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## EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR ONLINE CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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### ABSTRACT

Research has indicated the importance of classroom interaction as one of the determinant factors for language learning to be successful. However, with the fact that the online learning mode has been a new norm in the education context, creating a supportive classroom interaction is considered challenging. Both the teachers and students rely on the technological resources to interact both synchronously or asynchronously. Although theoretically, the online platforms are available to make interaction more explicit, it seems that interaction among learners during online class is either more difficult to create or is not fully encouraged. An online survey is conducted to explore possible challenges in creating interactive learning activities as well as strategies to improve classroom interaction. It is expected that the research may offer insights for instructors and educators to have a more meaningful classroom interaction and engage learners more effectively.

**Keywords:** classroom interaction, online learning, synchronous and asynchronous interaction

### INTRODUCTION

In language learning context, interaction is often used to refer to the language used by teachers and students when communicating meanings and ideas in the learning-teaching process. Research in second language (L2) interaction began in the 1960s aiming at evaluating the effectiveness of various foreign language teaching approaches used at that period (Tsui, 2001). Early research has put greater emphasis on teacher talk and questioning strategies, with typical scenarios in which the teacher opens the discussion by offering questions in this interaction sequence, and the pattern of interaction is highly structured and controlled. The teacher completes the interaction sequence by providing comments or feedback on the student's response after the student has responded to the inquiry. This pattern is commonly known as the IRF/E model which stands for Initiation-Response-Feedback/Evaluation (Cazden, 1986; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). However more recent research has shifted to also look at learners' talk and their communication strategies. A more current understanding in classroom interaction allows learners to initiate the sequence, creating a more 'democratizing' classroom talk (Waring, 2009).

This current research is not intended to discuss a particular structure of classroom interaction or offer a specific recommendation in regards to classroom interaction patterns. Rather, the argument that is put forward with this research is the essential role that classroom interaction plays in language learning and why educators need to pay more attention in maximizing the effective classroom interaction while offering some strategies for creating an effective classroom interaction in order for learners to benefit most from their learning process.

This study has laid out key notions in classroom interaction, why we should be more aware of its importance and how classroom interactions may affect students' learning success and the overall quality of online learning. Given the current pandemic situation which leaves no choice for instructors and students but to conduct teaching and learning processes in an online learning environment, the best strategies to address issues of dissatisfaction with online learning deserves a further investigation. The unexpected switch from face-to-face to online teaching has created a variety of issues and challenges, as well as opportunities that need to be explored. Therefore, this study attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What challenges students face which potentially prevent them from participating in classroom interaction?
2. What can be done to improve the quantity and quality of classroom interaction to maximize learning?

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

According to sociocultural theory, education is a social process, hence, interaction which happens either between teacher and -student or among students is a key to students' learning achievement. Indeed, a plethora of studies have pointed out the importance of classroom interaction as an indicator of successful learning. Classroom interaction is a key component in teaching and learning process both in traditional classroom and in the online learning environment. Second language acquisition theorists (see for example Long, 1996; Mackey 2012; Gass, Mackey and Pica, 1996) outlined the learning opportunity learners get when engaging in interactions both from the input and output. The importance of interactions cannot be emphasized enough, even though in reality it might be challenging for teachers to make sure that learners get maximum benefit from

interactions which happen in class. Research has indicated the importance of classroom interaction as one of the determinant factors for language learning to be successful. However, it is considered more challenging to create a supportive classroom interaction with many classes have now switched online. Both the teachers and students rely on the technological resources to interact both synchronously or asynchronously. Although theoretically, the online platforms are available to make interaction more explicit, it seems that interaction among learners during online class is either more difficult to create or is not fully encouraged.

With most classes in all education levels switched online in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, teachers and students around the world have relied on the technology to facilitate teaching-learning activities, interaction, and communication. Looking back to the history of its development, e-learning was initially created to allow a more efficient and effective education administration (Smart & Cappel, 2006). In a much broader scope, this has led to trends of universities offering online and distance education. Nowadays, almost all courses have an online component, which is frequently delivered via web-based technologies. (Kauffman, 2015). Technology in online education offers tools and web-based activities which are designed to be interactive, allowing its users to create environments where students actively engage with information, promote experiential learning where students learn by doing while refining their understanding as they develop new knowledge (Smart & Cappel, 2006). In addition to its interactivity features, e-learning is believed to increase student engagement by providing activities that actively engage learners to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material while developing knowledge (Driscoll & Carliner, 2005). Learners also benefit from the flexibility of e-learning in which learning units may be anytime and anywhere at their convenience so that learners have a bigger opportunity to balance work, school and family life.

