

Demotivated Students during Online English Learning in Covid-19 Pandemic: Voices from Indonesian Students

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced all sectors to stop their activities. As a result of this, learning activities were suddenly changed to online methods. Seeing the phenomena that occur around researchers, the decreasing of students' motivation during online English learning can be a serious matter. If the demotivating factor cannot be known, it will be difficult for the teacher to overcome it. To fill this gap, the researcher intends to look for the factors that cause demotivation in students during online English learning. An exploratory case study was employed as the research design and semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection technique. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on demotivating factors (learning contents and materials, teachers' competence and teaching styles, inadequate school facilities, and lack of intrinsic motivation). Research reveals that there are two major factors of demotivation experienced by students: (1) internal factors; (2) external factors. Internal factors consist of lack of interest; undirected study goals; negative habits, and external factors consisting of surrounding elements; teaching style; teaching materials and teaching content; learning facilities; sudden transition. In conclusion, the teaching and learning practices should encourage students to have positive experiences and not demotivate them in learning English such as using interesting online tasks.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic; demotivation; online English learning.

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 19 (hereafter known as COVID-19) must be a serious problem in many countries around the world. The World Health Organization (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic is a continuing crisis across over 200 countries around the world. In reaction to its spread worldwide, the educational activity closed for class activities. In addition to outbreaks of the recently emerged COVID-19 disease, several schools were temporarily shut down (Radwan and Radwan, 2020). In several schools, students are effective in transmitting the virus if the school is not closed. Students are successful at distributing the virus in this pandemic, and the closing of schools is considered the first intervention for adoption (Viner, Russell, Croker, Packer, Ward, Stansfield, and Booy, 2020). Schools need to force themselves to transform their learning into emergency remote teaching (hereafter known as ERT). ERT is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate mode due to crisis circumstances. It has been implemented into the learning process since the unexpected situation occurred (Hodges, et. al., 2020) Due to this condition, the Indonesian education system needs to follow a path that can help school conditions during such emergencies. In the framework of the Ministry of Education and Culture's guidance, schools should coordinate online English learning to provide students with a positive learning environment without being burdened with the pressures of fulfilling all curriculum standards (Rusmiati, Reza, Syaodih, Nurtanto, Sultan, Riana, and Tambunan, 2020). Then, to overcome this issue, the education system during the Covid19 pandemic changed to online learning as a platform for students to learn English.

Online learning refers to the environment that consists of the environment of electrical learning without physical contact with other people and this method provides the freedom of media and time. Online learning refers to an electronic learning system in which there are no actual peer students, unlike conventional learning, and equality of time and space exists (Baber, 2020). Online learning promotes digital utilities including the visual, auditory and the base of text which present the material of student's learning. Online learning uses technological devices to provide students with learning materials, including certain visual, auditory as well as text-based (Tufail, 2018). Online learning in English indicates many advantages. Aydin (2014) concludes that online learning has advantages in developing the students' English skills. He argues that online English learning affects the students' writing skills to improve brainstorming, diction and tracking conceptual framework, evaluation, self-exhibition and sharing of information. The other research conducted by Kacetl and Blanka (2019) shows that online English learning builds the students' self-autonomy and grows the students' confidence during the process. They found that online English learning builds the self-autonomy of students because the students search the sources of their learning on their own. Also, their confidence increases because they can express themselves without any distractions from their friends. Besides, the research conducted by Hew and Cheung (2012) claims that online English learning offers a chance for students to express their original ideas of their opinion. They found that online English learning helps to promote the originality of students' ideas due to the spontaneous condition.

Moreover, ERT connects online English learning to help teachers and students in the English learning process. Online learning provides simple organization and connectivity to flexible and realistic sources of content, facilitates self-learning and allows for extended learning (Mukhtar, Javed, Arooj, and Sethi, 2020). ERT provides

the elements of school such as teachers, students and staff to understand the use of technology in the English learning process. Online media in emergency remote teaching provided the instructors, learners, and school's staff with the technical information and online learning activity (Gaur, Majumder, Sa, Sarkar, Williams, and Singh, 2020). Academic literature may identify several advantages of online English learning. Online English learning helps minimize the time and money involved with students' travel and the uniformity of their materials (Hollis, and Madill, 2006; Genc, Kulusakli, and Aydin, 2016). However, some studies reveal that students interested in online learning also experience a shortage of the opportunity to engage with the instructor directly in real-time and to offer timely guidance (Markova, Glazkova, and Zaborova, 2017).

