
Students' positional identity in pandemic era

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 is a very dangerous virus. It makes the activities in the worlds stopped. The country that is attacked this virus restricts all of the activities. One of them is Indonesia. Covid-19 entered Indonesia on February. In the middle of March, the government has set a lockdown for all offices, trades, education and other activities. Especially in education, all of the schools have dismissed all the students and teachers until right now. All the activities in the teaching-learning process have done online. It raises several problems, one of them is students' ability in understanding the lesson that given by teacher via online has decreased, especially in learning English. This study aims to know the students' positional identity in pandemic era. The data took from the students' story and interview. The analysis of data described in sentences. It means this study is descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of research are 20 students of the second semester of English Education Department at Unisla. The result showed that almost 50% of students have positioned themselves as poor learners for this pandemic because of several reasons. Two of them; they cannot understand well about the material when the teacher explained by online and they have difficulty in getting internet networks in their villages. Considering the problems above, the government and educators are expected to be able to solve those problems faced by students in this pandemic era. So, in the future the study is going to analyse the educators' strategies in teaching English by online.

Keywords: *Online class, students' skills, EFL, positional identity*

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of 2020, coronavirus shocked all people in the worlds. It attacked in Wuhan Cina at the end of 2019. It is not the first non-natural disaster that happened in the worlds. World history recorded that there were several virus intimidate the people life such as; Ebola virus, SARS, H5N1, HIV, MERS and others. Indonesia is one of the countries that attacked those virus included coronavirus.

Coronavirus is a very dangerous virus. It causes death, 65 countries infected coronavirus that the number of sufferers are 90.308 inhabitant (Yuliana, 2020). WHO recorded that on March 15th 2020 Indonesia is the first rank in the Southeast Asia Region with the highest number of confirmed corona virus. There were 117 confirmed, 48 new

confirmed, 48 death, and 1 new death (World Health Organization, 2020). It made Indonesian government establish a policy on prohibiting activities outside of home. All of activities did at home, it known as WFH (Work from Home). It is not only affected the worker, but also the students. All of the school activities also did from home. In education, it is big problem for both teachers and students. Among teachers and students have to be ready in an online class. Minister of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia issued circular letter number 4 in the year 2020 which concerning of the implementation of internal education policy coronavirus spread emergency period disease (covid-19) point 2 is the process of learning from home. It means that all of the activities in school do in home. Teaching learning process form home is called online class.

Online class is known as “Daring”. Online class is an activity in teaching learning that carried out by using mobile computing device. Mobile computing devices such as smart phones, tablet PCs, computer and other devices that connected to internet network (Gikas & Grant, 2013). The students can set their own schedule for sort out of courses available online, they can learn wherever and whenever they need, they also can developing the new skills in the process managing to life-long learning (Dhawan, 2020). The students do not need worried that they cannot join in the class on time. There are several positive and negative effects in implementing online class. A student who lucky, they supported by parents, the parents facilitated online learning media. While the students who are lack in economic situation have to struggle to get online learning media. It means that students who supported by parents can eager to join in online learning, and find the ways to cross the close school to online class, while the students who do not lucky have difficulty in following online class (Schleicher, 2020). Online class needs video conferences, discussion with students by online, good connection network, the lectures is not only use laptop but also mobile phone, video recorded of lectures, the assignment can be accessed easily and students’ feedback can be attained (Basilaia, 2020). The other studies argue that It gives the opportunities for learners to access the content of courses because it was as well as interact with teachers wherever they are lived (Alimohammadi & Mansourian, 2016; Cavus & Ibrahim, 2008; Gikas & Grant, 2013). The development of technology information and media telecommunication show that school by listening lecture and make notes on paper certainly out of date. Government and educators set up variety resources to support the online class such as; education television, ruang guru, online resources and others applications. Several educators and students state that online class is considered effective than traditional class that in teaching learning process do by face-to face (Jacobs, 2013).

Before WHO states that all the school activities did at home, there are several studies which talked about teaching learning by online. One of it is Zang et.al do a research in the year 2004 found that e-leaning or online learning actually is more effective. The good thing is the use of internet and technology be able to change the way in delivering the knowledge. The inverse are several students bored in online class because they confuses which material they understand well and do not understand. Some of them do not ask question or ask the lecture to repeat the class although they have difficulty in comprehending the lectures and they do not have opportunities to re-experience the lecture content selectively (Zhang et al., 2004). It means that e-learning has positive and negative effect depend on each student.

Teaching learning activity by online still be an obstacle for Indonesian students. The limitation of internet network, mobile devices, and financial are the problems that often be a barrier in maximizing teaching learning in online class (Yaumi, 2018). Learning English for Indonesian students is difficult. The Indonesian students is difficulty in understanding the English subject because English is a foreign language that is seldom uses to communicate with other people in daily life. But English is very important for them to communicate with people in the worlds because English is an International or global language (David Crystal, 2017; Lauder, 2008). It is a reason why the Indonesian students have to master their English competence. Here, the students have to good comprehension to improve their English skill and change their positional identity in English as foreign language.