Regardless of these benefits, there are studies which reported learners' dissatisfaction with online learning. Piccoli, Ahmad, and Ives (2001) found that students in online learning environments experienced negative feelings of isolation, dissatisfaction, anxiety, and bewilderment. Contrary to the previous studies which pointed out the potentials of e-learning to increase student engagement, lack of connectivity and instructor presence in online learning might lead to student disengagement (Bowers and Kumar, 2015), lack of social interaction which may even

raise the chance of students failing or withdrawing from courses (Capra, 2011; Rovai & Wighting, 2005).

Classroom interaction models in the context where learning is supported by computer or other electronic medium regards interactivity may be seen from the students' interaction with content, students' interaction with the instructors, and from their interactions with peers (Moore, 1989). Interactivity with content includes the ability of learners to access, manipulate, synthesize, and communicate content information while their interaction with instructors refers to the ability of learners to communicate with and receive feedback from their instructors. Peer interactions indicate the ability of learners to communicate with and receive feedback from their peers.

McGorry (2003) proposed several aspects to measure the quality of online instruction including flexibility, responsiveness, interaction, student learning, technical support, technology, and student satisfaction simultaneously. There are two aspects which will be the main concepts focused here: student participation and interaction. The level of student participation has a significant impact on classroom interaction. However, formulating the interrelation between classroom interaction and student participation is not quite straightforward. Even when interaction options are available in some classes, interaction does not always occur (Congmin, 2016). One of the causes for the lack of participation is because students avoided using English by speaking in their first language, using silence or extended pauses, and uttering single words (Humphreys, Burns, and Tanaka, 2015).

Social presence is another important notion which could reflect participation and classroom interaction. Short, Williams, and Christie as cited in Palloff and Pratt (2007) defined social presence as the degree to which a person is viewed as "real" in the context of online communication where interaction is mediated by some form of technology. In the common configuration of the online classroom, instructors and students are primarily represented by text on a screen. We can't see the facial expressions and body language that can assist us figure out how people are reacting to what's being spoken. The absence of voices or tones of speech in asynchronous learning may lead to issues in expressing emotion and receiving messages (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). The concept of social presence holds the view that some media were better at establishing the quality or state of being present than other media. It was believed that media affects people's communication and

their identities. Establishing one's social presence and identity in online learning environments can be difficult due to limited communication channels and transactional distance (Moore, 2007). It is interesting to look at how instructors and students compensate for the lack of visual clues in online learning environments particularly when using platforms that focus predominantly on text-based communication. Thelemis (2014) proposed the sub-categories of teacher identity in online learning including instructional design/pedagogy, interpersonal skills and shared academic standards, digital literacy and attitudes toward synchronous video interactions, audiovisual communication and dialogue, and professional salience.

Earlier research underscores the importance of medium type used in online learning environments and how it may affect the level of presence. The medium of communication was seen as having the most impact on social presence. For example, a videoconference, rather than a discussion forum, provides a higher level of social presence because participants can hear and see each other. However, recent studies which investigated social presence in relation to online learning have found that the medium has no or little impact with building a sense of presence. It is participant behaviors, and not the media, that have a greater impact on the development of presence (Polhemus, Shih, and Swan, 2000). Muirhead (2000) discovered that in order for both the teachers and the students to benefit from an effective interactivity, there must be active participation in relevant academic discussions which involves both sides.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was exploratory and interpretative in nature. The researcher draws on the use of combinations between open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires. Follow up interview was done with several participants to gain a deeper understanding of their responses. The use of closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were intended to map the choices and preferences in students' experiences using the online learning platforms and their attitudes towards the aspects and types of classroom interaction. While the participants' answers to open-ended questions is expected to add significantly more depth and color to the data collected from the answers to closed-response items. According to Heigham and Croker (2009), in a questionnaire, open-response items are those that require respondents to react in their own words in a space provided. Such items are most suited for exploratory research, which will allow the researcher to have a wider

perspective on the field of inquiry. An open-ended questionnaire delves deeper into a topic by allowing respondents to express themselves more thoroughly or to elaborate or explain their replies to closed-response items in their own words, rather than limiting them to a list of options. An online questionnaire containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions was given to the students of semester 2, 4 and 6 at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education in a university in Kediri. In this context, the delivery of online instruction was mainly made through a digital learning hub from Microsoft, called Microsoft Teams which has almost all features of a Learning Management System (LMS). However, several other digital platforms –such as Google Classroom, web conferencing tools, and mobile app messengers are also allowed. By the end of the survey period, data had been collected from 74 students. Five students were later interviewed in order to get a fuller description and understanding of the understudied phenomenon.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Challenges in participating on online classroom**

#### **Social Presence**

One of the biggest issues in online classroom interaction is that students perceive a significantly different level of social presence between face-to-face communication and computer-mediated communication. This might affect their engagement and motivation to interact with peers and instructors. Many respondents in this study indicated the lack of social presence throughout their online learning experience. The following responses show this.