In the same connection, online English learning offers students motivation and special challenges and is just one aspect of the ability of students to achieve their achievements (Chen and Jang, 2010). Online learning motivation provides extensive and often human features and contexts (Hartnett, George, and Dron, 2011). Motivation is a context that describes the stimulated term that strengthens the human's behaviour. Wakilifard, Ebadi, Zamani, and Sadeghi (2020) argue that motivation is a term that can be used to define the main driver that inspires human behaviour. As mentioned, the student must have a good motivation to learn in the online English learning condition rather than have demotivation. The relation of motivation is linked to the goals of the students in following the learning process. Motivation is attributed to the outcomes or standards students desire to meet in classroom sessions (Ritonga and Ramadhani, 2020). The motivation itself becomes more important to the student to achieve their working experiences. Exactly, a student who is only inspired to graduate in a subject has a distinct educational process than a student who comprehends course material to prepare for reaching the field of work (Anas and Aryani, 2014). It happens when a student who is preparing for his future career will be serious about taking every course he takes, it is quite different from a student who only wants to pass a course where he will focus on the grades to be obtained compared to the progress he is taking.

Furthermore, there appears to be a shortage of research on demotivation factors throughout the pandemic era, particularly in the context of EFL learners in Indonesian. In Indonesia, demotivation study is in few numbers and still beginning. Pratiwi (2019) researched to investigate and explore the demotivational factors among non-English major students in learning English. She revealed the demotivational factors of non-English major students: lecturers' inappropriate teaching methods, lack of facilities, teaching material grammatically, low achievement from the students, low students awareness, low self-confidence of students and lack of time in practicing English. Other studies conducted by Rachel, Sirande, and Linggi (2020) explored the motivation and demotivation study at the junior high school level in joining an English club at their school. They found that the students have some motivating factors such as collaboration, communication, creativity and innovation. Then the students also have their demotivating factors such as teacher attitude, lack of facilities, teaching concepts and most of the students did not like to learn English. Another study from Elmas (2021) focused on the changes in learner motivation within the framework of Active Theory (AT) in Turkey. The study resulted that the Covid-19 situation had a negative impact on the language learning process of learners regarding their learning experiences which led to demotivation. As a response, the goal of this study is to explore the factor

distributions that lead to students' demotivation during online English learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

METHOD

Research design

An exploratory case study by Yin (2018) was chosen as the research design. The exploratory case study was used to some types of 'what' questions (Yin, 2018). The researcher applied the exploratory case study due to this method is acceptable to such social phenomena in the data that act as a point of concern to the researcher's investigation. The exploratory case study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of complicated social phenomena (Ogawa and Malen, 1991). This method was adopted because a detailed and in-depth explanation of a social phenomenon was necessary (Heigham & Croker, 2009). This method was used to support the research exploring the students' demotivating factors in online English learning during COVID – 19 Pandemic.

Participants

This research involved 3 male students from a senior high school in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 17 years old. They speak Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia without English in their daily activities. The participants were chosen because they were observed to have decreased motivation. They speak Sundanese and Bahasa Indonesia without English in their daily activities. During their tenth-grade year, they had the opportunity to learn English offline. Unfortunately, when the COVID-19 pandemic became deadly in March 2020, they were obliged to take online classes until this research was completed. The participants stated that they were dissatisfied with online learning since they believed that offline learning was preferable and more comfortable for them. For ethical considerations, the researcher asked the participants to sign the consent form before being interviewed.

Data Collection

The research data were collected through a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview is an interview based on a plan or interview guideline (Heigham and Croker, 2009). The researcher applied the semi-structured interview because this method was acceptable to gather information about some topics such as perceptions, beliefs, feelings and opinions of the research participant. The researcher used this instrument to ask participants relevant questions about the demotivation factors in online English learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview guideline, which includes multiple questions about participants' demotivation issues in online English learning, is based on Dörnyei's (2001) concept. Each participant was questioned for approximately 10 minutes per session and recorded using an audio recording device. It might be more or less based on the data collected from the participants. The researcher suggested participants decide on an interview place that would be most comfortable for them to feel less pressured throughout the interview. The interview session was held in the Indonesian language. The interview was held three times to gain a deep explanation. The audio notes were used for the interview. The interview session was held in the Indonesian language. The interview was held three times to gain a deep explanation.