There are many kinds of approaches, techniques or media given by English teacher to improve the students' skills. However, the students still cannot master their English skill in offline class (traditional class). Since the pandemic era, teaching learning activity was change. All of the activities was done by online. It is a teachers' challenge to make the students understand more every topic that learned in online class. It is also influence the students' positional identity.

Positional identity is a way of each student in positions themselves as good learner or poor learner, as good writer or poor writer, as good reader or poor reader. The students' position their identity based on the skill that they learned (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Elliot, 2012; Fernsten, 2008; Frankel, 2017; Zoch et al., 2016). Frankel (2017) conducted a research that analyzes the students' positional identity in reading by case study. The subject of study has positioned themselves as good reader and poor reader because of some reasons. It means that every student can determine their identity by themselves.

Considering the studies above, this study was analyzing the students' positional identity in pandemic era, especially in learning English. The subject of study was the students of second semester of English Education Program at Universitas Islam Lamongan.

METHODS

Considering to the aim of the study above, the data took by the students' story in their writing experiences and interview. The data describes in sentences, it means this study is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research a basic research but qualitative descriptive approach does not lacks interpretive attempt or intends a supposedly neutral description of reality (Seixas et al., 2018). The data's accuracy of this method are semi-interviewing and document study. Descriptive qualitative research do Descriptive qualitative research is describe the phenomenon or characteristic that the data collected by qualitatively (Nassaji, 2015). Those data collection describes by sentences. Document of study took in pandemic era by online. Semi-interview is also taken by online. Interviews itself is asking question to the respondent by telephone or other electronic devices like WhatsApp (Megel & Heermann, 1994). Semi-structured interview uses in order to know the deep information from respondent. Qualitative documents like public documents or private documents, the students' story is one of public document (Creswell, 2009). Creswell

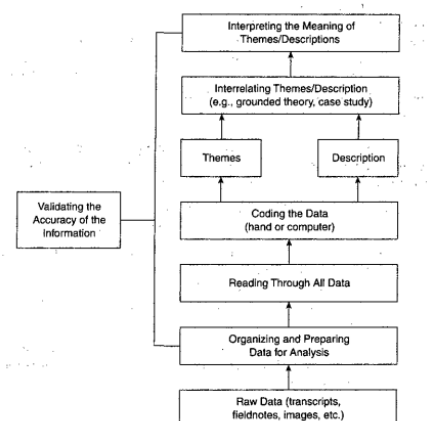
(2009) suggests in record the information from documents and interview have to takes note. Notes aims to classify the documents and interview. The document classify by notes on the table below;

Table 1. Positional Identity

No	Subject	Positional Identity		Reason
		Good Learner	Poor Learned	

In order to get the validating the accuracy data this study following Creswell (2009) ;

1. The researcher organizes and prepares the data to analyse. This involves copying the interview, scanning material, makes field notes or sorting and arranging the data based on the classification of positional identity.
2. Read all of the data is in order to know the information from the students sharing in writing.
3. Coding is the main process in organizing the data.
4. Description all the data from the coding.



The subject of study are students of second semester of English Education Department at Universitas Islam Lamongan (Unisla). There are 20 students. The study was done analyze the students of A class that consists of the students who are active in traditional class.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English as foreign language have influenced the students' identity. Teaching learning process focus on English four skills also influence the students' identity. The students' understanding the process of reading and writing reflect their identity as readers or writers for the user of literacy (Kauffman, 2006). Referring the problem of this study, the researcher analyzed the students' positional identity in pandemic era. In the pandemic era, they have to learn all of subject via online. It made them positioned themselves as poor

learner than good learners. It means online class have influenced the students' identity (Daher & Shahbari, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Tomei et al., 2008). The result of this study shown below:

Table 2. Positional Identity

No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Subject	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Positional Identity																				
Good Learner		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓			✓			✓	
Poor Learner	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Reasons																				
a) the students understand well about the topic that discussed easily		✓		✓		✓	✓				✓		✓			✓			✓	
b) the students can't understand well about the topic that discussed	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
c) the network is error when teaching learning is doing	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
d) the network is good when teaching learning is doing				✓			✓				✓									
e) the students is often wrong perception in understanding the task given,	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓				✓			✓			✓
f) the students is good understanding about the task				✓			✓									✓				✓
g) the students confuse when the teacher asked them to make question	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
h) the students active in QnA				✓		✓									✓		✓			
i) the students can explore every topic by searching		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				✓					✓				
j) the students can manage their time	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
k) the students can join the class whenever and whenever	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
l) lack in operate computer device	✓		✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
m) illiterate digital technology	✓			✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
n) Competence in the use of technology		✓				✓	✓				✓		✓		✓		✓			✓

Based on the table above, there are 12 students who positioned themselves as poor learners. Most of them argue that their identity influence of a) the students can't understand well about the topic that discussed b) the network is error when teaching learning process is doing c) the students is often wrong perception in understanding the task given, d) the students confuse when the teacher asked them to make question, and e) lack in mastering technology. Besides that, the students admit that in online class they can explore the topic discussed by searching in the internet and they can manage their time to join the class.

