma'arif kumpulrejo 02 kota salatiga tahun ajaran 2019/2020 skripsi. *Skripsi*.

Suartama, I. K. (2015). Strategi Pengembangan dan Pemanfaatan E-learning Dalam Proses Pembelajaran. *Scientific Forum-Faculty of Education Departement of Science Education (FIP-JIP) and The International Seminar*, *1*(1).

Suhada, I., Kurniati, T., Pramadi, A., Listiawati, M., Biologi, P. P., Gunung, S., & Bandung, D. (2020). Pembelajaran Daring Berbasis Google Classroom Mahasiswa Pendidikan Biologi Pada Masa Wabah Covid-19. *Digital Library UIN Sunan Gunung Jati*, *2019*.

Yazdi, S. M., & Zandkarimi, G. (2013). The Impact of E-Learning on some Psychological Dimensions and Academic Achievement. *International Journal of Education and Learning*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.14257/ijel.2013.2.2.05