

EFL LEARNERS' CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS ONLINE LEARNING THROUGH FLIPPED CLASSROOMS IN INDONESIA FOR FACING 4.0 INDUSTRY ERA

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Date received: August 01, 2022

Revision date: August 22, 2022

Date received: August 29, 2022

Keywords:

EFL; online learning; flipped classroom; era 4.0

The current study was aimed to investigate the cultural perspectives on online learning through the flipped learning activity to face the 4.0 industry era in Indonesia. Online learning has been a trend in education as the development of education in the world refers to the current situations due to the development of technology. The best alternative strategy to support online learning is conducting the flipped learning activity. However, it is not an easy matter since some cultural aspects in Indonesia can be great obstacles. It is crucial to recognize the problems and find the solutions referring to the existing cultural dimensions. The research applied qualitative method. The results revealed that the way how the learners studied English through the online learning activities was mostly influenced by the cultural dimensions such as getting passive in the class, focusing on getting good grades, expecting the teachers' dominations in the class, and getting fond of being given playful learning activities. Hence, it is recommended that both the EFL teachers and learners can overcome the problems related to the existence and influence of the cultural dimensions by implementing the flipped learning activities to support the online learning activities conducted for reaching better academic achievements through the developments of their generic capabilities to face the 4.0 industry era.

INTRODUCTION

In this modern world, advances in technology have changed the way of how people think about many aspects, including the educational world. A massive shift in the twentieth century creates an increasing demand for communicative competence at the concern of teaching methods (Arafah, Kaharuddin, et al., 2021). One of the developments of education in the world nowadays is the emergence of online learning activities. Data from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) shows that 132.7 million Indonesians are internet users or more than 50% of the total population of Indonesia, namely 256 million Indonesians (Hasyim, 2019). This means that more than 50% of Indonesia's population are smartphone-

How To Cite: Mulyanto, & Sujiatmoko, A. H. (2022). EFL Learners' Cultural Perspectives towards Online Learning through Flipped Classrooms in Indonesia for Facing 4.0 Industry Era. *Journal of Social Science*, 3(5). <https://doi.org/10.46799/jss.v3i5.396>

E-Issn: 2721-5202

Published By: [Ridwan Institute](http://www.ridwaninstitute.com)

based internet users so that it is not difficult to adjust the online learning activities for students (Arafah, Abbas, et al., 2021). It is widely recognized that there is a strong connection between people and technology since technology has been increased (Arafah, Abbas, et al., 2021).

The development of science and technology can be seen and felt in the existence of social media that required the internet to access online. Furthermore, communication through the online platform has a high impact on many users, so that it is also used to communicate in online learning (Hasjim et al., 2020). The online learning system promotes an easy way to hold or conduct the teaching and learning activities for both the teachers and learners. In this case, online learning brings the teachers and learners to have more flexible time to control and manage the teaching and learning processes. The most important thing is concerned with the strategies chosen how online learning may work well and successfully.

The success of holding online learning needs to consider two things are the learning time division or allocation and the use of technology. Online learning needs the right division or allocation of the learning time by implementing synchronous and asynchronous time learning. One of the significant strategies used or applied to support the online learning activities is conducting the flipped learning activities. Flipped learning is assumed to be a teaching method that leads the teachers to give instructions to the students to complete understanding the materials and doing the assignment before coming to the class. In flipped learning, students learn the topic before class and apply what they have learned during class (Van Alten et al., 2020). Hence, what will happen in the class can be used to do more meaningful learning activities or interactions such as discussions, simulations, presentations, projects, and so on (Gasmi, 2016). Thus, a flipped class can also be categorized into the blended learning system (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