Data Analysis

The researchers used theme analysis. The researchers manually transcribed, verified, and analyzed thematically the original data using three critical stages: familiarization, categorization, and classification. During the familiarization step, the researchers read and re-read the transcribed data to take notes on any early concepts that may develop during the process. Following the note-taking procedure, the researchers applied and reapplied codes to be separated and categorized. All codes were classified into main headings and labelled based on the appearances of subclasses. The study used conceptual, setting, and relationship codes. Dividing the types assists researchers in re-coding and re-categorizing to reach the theme development phase.

RESULTS

This section demonstrates the discovered findings that have been extended to the adjustment that is directly related to the study's focus. The study's general interview data is analyzed in the following themes: 1) internal factors (lack of interest, undirected goals, and negative habits), and 2) external factors (surrounding elements, teaching styles, teaching contents and material, learning facilities, and sudden transition).

Internal Factors

Lack of Enthusiasm

According to the interview results, students were uninterested in learning English in online conditions. The fact that they were uninterested in English demotivates them from joining the English teaching-learning process in the online classroom.

Excerpt 1

It's normal, sir. But if it's more fun in offline school than when you're online, you're just face-to-face on your cellphone and laptop. (Participant 1)

Excerpt 2

No interaction that makes me less interested. The online condition by Zoom makes me lazy. (Participant 2)

Excerpt 3

Emmm, I feel a bit lazy, sir. Because if you study online at home, it feels like home, right? (Participant 3)

Based on the above statement, it can be stated that the participants experienced a decreased enthusiasm for learning English. Participant 2, for example, stated that he had no interaction with his friends and his teacher when learning online. It also makes him less enthusiastic. In addition, participant 3 claimed that he was lazy while he was studying at home because when he was studying in his house, he felt same as feeling relaxed and disinterested in learning. As a result, participant 3 was less enthusiastic about online English learning. In conclusion, one of the decisive elements in the decrease of students' motivation throughout online English learning is their enthusiasm for learning

Score Oriented

The study goal is a necessary point in the learning process. When students have a directed goal in the learning process, students will fight to achieve it. From the researcher's findings, the data illustrated an indicator that the participant had thought

that he learned only to gain minimum mark criteria for his report, not to understand the material of the lesson. It came when he learned in online English class only focused on a mark for his report rather than he understood the material. The data may be shown up below:

Excerpt 4

My learning is enough to achieve a minimum grade on a report card. (Participant 1)

Negative Habit

Habit is formed from the activities that are repeated many times. When people have negative activities, it can be transformed into a negative habits. From the following excerpt, the researcher found that bad habits contributed to demotivating the students in online English learning.

Excerpt 5

At least when I joined Zoom or the other media in online English learning, it was early so I was sleeping. (Participant 1)

Excerpt 6

I prefer to be lazy sir honestly than to open the camera in a zoom meeting because my other friends were lazy too. (Participant 2)

Excerpt 7

Sometimes I feel sleepy when joining the online English class because the house feeling is different from school. (Participant 3)

From the data above, the negative habit came from the students' internal feelings that were influenced by the online condition. For example, participant 1 stated that he was left behind in joining the synchronous learning in zoom. It became a negative habit for him during online English learning, for he could not wake up early. Another claim came from participant 2 that chose to be lazy during online English learning. It was caused by his other friends who were lazy too. Participant 3 was sleepy when joining online English learning. It happened when the online English learning took place at his house that the condition was very different from school.

External Factors

Unsupportive Friends

In the COVID-19 pandemic condition, the house might be able to act as a school for the students. Wherever participants found that their friends disturb the online English learning process without a supportive method. It causes the students to have demotivation while joining the asynchronous learning through WhatsApp media.