Among students who position themselves as poor learners, there is a student who write that her problem about the topic that share in google classroom or when the class discussed by zoom". The students' understanding in online class is the most problem that happened in Indonesia. The problem is not only happen to subject Q but also to others. In online class, they cannot focus to the class. They just hear without trying to understand. It supported a sentence "Sometime when in zoom class, I can't focus when the teacher explain the material. So I can't understand. Sometimes I also just hear without know what the teacher explain". When they can't focus on the topic, automatically they will confuse what they will ask. It is due to the Indonesia people are still in medium level (Berliyanto & B. Santoso, 2016). The Indonesian people need improve their standard of life evenly. Subject Q says in interview;

"I become a poor learner in English because some reasons. In my home, the internet network is bad. I have to look for good place when I want to join in online class. I am often miss the class when the online class by zoom or google meeting. Several times I lost my task because I don't understand what I should do for the task. Although my teacher has explained it and my friends also help to explain it clearly." (Subject Q. 5/6/2020)

online class. Several students master how to write or searching in the internet, but when join in room they are passive. Subject Q says "I am not a good one in mastering technology. I can search and I can write in words but I always confuse when the class

opened in room. The teacher shares material and says that we would like to discuss it. I begin to think hard what have I do there and how I submit the task given to the room”. It means that the Indonesia have to think the good ways to improve the quality of Indonesian people in using internet, digital technology and mastering the computer devices. Those are in order to make the students can understand the materials well when they are in online class.

The second finding is the students have positioned themselves as good learners. There are 8 students who positioned themselves as good learners. Almost all them say that in online class they understand well about the topic that discussed, they also understand the task easily, they have many opportunities in questions the topic discussed, they can explore every topic by searching in the internet when they still do not understand it, they can manage their time and they can join the class whenever and wherever without worried they missed the topic discussed. Nevertheless, the students who positioned as good learners also admit that sometimes they have trouble in getting good internet network and several of them lack in mastering the computer devices.

There is a student who positions herself as good learner because of her competency in mastering technology. Subject F says “the important thing in online class is we have to master our competence in technology”. Technology is one of the importance things in online class. There are many kinds of technologies that have to master by the students in this pandemic era. By mastering technology, “the students obtain the latest know how on the assigned topics and able to get further information” (Natarajan, 2006). She also says that in online class, every students have many chances to understand more about the topic that discussed because online class is unlimited times and we can access the class whenever and wherever. Natarajan (2006) states that the advantages of online class by using e-learning are the education more alive anywhere, anytime and to anyone, the material that given can opened in convenient time, learner can focus on the material, cost savings, the students can record and capture the material and online class gives the outcome of knowledge more better than in traditional class.

“Since senior high school I have been use technology in learning every subject. When I find some difficulty in understanding anything, I search it on web. Internet gives me many advantages. By using technology, I can do my task easily, I am more interest in learning something new, such as I try to learn how to make good video, how I make interest presentation.” (Subject F, 5/6/2020)

Online class gives students a chance to get more knowledge; you can search many resources on web to improve your understanding about the materials. It sustain for you to probe information from different types of resources wherever and whenever (Arsham, 2002). Subject F says “Pandemic changed the entire thing in the worlds. In my class, the fact shows that several students do not have computer. Usually, the students go to “warnet” or a place to typing when they get a task. Since pandemic, they have difficulty to do the task or search another sources to get information. They must buy a new one.” as all of the people know that computer is an important device that all of the students must have it. Computer itself as a media in online class. Dawan (2020) writes “teaching learning

process make the student-centered, more innovative, and even more flexible”. Online class will be good for students who have computer and master the use of technology. But for the students who do not have computer, it is a problem.

The result on the table have shown that every students have positioned their identity by themselves, they have known their competency in using technology , and they have known the reasons why they are as poor learners or good learners. Online class gives the advantages and challenges to the educators and learners (Elango et al., 2008; Yulia, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study indicates almost all of students have positioned themselves as poor learners in pandemic era. The students’ identity influences by some reasons based on their perception. Based on the reason mentioned in their story, all of the students write that in pandemic era they enjoy in online class because they can join the class wherever and whenever and they can manage their time but the other reasons their identity in learning English were change become poor identity because of their trouble in understanding the topic/materials, internet networks, lack in understanding the task, confuse in making question in discussion section, and illiterate in digital technology. Good learners write that online class is not problem. They enjoy in online class. They feel more competence since online class because they always try a new thing about technology and explore many of resources to get more information.

The population of this study is small, so the respondents of this study is limit. The other limitation is this study only analyze the students’ positional identity without analyze their English skills. Furthermore, the reasons of students’ perspective in positioning their identity will more variation when the population of this study is large. Those problems are challenge for the government and educators. The government provides good facilities and technology which are accepted by all students. So, in order to know the effectiveness of online class in the students’ identity, the researcher will analyze the teachers’ strategies in teaching English by online.

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