The benefit of implementing the flipped learning method is to make the students have a self-paced learning model in which they are given the access to get everything needed to support the classroom activities that will be held. In this case, the students are expected to have a good preparation to join the class. Hence. They have more flexible times to learn the materials (Cottrell & Robison, 2003), get better comprehension and retention of the materials learned (Roberts & Plakhotnik, 2009), and gain assistance in compensating the missing class (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Besides, flipped learning is also concerned with leading the teachers to promote the student-centered and active learning system (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, the other thing that must be paid attention to to conduct the online learning activity is the use of technology. It is a fact that the EFL teachers are also often found to use various kinds of technological equipment such as radio, TV, cassette, CD, DVD, and computers or laptops. Even, in the 4.0 industry era nowadays, the use of technology develops with some digital applications to be connected with the internet. Thus, there are various digital applications operated through laptops or HP that can be used to support the EFL teaching and learning activities. Hence, flipped learning context and the use of technology of digital applications can be the best alternative for conducting the EFL online classrooms. In short, the technology which is integrated with the language classrooms may give various positive impacts on the improvement of the students' motivations and attitudes (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018; Macaro et al., 2012).

However, what can be the problem is that not all teachers and students may encourage themselves to use the technology of digital applications. One of the factors affecting discouraging the use of technology of digital applications is concerned with the cultural aspects. Every country or region has its own culture which can be different from one another. The culture existing in one country or region may influence or touch the aspects of people's lives. In

the end, the cultural product of art in society is equivalent to cultural, political, and social studies issues (Afiah et al., 2022).

In education, what happens about the implementation of the way how teachers and students conduct the teaching and learning activities are often affected by the existing culture. In Indonesia, for instance, there exists one cultural description about how education or the teaching and learning process works. Specifically, it is commonly seen that Indonesian students tend to apply the surface learning approaches which lead them to promote rote memorization, low critical thinking skills, unreflective learning activities, passiveness, and compliance (Dardjowidjojo, 2006; Elsegood & Rahimi, 2009; Iftanti, 2012; Nilan, 2003). In addition, the Indonesian students prefer paying attention more to academic achievement to generic capabilities which lead the students to have and develop their high order thinking levels, communication skills, leadership characters, and problem-solving competencies (Hadiyanto, 2010).

Such the learning situations built are not appropriate to the current situations of which science and technology have developed fast. In this case, every teacher is claimed to develop their competence through applying the teaching strategies which can lead the students to have the capacity in facing the changes of the world nowadays known as the 4.0 industry era.

Based on the explanations above, it is crucial to conduct the study on learners' cultural perspectives towards online learning through the EFL flipped classrooms for facing the 4.0 industry era in Indonesia. To this end, the research team has tried to formulate the research questions as follows.

- 1) What are the cultural factors performed by the EFL learners entailing some difficulties in joining the EFL flipped classrooms?
- 2) How do the EFL teachers overcome the cultural factors to encourage themselves in joining the EFL flipped classrooms?

METHOD

The study was concerned with analyzing the learners' perceptions or perspectives about online learning through the EFL flipped classrooms for facing the 4.0 industry era in Indonesia. To understand the phenomena happening, the sociocultural contexts needed to be taken into the consideration in this study. This study applied qualitative research. In this case, the sociocultural context may touch on some aspects such as the physical environment, participants' ideologies, values, and histories (Chambers & Bax, 2006; Kern, 2006).

Referring to the explanation above, the study, used a qualitative descriptive approach (Creswell, 2017). This study also employed a case study design. The investigation of this study was based on natural and holistic realities to be interpreted and described to get rich information on the phenomena that occurred (Cohen et al., 2002). The participants of the study were 40 students in one class of the English department of Dr. Soetomo University. It was located in Surabaya – East Java Province – Indonesia.

To get the data, the researcher did the observations to know about the students' real conditions and attitudes affected by the existing cultural dimensions and the real implementation of the flipped learning activities with the use of various internet-mediated applications done by the lecturer. In addition, the writer also conducted in-depth interviews. In doing the in-depth interview, the writer applied an unstructured format of the interview. In this case, the writer also used open-ended questions to get information related to all events happening.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cultural dimensions have become the significant obstacles for both the EFL teachers and students to reach success in learning English. In this case, the way how Indonesian learners learn English as a foreign language is mostly influenced by the cultural dimensions entailing certain learning situations which are supposed to be less supportive for getting better academic achievements referring to the 4.0 industry era.