Excerpt 8

Then the difficult things in doing the assignment happened when my friends weren't with me in the class so I had to chat with them on WhatsApp first. In the offline class, when the teacher gives us the assignment. We can do it together in class. (Participant 1)

Excerpt 9

That is truly the same honestly as me and the other students that are very lazy when the discussion session on the WhatsApp group. It is because there is no initiative from my friend to encourage each other. (Participant 2)

Excerpt 10

The laziness to join the WhatsApp group discussion transforms into no more enthusiasm, sir. If I learn in an offline school, I can study with my friends in conditions that are more enthusiastic for me to learn English. (Participant 3)

In connection with the statement, participant 1 felt demotivated when he felt unconnected with his friends during the communication process to discuss the assignment. When he had a problem with an English assignment, he usually asked his friend face-to-face to find the solution. But, for now, that condition must be gone. On the other hand, participant 2 was being lazy in joining the discussion session in the WhatsApp group. In this case, he was being lazy in terms that in the online English learning class he didn't see his friend give a supportive way then there was no initiative from the others to encourage him. Furthermore, participant 3 thought the laziness in online English learning had transformed him into no enthusiasm. He felt that during the offline learning process he could be more enthusiastic because he could study with his friends and share all of the things that connect with the English lesson.

Inappropriate Teaching Styles from Student Perceptions

In terms of students understanding the lesson material, the teacher could consider their teaching styles, especially in online English learning. In online English learning, the students experienced different feelings than in offline learning. For instance, the online learning process in a zoom meeting makes the students bored because the teacher only explains in one way rather than holding a discussion session. The data is displayed below:

Excerpt 11

The influence of my laziness came from the teacher, sir. She explained the material in a boring way so that made me bored. (Participant 2)

Excerpt 12

The boring condition happens when the teacher explains the material in a monotonous way. That makes the material not interesting for me. (Participant 3)

Regarding the statement, participant 2 experienced laziness in listening to the material given by his teacher. Usually, the teacher explained the material to participant 2 in a monotonous way, so he was bored during the lesson. Additionally, participant 3 also felt bored with the teaching style of his teacher. It happened because his teacher taught him in a monotonous way. For instance, the teacher only explains the material without interaction with the participant. As a consequence, the material given by the teacher is not interesting anymore for participant 3.

Uninterested Teaching Material and Teaching Content

Teaching material is important in the learning process. It can determine the lesson which students can understand on that day. Then, teaching content can also be considered. When teaching content is taught to students that are not interesting to them, it can reduce students' motivation during learning. From the data below, the data showed that student 3 felt that the teaching material and the teaching content from his teacher did not make him interested. The data might be shown up below:

Excerpt 13

The material is not interesting for me, sir. The PowerPoint slides only text and the design of the slides looks ordinary and less interesting for me to learn. (Participant 3)

Insufficient Digital Facilities

Learning facilities are required to support learning activities and to ensure the effective operation of the process. Online learning requires the use of learning resources, particularly the internet and other forms of technology. The learning process will be slowed or even stopped if there are no supporting facilities. The data showed up below:

Excerpt 14

One day, when I was using the Sekolah Pintar Indonesia (SPI) for our English test, the server of the program was even unstable, sir. It caused the test to be postponed until the next meeting. (Participant 1)

Excerpt 15

At school, if you don't understand, you can directly ask questions to the teacher, but in online English learning sometimes our network is bad, so it's difficult, sir. When I want to ask a question, instead I don't understand anymore. (Participant 2)

Dealing with the statement, it indicates that participant 1 complained about the facilities that were in the form of a network server that was often down. For example, when he was taking an English test with his classmate. He was doing his English test at Sekolah Pintar Indonesia (hereafter known as SPI), and the SPI server was down. And forced the English test to be postponed until the server recovered. To sum up the connection with the data, participant 2 also complained about the network signal from the provider during online English learning. He complained about the internet network that was used while studying. Sometimes the network is disrupted and even worse so it is difficult for him to join the class. Especially when the network is bad, he cannot ask the teacher about the material and as a result, he doesn't understand it even more.

Sudden Transition

COVID-19 was first found in China in 2019. The virus spreads very fast. Due to the spreading, the school was closed to prevent it. In the beginning, the student and teacher accepted the online learning for 2 weeks. But the transition from offline to online learning was not supported by adequate equipment and curriculum.