*‘The lecturer and the students should regularly join the class so that the bonding between lecturers and students could be built and all of us feel comfortable so that good communication can become more effective.’*

*‘Lecturers should establish relationship closeness, often ask questions and interact with students.’*

*‘More frequent communication is better to avoid misunderstanding.’*

Another issue which was revealed by the students related to the instructors’ responsiveness. One student commented that the lecturer need to, *‘give a good response*

*when the students ask about lessons or something else during online class,’ while another student stated that,’ The lecturer must answer when the students send a message, and do not read it only.’*

Effective interaction between students and instructors is reflected from how easy the conversations take place, the degree to which students feel free to ask questions and express their opinions, and how accessible and responsive teachers are to information-related challenges all influence instructor-to-student interactions (Peltier et al, 2005). In an online learning environment, it would be necessary to combine both synchronous and asynchronous types of delivery.

Although the use of video conferencing is often believed to be more effective in creating social presence because its’ media richness enables speakers and audience to communicate real time with visuals, voice, tone, and body language, previous studies (see for example Swan, 2002) also encourage the use of online discussion forums. When constructivist-based educational methodologies were applied in several aspects, including peer-moderated conversations, group projects, and chat room, it was found that this model of peer cooperation led to the development of self-directed learning skills and a sense of community among learners (Ruey cited in Kauffman, 2015). Instructors’ skills in maximizing the use of digital learning platforms will be a key factor in increasing student engagement and interactions.

### **Technical Issues**

Technical issues including poor internet connectivity and login error have been identified as major problems with online learning and might lead to student disengagement (Bowers and Kumar, 2015). These problems are also found in this context. Here is what the students said.

*‘sometimes the signal was bad which made connection was bad and we can’t get what the lecturer explain to us’*

*‘When I have trouble with signals and the voice is lost, it’s hard to focus on the lecture.’*

The issue with connectivity may at times influence student preference in the type of learning media to use. As mentioned previously, the Faculty has encouraged the use of Microsoft Teams as the main digital learning platform. This decision was made by considering the collaborative and complete features in this learning platform will help with the instructional organization and delivery. Several features that are often used in this learning context are the video conference and online discussion thread. The video conference is found to be quite effective in mediating interactions between the lecturers and students during online class meetings. However, some students who have issues with internet connectivity mentioned that they would prefer a mobile app messaging instead, as it is much simpler and there is barely any risk of losing connection. One student commented that he preferred Whatsapp messenger because of the following reason.

*'I choose WhatsApp group chat, because when the signal is lost, we're still able to follow the materials we'll, it's a little bit different when we're in a video conference meeting.'*

It is quite common to find that such technical issues such as poor signal or internet quota may impede students' participation in online learning. In line with this, there have been several studies which identified network connectivity as one of the most generally perceived problems in online learning besides other aspects such as lack of interactivity or two-way communication (Ferri, Grifoni and Guzzo, 2020; Lall and Singh, 2020).

By knowing learners' issues with the online platforms as well as their preferences in what technology they find useful in their learning experience, instructors will have a better understanding in using a variety of available platforms to support the course delivery. This is essential as the students' perception on the utility of the technology is one of the key variables for the success of online learning (Bhuasiri et al., 2012).

### **Anxiety, Fear of Speaking and Confusion in Class**

In response to a question about what factor which students think might prevent them from participating during online class meetings, most of those surveyed indicated that they were afraid of responding incorrectly to the task. When asked to elaborate this response, some students stated that even though there would not be any negative consequences they received, they would feel uncomfortable when responding incorrectly.



It seems that the online learning situation has put more pressure and difficulty for them to understand the lecture materials as well. Their answers were reported below.

