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Online Class Discussion and Social Presence to Boost Academic Performance of English Subject Amid COVID-19 Outbreak

ABSTRACT: *Online learning is the indispensable option amidst COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019) pandemic, which infects people around the world. Like or dislike the advanced of technology or the use of interactive communication technology in teaching learning process is at staked, for the sake of education. All schools around the world have implemented this online learning activity and intends for the success in teaching learning. Some learning strategies have been implementing to arouse students learning interaction which effect to their academic performance. In this inquiry, I investigate that online class discussion is the learning strategy recommended and implemented and the social presence interaction in this inquiry of English subject at STMIK (College of Informatics and Computer Management) Pontianak class in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Qualitative and quantitative methods are used in this study. Questionnaire then simple regression SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical program is applied to figure out the significant academic performance obtained. Definitely, online class discussion and social presence are valuable learning strategies which boost learners' academic attainment. The continous and longer allocated time of online class discussion in learning English is recommended for the significant learning outcomes. Having online class discussion may drive social presence of interactions between the participants. Further studies concerning online discussion and social presence is recommended also to be learned for the good of learning.*

KEY WORDS: *Online Learning; Interactive Communication Technology; Learning Strategy; Online Class Discussion; Social Presence.*

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of pandemi COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019) has altered many life aspects, particularly in educational sector, which its crucial

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impact to learners and instructors, also the educational organizations around the world. This unconvenient atmosphere of pandemi COVID-19 has caused all schools and campuses closed, then learners have online learning to follow the social distancing (Abidah *et al.*, 2020; Adnan & Kainat, 2020:45; and Alghamdi, 2021).

The Indonesian government completely the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, immediately do an action to replace the face to face teaching learning process to all schools institutions and having online learning at home through its circular notes to schools to get the social distancing (Setiamarga, 2020; Djalante *et al.*, 2020; and Lestari & Wantini, 2021).

Some of various platforms are offered, such as *Ruang Guru* (Teacher Room), *Rumah Belajar* (Learning House), Quipper School, Google Classroom, Zoom, WA (WhatsApp), etc. Online learning becomes popular and used widespread all globe, since it is integrated in learning; and because of this unconvenient pandemi atmosphere (Abidah *et al.*, 2020; Bayu, 2020; and Setiamarga, 2020).

As its popularity in learning necessity, online learning is not merely becomes a trendy learning tool; however, it is a primary tool of educational circumstances. Besides, it affords the advanced education with broaden insightful and try to reach students who cannot come to class or campus recurrently, and simultaneously keeps flexibility and support chance to accomplish the courses and grade (Valentine, 2002; Coman *et al.*, 2020; and Park & Kim, 2020:1-2).

Online learning is classified as a suite of learning endeavours of subjects presented through network as the interchange of learning. This online phase offers students to access the knowledge and materials also to engage and cooperate amongs the course contributors. Online learning also defined as the deployment of internet of gaining materials, the engagement with the materials, with teachers and others also the guidance and assistance preserved to gain the knowledge and learning experiences (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020:53; Abidah *et al.*, 2020; and Coman *et al.*, 2020).

Regardless of passion and assurance showned by the educational practitioners, there is still the doubt, uncertainty, and skepticism to e-learning from the learners. Though many identify e-learning has the prospective to arouse learning and learning practise at vary levels, but the recent shortcomings are still many to be handled (Ayu, 2020:48; Coman *et al.*, 2020; and Zalat, Hamed & Bolbol, 2021).

Can the online learning as effective as the face to face atmosphere. A latest inquiry reported that learners in online courses present essentially

worse than learners in face to face courses, especially for the least well prepared students. Learners have limited interaction with instructors, thus may effects students' performance (Khalil *et al.*, 2020; Park & Kim, 2020:2; and Zalat, Hamed & Bolbol, 2021).

In line with Chong W. Park & D. Gook Kim (2020), Muhammad Adnan & Anwar Kainat (2020) agree that the limited communication with their instructor is another hindrances in online learning. Students' interaction of face to face and the real-time sharing of ideas, knowledge and information is partly missing from digital world (*cf* Park & Kim, 2020; Adnan & Kainat, 2020:46; and Zalat, Hamed & Bolbol, 2021).