Excerpt 16

It's different, sir, from offline and online schools. If the school is offline, we can meet face to face with friends and teachers. But, when you are in an online school, you can't do it. You just stay at home. (Participant 1)

Excerpt 17

Eee I was surprised. Firstly, I think that the study at home policy said that it only happened for 2 weeks, sir. (Participant 2)

From Excerpt 16, participant 1 felt there was a difference between offline school and online school. He thought that when he learned offline learning, he could learn with his friends and his teachers and learn together directly with them. In addition, participant 2 (Excerpt 17) was surprised by the study at home policy from the government. In the beginning, the government said that the policy only happened for 2 weeks. But in reality, that online English learning policy is extended until now. And he is not ready yet to transform his study from offline to online learning.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the demotivation factors discovered in this study, it was discovered that internal and external factors are extremely important topics to highlight. Those elements that contribute to students' dissatisfaction with online English learning originated both within and outside of the individual. Through data analysis, it was shown that eight internal and external factors demotivate students during online English learning, namely lack of interest, undirected goals, negative habits, surrounding elements, teaching styles, teaching contents and material, learning facilities, and sudden transition. This is in line with Brown's (2007) argument that internal factors are determined directly by the individual in the context of English language learning and instruction.

In addition, in this research, a lack of interest was examined as an individual factor that contributed to student demotivation in online English learning. Furthermore, Mirhadizadeh (2016) suggests that internal factors in language learning are impacted by external ones that remain in a learner's surroundings. It was like the study's results that students were too lazy to learn English in an online class since there was no interaction with their friends. To argue with the statement above, students' disinterest in studying English during online classes is also due to a lack of interest in learning from themselves. The participants felt the same way, and they grew less interested in online English studies. It is in line with Han, Takkaç-Tulgar, and Aybirdi (2019) who categorized the lack of interest as the internal problem of the students themselves. Also, students might become demotivated in a difficult learning environment and simply lose interest in studying online English learning. Additionally, undirected goals were also the cause of students' demotivation in online English learning. When the student didn't have a directed study goal in their learning process it might be a big mistake for them. A study goal for the learners not only acts as a leading actor but also involves the learning process (Li and Zhou, 2017). It can be concluded that undirected study goals have an impact on the mindset of the student.

Dealing with negative habits from the students also caused students to be unmotivated in online English learning. The students felt lazy during their online

English learning. It was related to their activities. It is in line with Santosa and Riady (2021) who claimed that online learning impacts the students' habits to be lazy. Another relevant demotivating factor for students during online English study was surrounding elements among the students. They did not enjoy being studied by themselves at home during online English classes. In this situation, students have to be engaged to study with their classmates. The findings are following Irawan, Dwisona, and Lestari's (2020) belief that students require any physical social interaction with their classmates and teachers in the classroom.

In the same way, teachers' teaching styles also have an impact on students' motivation. The students discovered that their teacher used a less varied teaching method and that the teacher's explanations were hard to understand. Relevant research also emphasizes the significance of the teacher's contribution to the teaching and learning process (Dornyei, 2001; Liang, 2008; Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009). Subsequently, inappropriate teaching materials and contents were other demotivating problems for students. The student was dissatisfied with the English materials provided by the teacher. The material did not suit his expectations or interests. Although the learning content delivered by the teacher is critical for students to comprehend the lessons they get. Kikuchi (2009) pointed out that teaching content is one of the demotivation sources.

Another demotivation factor from the students came from the learning facilities. Downturned servers and bad signals are one of the obstacles to online English learning. Because the server was down, the program used by students to study was interrupted. This condition affects the students because they can't learn smoothly during the program. A good deployment of school infrastructure may make it more enjoyable for both the teacher and the learner (Sakai and Kikuchi, 2009; Li and Zhou, 2017). Afterwards, the sudden transition also affected the students to experience demotivation during online English learning. The fast-changing learning method generated difficulties for the students. The students complained that they must learn in online conditions for a long time and that students lack readiness. According to Kundu and Bej (2021), student preparation for a rapid change in education arises from the students' capacity to adjust to this remarkable change.

Taking everything into account, this present study provided several demotivational factors from the participants during online English learning. Knowing these demotivation factors can help the students to improve their learning during online English learning because the students know what to do in their online English learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher found that all the factors that contributed to the demotivation of students in learning English at school during online learning were common but several factors were recently discovered during this online learning. These are factors that come from both inside and outside the student. This outcome is a result of the school's failure to handle the learning system transition during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the environment is established through online classroom teacher learning approaches as well as student-to-student relationships. To increase students' desire to learn English, a collaboration between teachers, students, and schools is needed. Teachers, on the other hand, can help students solve problems by giving alternative approaches or suggestions. Teachers are urged to adapt or modify their teaching approaches, particularly during online learning,

to reduce the demotivating effect on students. If teachers and students can unite to solve their difficulties, they will be able to have a better path in the future.

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