*'I hope the lecturers can provide an easier learning method so that we can understand better.'*

*'Maybe students can not interact during online class because they are not sure with their opinion or even if they don't have enough understanding of content.'*

*'Online learning is really different from offline learning. So we must put extra effort for understanding the lecture.'*

*'When the class gets too tense, the lecturer should create a comfortable atmosphere so the students want to express their opinion.'*

*'Some students find it hard to give an opinion because they are shy or afraid that their answer is wrong. Some people are just afraid to tell their opinion in front of everyone else.'*

Previous studies have identified several problems in online learning including learner frustration, anxiety, and confusion (Beaudoin, Kurtz & Eden, 2009; Piccoli, Ahmad, & Ives, 2001). Switching to an online mode of delivery definitely brings challenges to instructors and learners. Interaction which used to be natural and spontaneous in an offline learning environment has become a construct which needs to be designed and built. In order to have a meaningful interaction, pedagogical aspects, technical factors, and emotional dimension in the learning environment should be controlled. Palloff and Pratt (2007) maintain that when teachers begin to employ technology in the classroom, they face a new set of physical, emotional, and psychological challenges in addition to the educational issues. An instructor, like a student, may struggle with performance anxiety in the classroom or on the other hand, may also feel more at ease online and be more engaged in responding to questions. Either instructors or students need to explore their new identities within the online learning environment, embrace the newness of the learning media, address the difficulties and issues which might occur, and take the learning process as a journey either academically or professionally.

## Improving the Quantity and Quality of Online Classroom Interaction

### Enhancing Course Structure and Delivery

The digital learning platforms may serve as one of determinant in an effective course delivery. There are three main types of platforms that were found useful according to the respondents in this context. The first type is a digital learning platform (Microsoft Teams), video conference tools (Zoom and Google Meet), and mobile app messenger (i.e. Whatsapp). Almost 70% of all participants expressed a strong preference in using Microsoft Teams when asked about a particular learning platform they think the most useful. The reason behind this preference was highly influenced by the fact that it is the policy from the Faculty to encourage the use of Microsoft Teams as the main platform in delivering the online instruction. When the participants were asked why the preferred using Microsoft Teams, the majority commented that the main reason was because most of the lecturers were using this learning platform. The benefits that students experience when using this platform is related to the fact that it provides complete features under one hub which allows easier information integration and course delivery and organization. One individual stated that Microsoft Teams *'provides many assistance tools for class such as the video conference, assignment, attendance list, and so on.'* and another commented that this platform enables them to *'save files such as assignments and even materials too. So, I won't worry about the memory being full and if any files are accidentally deleted.'*

Some students expressed their views in support of the use of video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams meeting because they think the lectures could be conveyed clearly through this mode of delivery. In addition to that, by having online meetings through video conferences, they feel that the lecturers' presence is more validated.

However, the students also stated that they would benefit from having more variation in terms of class activities and tasks and incorporate pair or group work activities to enable students to interact with their classmates. This opinion seems to have support from Muirhead (2014) that teachers must have the knowledge and skills to create a classroom structure that promotes social interaction while upholding high academic standards and encouraging individual learning. Their perspectives are stated in the following.

*'Teacher should plan multiple 'interactive quizzes' that can be answered in real-time and take advantage of student interactions.'*

*'They must be creative to handle the class and lecturers must have a lesson plan'.*

*'It must be done with a fun learning style so it does not make students get bored quickly.'*

*'I think teachers should give activities that required to interact, and give more interesting activities.'*

In addition to the type of learning platforms and the variety of learning activities, students in this learning context considered that teachers should make sure that the learning activities they use in class allow and encourage students to have interactions, and the learning material is interesting or thought-provoking. One student said, 'I think teachers should give activities that are required to interact.' These findings are expected to raise instructors' awareness in the importance of course designs and delivery in increasing students' motivation and engagement. It should also be noted that instructional design/pedagogy, attitudes toward synchronous video interactions, audiovisual communication and dialogue, are among the aspects in which teachers present their social presence and identities (Thelemis, 2014). While the instructional decisions made by teachers when teaching online might not always reflect their true performance when teaching in face-to-face classrooms, this is how they will portray themselves and give information about their identity as an educator. This is the call for educators and education administrators to make sure that training on digital literacy and pedagogy become part of the teacher professional development agenda in order to improve teachers' competence and confidence in designing and delivering instructions which meet learners' needs and expectations. There should be a good balance in using both synchronous and asynchronous online learning activities. When it comes to synchrony, the best option will depend on learners' characteristics and needs, for example adult learners who might also have work and family commitments may also require more flexibility, so asynchronous could suit their situations better (Hodges et al., 2020).