Moreover, the inadequate access and accessibility of the internet and the shortage of newest technology modified organizational responsiveness and students' part to take part in digital learning. Other obstacle cited by online learners are learners are feeling isolated from other participants and instructor (Junk, Deringer & Junk, 2011:4; Efriana, 2021; and Zalat, Hamed & Bolbol, 2021).

Considering the latest situation arise above, then, the research questions are formed as followed: (1) How does online class discussion arouse learners' academic performance?; (2) How does social presence arouse learners' academic performance?; and (3) How do online class discussion and social presence arouse learners' academic performance?

Literature Review. Social presence and online class discussion are the variables to be implemented in this inquiry to figure it out to learning outcomes.

Firstly, about the Social Presence. Y.A.W. de Kort, W.A. Ijsselsteijn & K. Poels (2007), and his colleagues, classified presence into 2 main groups: physical and social. Similarly, some researchers, such as C. Heeter (1992); F. Biocca, C. Harms & J. Burgoon (2001); and others, explained presence as the interdependent of two events – telepresence and social presence. Telepresence defined as “being there” and “being together with another” as social presence mean (Heeter, 1992; Biocca, Harms & Burgoon, 2001; de Kort, Ijsselsteijn & Poels, 2007; and Park & Kim, 2020:4).

Interactivity, social context and online communication definitely have effect on social presence, otherwise the passive interaction lessen social presence (Tu & McIsaac, 2002; de Kort, Ijsselsteijn & Poels, 2007; and Park & Kim, 2020:4).

Social presence is a crucial constituent in online learning and takes a straight effect in several conditions on the growth of learning society and collaboration in e-learning atmosphere. Aligned with this, D.R. Garrison, T. Anderson & W. Archer (2000), as cited also in A. Sun & X. Chen (2016), defined social presence as:

[...] the capability of participants in a society of query to envisage themselves publicly and sensitively as "real" populations through the medium of communication being used (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000:94; and Sun & Chen, 2016:167-168).

Then, in that kind of situation, social interaction and communication can grow and be sustained around the common goal and purpose among students themselves and between students and their instructors (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000; Sun & Chen, 2016:167; and Park & Kim, 2020).

Secondly, about the Online Class Discussion. Most significantly, discussion forum as an educational trend of computer conferencing usage for higher education conveyance. Highly admitted the amount of peer to peer collaboration in boosting involvement to material and increasing learning, leads and encourages learners in online practise and participate actively as needed (Harris & Sandor, 2007:384; Cavanagh, 2011; and Tan, Small & Lewis, 2020).

Discussion forum of online course through internet can enable the communication amongst students and create them involve actively in discussion. Online discussion is an indispensable part in the online atmosphere. Online discussion as the unique assistance assured a stage to aid students learning. It is broadly integrated into universities with the goal to boost learners learning meaningfully (Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017:10; Wang, 2019:113; and Tan, Small & Lewis, 2020).

Referring to its magnitude of online discussion in learners acquiring of knowledge, W.J. Fear & A. Erikson-Brown (2014), as cited also in Y.M. Wang (2019), detailed as follows:

We suggest that discussion is a key factor in asynchronous learning, perhaps the key factor in producing high level pedagogical outcomes (Fear & Erikson-Brown, 2014:6; and Wang, 2019:114).

Next, online class discussion forum are supposed to allow adaptable and self-governing learning and intelligence assembly and improve analytical thinking capable. S.J. Levine (2007), and other scholars, arranged the circumstances to keep online discussion can be run successfully, namely: (1) construct a conducive learning atmosphere; (2) put the rules and instruction at the beginning; (3) administeres deep inquiry and issues; (4) concentrate on three highest ranks of the cognitive scope; (5) control the consistency of class discussion; (6) deliver guided point of view; (7) value personally without denied the isolation; (8) always active to participate in discussion; (9) inspire for involvement; and (10) make conclusion of the main topic (Levine, 2007; Ryan, 2013; Seethamraju, 2014:1; and Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017).