The main result of the current study revealed that learners tended to be passive in joining the EFL virtual classrooms. One of the factors leading to the emergence of the learners' passiveness was caused by their lack of willingness to communicate and interact with the teacher and peer during the online learning activities conducted. They felt that they did not have good competencies to communicate and perform something through sharing ideas or opinions. They were also afraid of making mistakes. They did not want to make the teachers angry for the mistakes made. Hence, they preferred being silent to speaking up. It can be seen from the statement spoken by one of the students investigated below.

"I seldom speak or share opinions in the class. It is because I feel that my English is not good, I often make mistakes when speaking English. So I am afraid or ashamed to speak. That's why I prefer being silent during the online class" (S1-09/06/21).

The statement above showed that the student had a handicap which could make him keep silent all the time during the online class held. It was supposed to be the main factor why he did not like to speak or share ideas in the online class. The factor was concerned with his competence in English. In this case, he was found to lack competence in speaking English. This condition also made him afraid or shamed by the teacher and peers. It was because every time he tried to speak English, he was haunted by the mistakes that could be made by him. The statement above was also supported by another statement coming from another student investigated as follows.

"To me speaking English is not easy. It needs to understand grammar. I get difficulties in learning and understanding grammar. So every time I speak English, my grammar is really bad and I have many mistakes. When I make mistakes, I feel shamed since my friends will see me as a stupid guy who does not understand anything or cannot speak English well. It is their assumption to me. So because of this, I often decide to keep silent in the class. I do not want to say anything or share any ideas" (S2-09/06/21).

What happened with the student above indicated that he had a big problem with grammar that made him have no competence and willingness to speak or share ideas during the online class held. Lacking grammar competence made him feel like to be a stupid man which could embarrass himself in front of his friends. There was also an assumption arisen or given by his friends when knowing that he had many mistakes in speaking English. This made him get shamed for participating in sharing ideas in the online class.

Referring to the fact above, it can be explained that the cultural dimension concerning the passive attitude performed by the students has become the common view in the online learning activities conducted by the EFL teachers in Indonesia (Dardjowidjojo, 2006; Elsegood & Rahimi, 2009; Iftanti, 2012; Nilan, 2003). One of the most popular reasons why students tend to be passive when joining online classrooms is related to their lack of competence. In this case, what is often promoted in the students' lives referring to the existing cultural dimension is that keeping silent or being passive is better than making mistakes because of a lack of competence.

This shows that lacking competence can be the main obstacle for the students to be active in the class. Even, they tend to avoid participating in sharing ideas or opinions. What makes this happen is the feeling of being ashamed and afraid of making mistakes. They feel

that making mistakes when speaking English and sharing ideas or opinions can embarrass them in front of other people or students. Hence, they have a tendency not to be brave in participating in sharing ideas. They prefer avoiding making mistakes to embarrassing themselves due to the mistakes made.

The students' passiveness is also caused by the learning environment created by the EFL teachers in conducting the online learning activities. It seems to be the common reality that the students feel to be the young man who must always adhere to the teachers. In this case, the students may believe that the teachers are always right and there is nothing wrong with the teachers concerning what they teach or explain. This can be seen from the statement given by one of the students interviewed.

"As a good student, I just need to obey what the teacher says to me. I am sure my teacher always says something right. She never tells a lie and is always honest. What is true is true. Hence, I do not have the reason to blame her and break the rules that she has made" (S3-09/06/21).

The statement above indicated that the student wanted to show that she was a good student by obeying the teacher. She did not have any intention to outface and break the rules made by the teacher. This could happen since the student believed that her teacher was a good example to be copied. One thing that she could believe her teacher was that the teacher never told a lie. Realizing this, the student had no reasons to blame or had a bad assumption about her teacher. This was also supported by another statement coming from another student investigated as follows.

"Talking about my teacher, I am sure that my teacher is never wrong. She is clever and smart. So I believe that she will teach me well. Of course, I do not want to interrupt her when she is explaining something whatever it is right or wrong. And also, blaming the teacher is not good for a student like me. It must be forbidden and I will get in to do it" (S4-09/06/21).