## Mind the Psychological Factors

One of the most important aspects determining student performance and learning, particularly online learning, is learner motivation (Boyd, 2004; Smart & Cappel, 2006). On the other hand, previous studies have reported some negative experiences and emotions which might be caused during online learning such as learner frustration, self-isolation, anxiety, and confusion (Piccoli, Ahmad, & Ives, 2001; Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver 2008). In line with the previous studies, the students in this context also reported anxiety, fear of speaking and confusion which have been discussed as part of challenges in online learning.

In response to these challenges, several students who are interviewed stated that during online learning, it is important that instructors pay attention to the psychological aspects, and only to the cognitive or academic aspects. Some of the students who are interviewed attend evening and weekend classes in which they learn only during two days (Friday and Saturday) every week. The levels of exhaustion and fatigue were quite high among students in these classes. However, both responses from the regular and weekend class were similar. Here are their statements.

*'Make it a bit relaxed. As we know that online classes create high boredom for both teachers and students. Attending online classes sometimes becomes really stressful especially when we do it for hours and non-stop. The teachers should light up the situation by making small talks and sharing more than just about the lesson. When the class is full of confusing explanations, surely the students lost the concentration and interest easily. I feel that when we had offline classes before, we could share stories or other things to the teachers but when it came to online learning, everything went so exhausting and really straight to the lessons.'*

*'Occasionally (teachers need to) tell a joke to the students so that the class atmosphere is not stressful'*

*'Joking in class could also make (students) feel more comfortable.'*

In traditional classrooms where instructions are delivered face to face, creating an emotionally stimulating environment during teaching were seemingly more salient. The fact that teachers and students may see each other directly make it more straightforward to connect emotionally. However, with the online mode of delivery, this is not always the

case, especially when courses are mostly delivered asynchronously. Even with the synchronous online learning where teachers and students meet online, there are difficulties in building emotional connections due to the limitation in social presence. The lack of emotional supports was obvious from the students comment below:

*‘Teachers should give encouragement and may be praise students to boost our spirit.’*

*‘Lecturers should understand about psychology of Education so they can have a good understanding about the (students’) condition.’*

Previous studies on social presence suggested some aspects which could increase the sense of social presence in online environment which consisted of teachers' verbal (i.e. giving praise, soliciting viewpoints, humor, self-disclosure) and non-verbal (i.e. physical proximity, touch, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures) behaviors. These aspects have been found to reduce the psychological distance between themselves and their students and lead to a greater learning success (Swan, 2002).

### **The Demand for Effective Feedback**

One of the dimensions in classroom interaction is centered around the interactivity between student and teacher which entails learners' ability to communicate with and receive feedback for their works. Prompt response and feedback by faculty will increase students' engagement and compensate for the perceived distance during online learning (Tanis, 2020). A clear and comprehensive feedback from instructors is suggested to create a greater learning success. The surveyed students, too, indicate a strong awareness of the importance of feedback for learning. However, the students who responded to the questionnaires revealed that during online learning many of the lecturers tend to put them in groups for presentation projects without providing sufficient feedback. These are shown from the extract below.

*‘They (the lecturers) should give effective feedback of the student's task.’*

*‘Students need an evaluation of what they have presented. Sometimes there are lecturers who only ask students to do some assignments but do not give any evaluation at all.’*

*‘Giving feedback is needed also for the students to know which area to improve.’*

In their seminal work, Hattie and Timperley (2007) discussed different types and goals of feedback. Feedback may take many forms and may be given by different agents (e.g., teachers, parents, peers, self, experience, etc.) and serve as the information given on a person's performance or comprehension. This corrected information or evaluation may be provided by parent or teachers. A student can consult their peers for an alternate technique, or consult a book for a solution to a problem. Self-feedback and self-evaluation have now become a common practice as part of learning assessment. In a study on the practice of self-evaluation, students who were given specific benchmarks to judge their ability show accurate results which facilitate their competence as a language learner (Donato & MacKormick, 1994). In regards to effective feedback, the most successful forms of feedback provide learners with clues or reinforcement, are delivered via video, audio, or computer-assisted, and/or are related to goals while the least successful methods for improving achievement were pre-programmed education, praise, punishment, and extrinsic rewards (Hattie and Timperley (2007)).

Interestingly, although many respondents indicated the lack of feedback provision from the Faculty, there was evidence of the implementation of peer feedback in this context. This was indicated from the following comment.