Today, online settings are broadly consumed to relate individuals who discusses the relevance topics to let them assign and interchange

knowledge and ideas. Furthermore, discussion medium already been used for pedagogical goal as aid for enhancing diverse types of learning which lead to satisfied learning attainment. It is also as a learning aid for learners to interact and to get feedback of learning (Nor, Razak & Aziz, 2010:53).

Some advantages of online discussion forum are: (1) this forum let the learners and instructor share ideas and interact asynchronously; (2) construction of new knowledge is created in discussion practise since they share and interact through discussion; (3) this online forum encourages the discussion quality and collaborative learning for the deepest discussion of the material; (4) it offers the flexibility, suitability, and availability; (5) it provides more interaction between courses participants and instructor; and (6) the data of discussion is save as it is recorded virtual space and can be replayed or reviewed, etc. (Levine, 2007; Ryan, 2013; and De Lima *et al.*, 2019:9).

The foregoing study of learners' insight of studying through online discussion display that Physic Education Students of UNNES (*Universitas Negeri Semarang* or State University of Semarang) in Central Java's experience worthy view of acquiring through online class discussion forum. Other preceding study claimed a notion of discussion settings as scholars centred peer e-learning settings and as an novel method that gets the learners into the online learning practise by encouraging them to actively in learning also as the central role in learning (Harris & Sandor, 2007:383; Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017:1; and De Lima *et al.*, 2019). So, some advantages of online discussion are concluded as follow:

[...] it offers the chance for passive students in class to be active engage in online discussion; online class discussion gives chance and enough time to discuss the topic; an online situation may allow you at least to create small discussion within a large group; it is a suitable step and may maintain your online course discussion; and the last, online class gives feedback to be considered for further clarification (Biriyai & Thomas, 2014:5).

METHOD

This is a research and development approach, where it is managed to construct a specific product and assess the value of the result. Online class discussion and social presence are the specific product to be practised in online learning, then it is assessed to figure out their benefits in online teaching learning practise (Purnama, 2013; Sugiyono, 2013; and Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017:10).

In this inquiry, questionnaire is delivered to participants to figure out their perception of using online class discussion to boost social presence of interaction between learner-learner and learner-instructor. Questionnaire is a method of information gathering is conducted by administering a series of questions to participants to be responded, then be portrayed using

Likert scale 1-5 (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Sugiyono, 2013; and Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017:11).

The questionnaire aspects embrace the ease of application (zoom) used in learning, the level of interactivity, learners feel comfort in learning, the advance used, and the advantages of this application in learning for learners (Asim, 2001; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; and Sudarwati, Khanafiyah & Sugiyanto, 2017:11).

The learners of STMIK (*Sekolah Tinggi Management Informatika dan Komputer* or College of Informatics and Computer Management) Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, Technique Informatic Program becomes the participant in this study, consisted of 30 students. Furthermore, the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) point of 25 simple regression is applied to hold information of the significant correlation of academic performance gained in using online class discussion in online learning (Riadi, 2016:156-168). The formula is as follows:

$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{n \cdot \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{n \cdot \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$
$$r = \frac{n(\sum xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{\{n \cdot \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{n \cdot \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Then for doubled correlation regression the formula as follows:

$$R_{x_1x_2y} = \frac{\sqrt{r^2x_1y + r^2x_2y + 2.r x_1y.r x_2y.r x_1x_2}}{1 - r^2x_1x_2}$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This segment converses the qualitative and quantitative methods of gaining research information, while having online class discussion and social presence in online learning amid COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019). The online class discussion and social presence as the variables to be investigated in this study to boost participants academic performance of English subject. This is a technique informatic class consisted of 30 learners. This class then divided into 6 small groups of 5 learners. They are classified based on the students list presented from university. Each group have one leader to guide and control each group. From the beginning of the semester the lecturer already informed them about this class project to have online discussion for English subject. They are recommended to prepare the topic already provided by lecturer.