What was stated by the student above indicated that the teacher was assumed to be a good person who was always right, never did mistakes, and could be trusted? This made the student be adherent to everything said or instructed. Even, in the process of the learning activities held, the student did not want to interrupt for doing the confirmation and clarification to the explanation given by the teacher.

Based on the facts above, it can be revealed that the Indonesian cultural dimension related to the students' passive attitude can still be the characteristics performed in the EFL classrooms. The students may feel to be the younger people who must be polite and obedient to the teachers without any exceptions. They are not allowed to blame and interrupt for confirming and clarifying what is being explained by the students. What the students do to confirm and clarify something can be assumed to do something impolite to the teachers. This can only happen when the teachers ask directly to the students or are given the opportunities for the students to do the confirmation or clarification. When the instructions for doing such things are not given, it will be forbidden to do interruptions.

This condition leads the teachers to have fixed status as the leader who has great authority (Dardjowidjojo, 2006). The students who assume themselves as the parties within the lower status will not have any right to do interruption for confirming and clarifying something. What the students do by interrupting will be indicated as impolite actions which are forbidden to be done. The teacher's status as a leader who has great authority also entails the belief from the students as the man who has never done something wrong. Thus, everything said and done in conducting the learning activities is always believed to be right (Novera, 2004).

Another thing found about the students' passive attitude is concerned with the talk domination. In this case, when the students tend to keep silent during the online learning

activities held, the teachers are found to dominate the talk. This may lead to building teacher-centered learning activities. What EFL teachers do is caused by the minimum participation performed by the students. This could be seen from the statement given by one of the students investigated as follows.

"I myself really do not like to be active in the class. It is because I often do not know what to say. I mean that sometimes I do not understand the question given by the teacher. I do not have any background knowledge or information that I can share with others. But, I get amazed when the teacher talks a lot during the class. She seems to try to make us understand better. Hence, she often dominates the class by explaining something deeply" (S5-09/06/21).

The statement above indicated that the students got interested in having the teachers who liked to explain in detail to make them understand better. The students also enjoyed with long explanations given by the teacher. They did not realize that the teacher dominated the class. What the teacher did was caused by the passiveness performed by them. This condition was also clarified by another statement spoken by another student as follows.

"I am very happy with my teacher. It is because she often talks a lot about giving detailed explanations to us. It can make us understand better. I do not care that we do not participate in talking or sharing ideas. We wish to make our teacher be the center of information and explanation about the topics that we learn. And I like it since I myself can feel the benefit by understanding well the explanation given" (S6-09/06/21).

The statement above showed the student's preference in getting the length and detailed explanations given by the teacher. She preferred listening to what was explained by the teacher to sharing any ideas. She also did it on a purpose for making the teacher be the center of the learning activities held. Even, she did not expect that she and her friends changed the teacher's position to share ideas or give explanations in detail. It was because she believed that the teacher was the best man who did the job as the informant for explaining everything needed to make the students understand better.

What has happened above does not make the shocking condition in the common EFL online learning activities in Indonesia. The teachers' acts of giving long and detailed explanations have been the common cultural dimension in education. The students feel happy when they see that the teachers give a long and detailed explanation to them. It is because they believe that it can make them get a better comprehension of the topics learned or discussed. In this case, the students get more interested in caring about academic achievements rather than the development of their generic capabilities (Hadiyanto, 2010).

Academic achievements often become the focus and target that must be reached by the students in Indonesia. The students may get proud when they are successful in having good scores as the depiction of the improvements of their academic achievements. In turn, what is known as the generic capability including the capacity for having or building the creative or high order thinking level has never been the main target and focus expected to be reached.

All factors causing or forming the students' passive attitudes cannot be separated from the existence of the cultural dimensions that are commonly found in the surrounding environments in Indonesia. They can give a great influence on the way how the students think about joining the online learning activities held. However, some EFL teachers seem to realize and try to find the solution so that the existing cultural dimensions may not affect or give a deeply negative impact to the students. One of the recommended ways is implementing flipped learning activities with the use of technology.