*'Yesterday, we were given the task of making a composition and correcting each other's assignments. We do it in pairs.'*

According to Foster and Ohta (2005), through the practice of peer-feedback, interactional processes such as meaning negotiation and other types of peer scaffolding will create opportunities for learners to get access to learning, especially in a context where students are learning a language.

### **Strategies to Increase Students' Participation**

Ormrod (cited in Wong, 2020) identifies four core learning needs: "arousal," "competence," "self-determination," and "relatedness". In the context of education, "arousal" refers to the level of learners' engagement in an activity, and positive arousal allows for effort and participation in learning. A favorable physical environment, affective variables, motivation, attention, and cognitive evaluations can all contribute to positive arousal. The evidence presented in this section suggests that students' motivation

has guided them to achieve their future goals and made them persevere in their learning process. The following extracts describe what aspects motivate them in learning.

*'I motivate myself to graduate soon and study abroad. I also want to show that the university where I am studying right now is not of low quality or less well-respected. I also look at how my parents have worked hard and it also motivates me.'*

*'What motivates me is my parents, because I want to make them proud. And I see myself as quite a competitive student, so yeah, I want to achieve a good result in each semester.'*

*'There are several things which motivate me such as interesting or challenging subjects, guidance or support from the lecturers, and support from my parents. My parents often check how I am progressing with my study.'*

*'I am motivated to learn in any subject as long as the lecturers do not rely on Whatsapp messenger for delivering the materials.'*

Although some students' motivation are personal in nature –either it is resulted from their parents' support or relates to their personal character and their own future goals- , there are important educational aspects to consider for improving students' participation and engagement. Firstly, it is important that instructors design carefully their instructional goals so that students find them cognitively challenging. Secondly, the use of learning platforms and instructional media may also affect students' motivation, so it is necessary to make use of learning platforms which create opportunities for students to interact while acquiring new skills and demonstrating their competence. Lastly, instructors have to make sure that students have the support and guidance they need to develop as learners and achieve the learning goals.

Other causes for the lack of participation are because students perhaps get intimidated by the use of English Language. In this situation, students sometimes respond by speaking in their first language, using silence or extended pauses, and uttering single words (Humphreys, Burns, and Tanaka, 2015). Talking about this language issue, some students admitted to the use of English, even though they are studying English and training to be English teachers. It seems that the use of English by the lecturers may prevent them from participating because either because they have difficulty in

understanding what was discussed in class, or simply because they were not confident enough to speak in English.

Below are the students' statements.

*'Don't teach using English only, because not all students understand that.'*

*'Please explain in English and Bahasa. I feel so pitiful to my friend who cannot really understand the lesson when my lecturer explains the lesson using English much and fast.'*

*'There are many students in the class who are not fluent in English, so the teacher should not speak English too often or after speaking in English, please explain in Indonesian.'*

The last strategies which were recommended by the students in this context identified with the use of cameras during synchronous online learning through video conferencing and appointing students to participate actively in online class meetings to lessen silence in class. Some students were reluctant to turn their camera on and this might lower the sense of social presence in class and lower the rate of participation. Regarding this issue, some students touched on the role of the lecturer in managing the class and setting the class rules and routines. These students believed that lecturers should encourage students to always turn the camera on. The following comments and suggestions were reported from the data.

*'Ask the students to activate the camera, so that all students look active and the learning process feels comfortable.'*

*'Calling the name of the students, if we call the "class" only few will answer, but if we call "name" of the students 1 by 1 they will pay attention to the class.'*

*'Lecturers should require students to turn on cams so that lecturers and students can directly interact by seeing the activities carried out by students.'*

*'Always invites students to interact such as when explaining a material, the lecturer must also ask questions for students. so that students can interact more and try to understand the material.'*



## CONCLUSION

The transition of traditional face-to-face class to online class brings a lot of challenges, issues, as well as areas for reflection and improvements. Both teachers and students will likely encounter a new personal, psychological, emotional, and social dimension which requires them to negotiate their sense of presence and identities. Teaching in an online environment requires teachers to adapt and develop new skills to maximize the course delivery. Course design, course delivery, the use of digital platforms, and the balanced use of synchronous and asynchronous online learning are all important factors which affect the pattern and level of classroom interactions. Students' participation in classroom interactions could reflect how well the course and learning activities are designed and how much academic and emotional support are provided in the learning context. As the online learning experience in each context may offer uniqueness and different aspects to explore, it is expected that the findings from this study will enrich our understanding of online learning and provide new insights for educators to refine the delivery of instruction for learners in their contexts.

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