Table 1:
Speaking Aspects from Online Discussion

No	Nama	Pro	Gram	Voc	Idea	Coh	Total
01.	Ronny	5	5	5	5	5	25
02.	M.Kallis	3	2	2	2	2	11
03.	Cindy	2	2	2	1	1	8
04.	Indra	1	1	1	1	1	5
05.	Natasha	3	3	2	2	2	12
06.	Fadli Z.	4	3	4	3	3	17
07.	Nico	4	3	3	3	3	16
08.	Hiasintus	5	4	4	4	4	21
09.	Seperianus	2	2	2	2	2	10
10.	Alvaro	5	4	4	5	4	22
11.	Michelle	5	5	4	4	5	23
12.	Nurul E.	2	3	3	3	3	14
13.	Lili T.	4	3	3	3	3	16
14.	Tanu	3	3	2	3	2	13
15.	Riyan F.	3	3	3	3	3	15
16.	Andi I.	3	3	3	4	3	16
17.	Titin	3	2	2	3	3	13
18.	Sabto H.	5	4	4	5	5	23
19.	Septiningrum	2	2	2	2	2	10
20.	Rezky F.	3	2	2	2	2	11
21.	M.Fikri	4	4	4	5	5	22
22.	Noviyanti	4	3	3	3	2	15
23.	Adelia	5	4	4	4	4	21
24.	Petrus	3	3	3	3	2	14
25.	Vinsensus	4	3	2	3	3	15
26.	Vincent ZF.	5	3	4	4	4	20
27.	Septian I.	4	3	3	3	3	16
28.	Leonardo D.	5	4	3	4	3	19
29.	Bagus	4	3	4	3	4	18
30.	Yosse	4	3	4	3	3	17

The topics discussed are as followed: “People in Computing” for 1st group; “Data Security” for 2nd group; “Software Engineering” for 3rd group; “Network” for 4th group; “Communication System and Computing Support” for 5th group; and “Websites” topic for 6th group. The 1st discussion conducted on 22nd September 2020; the 2nd discussion on 1st October 2020; the 3rd discussion conducted on 6th October 2020; 4th discussion on 13th October 2020; the 5th discussion on the 24th October 2020; and the 6th discussion on the 31st October 2020.

Some weaknesses occurred when the first group (Group A) presented the material. Of course, these are the challenges for this online class

Table 2:
ANOVA and Coefficients

ANOVA ^a						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	553.668	1	553.668	15.487	.000 ^b
	Residual	1000.999	28	35.750		
	Total	1554.667	29			

a. Dependent Variable: y

b. Predictors: (Constant), x

Coefficients ^a							
	Model B	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	57.330	3.803			15.075	.000
	x	.900	.229	.597		3.935	.000

a. Dependent Variable: y

discussion. The participants of the course just keep silence, while the the first group presented the material via zoom. They looked passive, feel shy, and a bit afraid to discussed or to talked. So, the first discussion is an unsatisfied discussion happened.

The researcher guides the discussion by giving some instructions, advices, motivation, and feedback to the participants to be active to engage in the discussion. And all that attempts done fruitful for the next groups presentation. They started to get involved for the next discussion by asking some questions of the material presented, more active and involve and the discussion run dynamically. The discussion practised is observed and assessed to see its effect to their academic attainment of English subject. They are assessed of their speaking performance aspects, such as the pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, idea, and coherency. Students's scores then delineated into the table 1 and table 2.

The scores of online class discussion for each participant then accumulated with their total of all English scores gained to ascertain its effect to their academic attainment using simple regression of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) of 25. From ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table the regression test result, F is 15.487 and sig. 0.00. Since sig. 0.00 is smaller than 0.05 then can be explained that the coefficients linear of the regression is significant. It means online class discussion effect significantly to learners' academic performance of English subject. The result gained then is the answer for the 1st research question above.