The result of the study found that the teacher tried to implement the flipped learning activities. One of the ways have done was to give the tasks leading to build the generic capabilities. In this case, the teacher was found to divide the sections of the learning activities

held. First, she applied the asynchronous time for giving the materials and tasks to the students. It was expected that the students had a good preparation by understanding the materials and doing the tasks before the class was held. And then, the second was known as synchronous learning activities when the teacher used an application mediated by the internet connection such as zoom meeting to hold the discussions or presentations. This could be seen from the statement given by the student as follows.

"I liked my teacher. We know that we often keep silent in class. The reason is that we do not have a good preparation to join the class. That's why the teacher seems to have the solution by giving us the materials and tasks to do before we have the meeting through the zoom application. In this way, we can try to be active though we still often like to be quiet due to avoid making mistakes" (S7-10/06/21).

The statement above indicated that the student had been able to realize the factor why they liked to keep silent in the class. It was caused by lacking the preparation they had. This could happen when they did not know the materials that were going to be learned when the class started. However, she was very happy since her teacher could recognize the problem and tried to find the solutions given the materials before starting the class. What the teacher did was aimed at making the students know the materials that were going to be learned, so that the students could prepare themselves and be active in the class. Another similar statement was also given by another student as follows.

"I think what our teacher does to make us active in the class is by sharing the materials every time we will have the class. So, one or two days before we will have the meeting through zoom, she shares the materials so that we can read and learn the materials. Hence, we will be able to prepare ourselves better to join the class. However, sometimes the materials and tasks given are very difficult so that we do not understand and go back to keep our silent in the class. And we like to wait for the teacher's explanations" (S8-10/06/21).

What the student had stated above indicated that the student could think about the benefits of sharing the materials or tasks from the teacher before the class was held. In this case, the student could prepare themselves better. It was a good technique to entail the students' preparation before joining the class. However, another problem also appeared when the materials shared or tasks given were very difficult for the students. The students tended to expect to get an explanation from the teacher to overcome the difficulties faced in understanding the materials or tasks shared.

The facts above reveal the students' perspectives concerning the way how the EFL teachers try to solve the problems faced due to the influence of the cultural dimensions on the students' activeness in the process of the online learning activities conducted. In particular, the teacher has an intention to implement the flipped learning activities by dividing the learning sessions (Embi & Panah, 2014). The first session is done by sharing the materials that can be learned or read by the students and the tasks that can be done by the students before the class is started. The second session will be the time for the show of the real learning activities to come. By doing this, the students can prepare themselves to join the class well.

The students' preparation is crucial. The class can be alive if the students have good preparation so that they can participate and show their activeness during the class held. It means that the materials shared before starting the class may lead both the teacher and students to create meaningful learning activities (Gasmi, 2016). Moreover, this condition brings the students to have a self-paced learning model which can be the access for building the student-centered learning system in the class (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017).

What the teacher does through implementing the flipped learning activities also gives another contribution to face effects of cultural dimensions performed by the students. Many

students only care about the results of learning which can make them proud of themselves. In this case, academic achievements can be the main target they have. This is usually seen in the scores they get from the tests or examinations. They will be very happy if they can get good or high scores. Unfortunately, the scores they get sometimes do not indicate the improvement and development of their generic capabilities such as communicative competence and critical thinking skill as the depiction of their high order thinking levels.

The flipped learning activities are beneficial to lead the students to build their generic capabilities through having flexible times to learn the materials (Cottrell & Robison, 2003), getting better comprehension and retention of the materials learned (Roberts & Plakhotnik, 2009), and gaining the assistance in compensating the missing class (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). One of the students investigated had proved it through the statement given as follows.

"I am the student who likes to consider the attainment of the academic achievements that I can get as the results of learning activities I follow. But, I change my mind when my teacher gave me some tasks which lead me to do many things concerning thinking deeply and critically. I found that the tasks were very useful for me and I felt that I got something new. It was like new training for me to get the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create something. So it was like trying to solve the problems to me" (S9-10/06/21).

What happened with the student above indicated that the cultural dimensions played a big role in his life. In joining the learning activities, he liked to focus on getting good academic achievements through the scores gained. It seemed that the barometer of success in learning for him was to get good scores even though there was nothing to improve his generic capabilities. But, he began to realize the importance of the generic capabilities from various tasks given by the teacher which led him to build his critical and analytical thinking skills as the depiction of the high order thinking level. What had been stated by him was also supported by another student as follows.

"Actually, I am often passive in the class. It is because I think the online learning activities given by the teacher are not different from what happened in the offline ones. But, I was surprised when the teacher had an interesting way that did not focus on targetting the attainment of the academic achievements like from the tests. She used various technology applications like Youtube, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Websites to teach us. It was very interesting since we were told to have the performances like analyzing cases, doing presentations or simulations, and creating some products such as video. Of course, we need to prepare many things for doing those activities, and we were given the chances" (S10-10/06/21).

What had been stated by the student above indicated that there was a change in the way how she perceived the learning activities performed by the teacher. She thought that what was done by the teacher in conducting the learning activities did not perform any difference. It was similar to what had happened when the class was held through an offline system. In this case, the teacher was assumed to bring the offline learning situations into the online learning activities through the zoom application. In particular, there were no specific ways of teaching which could entail something different through the use of technology since the learning activities were held virtually.

But, to her surprise, she found something different about the ways how the teacher conducted the online learning activities with the use of various applications mediated through internet connections such as Youtube, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Websites. Those applications were successful to make the learning situations or activities become more interesting and challenging which could make increase the students' enthusiasm and motivation to join the learning activities performed. In this case, the learning situations or activities not only transfer

what happened in the offline learning activities into the online learning activities via zoom application, but also led the students to be active and creative through various performances done such as analyzing cases via discussions, doing presentations or simulations, and creating various products like videos, posters, pamphlets, and portfolio projects.

Referring to the facts above, it can be explained that the cultural dimensions also lead the students to plant a bad image in holding the learning activities performed by the teacher. In this case, the students may have some bad experiences in joining the EFL learning activities. So it can affect the way how they join the online learning activities proposed by the teacher. However, the implementation of the flipped learning activities performed by the teacher has successfully changed the students' mindsets about the existing bad image.

What is supposed to be something interesting in the online learning activities is concerned with the use of technology. The technology applied is in the form of various internet-mediated applications. The use of those applications contributes to improving the students' learning motivations and academic achievements (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018; Macaro et al., 2012). It is because the learning activities created by the teacher can be more interesting and challenging for the students.

The of the technology in the language classroom is also supported by the implementation of the flipped learning concepts which promote the attainment of generic capabilities. In this case, the students may have great opportunities to learn and get the learning development through various activities which lead them to have the capacity to solve the problems in life (Hadiyanto, 2010). Specifically, the students may do various learning activities which contribute to forming their high order thinking levels through performing critical and analytical minds, communicative competencies, and creative activities. All of the things done by the students may beneficial to prepare themselves in facing the 4.0 industry era today.

CONCLUSION

The cultural dimensions performed by the students still give great influences to the way how they learn English as a foreign language. Facing the phenomena, the EFL teachers are claimed to solve the problems. One of the solutions is to change the students' mindsets when joining the EFL classrooms. In this case, the teachers must try hard to make the online learning activities conducted be different from what has happened in the offline learning situations. It means that teachers should not only bring what is usually done in the offline learning situations into the online learning activities, but they must perform something more interesting and challenging through activities that lead the students to build high order thinking levels.

Online learning activities will be the mainstream for many teachers in modern life nowadays. The use of technology in the form of internet-mediated applications will be a need that cannot be avoided to give the best service to the students through the online learning activities done. The most important thing goes to how the EFL teachers can modify and utilize the existing technology for supporting the implementation of the online learning activities held. Hence, one appropriate strategy needs to be implemented.

The flipped learning concepts have been successful to integrate online learning activities and the use of technology. As a result, various learning activities which lead the students to build generic capabilities through building critical and analytical minds, communicative competencies, and creative activities can be done by the students. Those activities may not only be able to omit the existing cultural dimensions gradually but also prepare the students to face the 4.0 industry era better.

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Journal of Social Science

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