Furthermore, the qualitative data is earned through the questionnaire administered to learners to get their view or perception of the effect of

Table 3:
Questionnaires of Learners Perception of Social Presence

No	Aspects	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Good Enough (3)	Less Good (2)	Not Good (1)
1.	This zoom (online class discussion) is easy to use.					
2.	The level of interactivity.					
3.	Comfort in learning English.					
4.	The advanced use.					
5.	Overall the use of this application contributes many advantages for learning English.					

social presence to their academic’s performance. Learners perception of the effect of social presence to their English is assessed with simple regression of SPSS.25. The results then percentaged based on likert scales category as “very good”, “good”, “good enough”, “less good”, “not good”, which envisaged into 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

Online class discussion as the strategy applied in online teaching-learning process using zoom application to arouse learners interaction in online learning. Zoom is an application used for video conference, while online teaching learning practising, with some features offered, such as the face to face interfal, audio, video, chat forum, recorder, and learners data of participating. The learners or the groups that already performed the discussion they are asked to give response to the questionnaire. The aspects embraced of questionnaires portrayed belows is delineated in table 3.

The total scores of questionnaire for each participant then accumulated to the all academic attainment of English subject to figure out its effect of academic performance using simple regression SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) of 25. The regression test refered to the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table above displays F is 0.267 with sig. 0.610. Since 0.610 is greater than 0.05, then the coefficients linear is insignificant. It means the participants’s perception of social presence have no effect to their academic performance of English subject. Then it is as the second research answer. See table 4.

The doubled regression with 3 variables is applying to figure out the meaning of online class discussion and social presence to learners’ academic attainment of English subject. The ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) and coefficients are delineated in the table 5.

Table 4:
ANOVA and Coefficients

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.674	1	14.674	.267	.610 ^b
	Residual	1539.993	28	55.000		
	Total	1554.667	29			
a. Dependent Variable: y						
b. Predictors: (Constant),						
Coefficients ^a						
Model B		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	76.105	8.699		8.749	.000
	x	-.218	.422	-.097	-.517	.610
a. Dependent Variable: y						

The results displayed on ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table that is F 0.6122 and sig. 0.006. Since sig. 0.006 is less than 0.05 then can be inferred that the coefficients linear is significant. It means the online class discussion and social presence have effect to participants' academic attainment of English subject, Technique Informatic Program learners of STMIK (*Sekolah Tinggi Management Informatika dan Komputer* or College of Informatics and Computer Management) Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia (*cf* Biriyai & Thomas, 2014; Susanti, 2018 and 2020; De Lima *et al.*, 2019; and Agung, Surtikanti & Quinones, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Online learning is an inevitable option to be practised in teaching learning while COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019) pandemic. To generate participants engagement in learning then online class discussion is recommended to be implemented. By having online class discussion, it may cause both individual and groups responsibility to their subjects or topics to be presented in learning process. Which direct individual and groups interaction then create social presence of the participants in learning process. Discussion process must run together or simultanously with social presence to achieve significant learning result.

It is proven by the accumulation gained of doubled regression linear F 0.6122 and sig. 0.006. Since sig. 0.006 less than 0.05, then it means the strategies applied those are online class discussion and social presence significantly effect learning outcomes of English performance in online learning. The present of social presence in online class discussion together

both support learning English process for better outcomes.

The continuous and longer allocated time of online class discussion in learning English is recommended for the significant learning outcomes. Having online class discussion may drive social presence of interactions between the participants. They may collaborate and interact to the topics discussed. Further studies concerning online discussion and social presence is recommended to be learned for the good of learning.¹

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¹**Statement:** This is to certify that my research is a product of my collaborative effort. It is an original, with some literature review from other sources. My research is not plagiarized – relevant statements of authors in the literature review are properly cited. I certify further that my research has never been reviewed nor published in any other scholarly journal. This certification is issued on 27th July 2021 for whatever legal and official purposes it may serve.

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STMik PONTIANAK & BINUS ONLINE LEARNING

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Online Learning at STMik Pontianak

(Source: <https://www.stmikpontianak.ac.id>, 27/07/2020)

Online learning is an inevitable option to be practised in teaching learning while COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease-2019) pandemi. To generate participants engagement in learning then online class discussion is recommended to be implemented. By having online class discussion, it may cause both individual and groups responsibility to their subjects or topics to be presented in learning process.