

# Factors Affecting Students' Learning Interaction and Engagement in Online Learning

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**Abstract:** The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted various aspects of lifestyle, as well as the world of education. As a result, learning was carried out with online. Online learning was not just providing material online, but there were interactions that occur during the learning process. Interaction occurs between students and teachers, between students and students, and students with the learning material itself. The aim of this research was to determine factors that affect students' learning interactions and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL Classroom in the academic year of 2021/2022. This research was a case study design under qualitative approach. The population in this research were amounted 18 students, 14 females and 4 males on second semester of the English education study program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon. Data collection was collected with questionnaires and interviews. The results showed that several factors were found that affecting the students learning interaction and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purposes. Based on the results of the analysis of the data taken, the most dominant factors affecting in online learning on speaking for general purpose was the interaction between lecturers and students and behavioral engagement.

**Keywords:** Online learning; Students interaction; Students Engagement

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has given an impact on diverse aspects of lifestyles, without exception the education aspect. The learning system in the global of education is changing, that's usually used offline or face-to-face system however now using online system. Online learning is the interaction and engagement of students in online classroom learning which will affect the acquisition of material knowledge and student activity in online classes. In online learning, an educator needs a technology medium for interaction with students. Some applications can be used in online learning such as Google Meet and Zoom for virtual meetings, e-learning, and WhatsApp could be used in discussing [1]. The use of this application is to find out students' interest in learning during pandemic lessons and to investigate students interactions and engagement in online learning.

Students' Learning interaction and engagement in the learning process will increase student understanding and provide opportunities for students to be more active in learning. Student interaction is an online learning activity that assumes that students interact such as asking questions or having an interest in learning. Interaction in EFL classrooms has become a prominent aspect since the emergence of foreign language teaching which requires teachers to create interactive interactions [2]. The learning interactions occur between students and teachers, between students and students, and the learning material itself. In the

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EFL classroom, one of the most important parts of the teaching and learning process is the interaction that occurs between teachers and learners [3]. In EFL students, their learning will be successful if they often build interaction and engagement in learning. Creating a relationship of interaction with lecturers or with fellow students, will make students practice all the theory or knowledge that has been obtained.

According Fredricks et al (2016) stated student engagement is an attachment in the learning process, both in academic activities and non-academic activities which can be seen through the behavior, emotions, and cognitive shown by students in school or class. Behavioral engagement consists of doing paintings and following the rules, Emotional engagement refers to hobbies, values, and feelings. Students' emotional reactions in class include interest, boredom, happiness, tension, and anxiety, even as cognitive engagement consists of motivation, effort, and strategies in learning.

Online learning is used for lectures during the pandemic, which makes speaking courses to be online learning. Speaking class is a subject that is studied in EFL class. Online learning makes lecturers and students adapt to the use of the internet and technology, so they can carry out learning without face to face. Since speaking is a second language learning method people do as a kind of linguistic acquisition after having learned from listening [5]. In speaking courses in the teaching and learning process there is interaction and student engagement in learning. Seeing the current state of online learning makes student learning interaction and engagement less. Online lectures provide an overview of the lack of optimal understanding of the material and the number of tasks given to students, resulting in a less effective lecture process [6].

Based on preliminary classroom observation, the researchers found that teaching and learning activities at EFL classroom that now use an online system, become one of the challenges for students and lecturers. Especially in speaking subject, because speaking skills are very important in communication. In speaking subject, the teaching and learning process must occur directly with students' interaction and engagement in order to improve students' speaking skills. However, online learning currently makes student learning interaction and engagement less. The atmosphere of learning to speaking becomes enjoyable since there are several topics that students can talk with lecturers, but because the manner of learning has shifted to online learning, which poses issues in most educational divisions. Because the changes that arise make students afraid to interact and be engage in learning. Students were more passive and wait for the lecturer to ask questions and appoint students, and it is not uncommon for students to respond slowly in class. Only a few students seemed quite active in lectures. Many obstacles encountered such as internet connection, there is not much time for speaking practice, less effective learning and much more.

Shows that it is necessary to see factors that affect students learning interaction and engagement in online learning for speaking subject, whether they participate actively in class or passively in class. Student interaction and engagement occurs when students are motivated and attract so that they learn actively in class. Therefore, the researchers wants to find out factors that affect students' learning interactions and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL Classroom in the academic year of 2021/2022.

Considering the cause of the problem, In English Education Department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon, there are four speaking subject, namely: In second semester is Speaking for General Purpose, in third semester is Speaking for Instructional Purpose, in fourth semester is Speaking for Standardized Test, and in seventh semester is Public Speaking. This research focused on Speaking for General Purpose at second semester in the academic year of 2021/2022. In this course, students are guided to produce English utterances mostly related to their personal lives and surroundings and to practice several speech functions they may encounter in daily activities. Learning activities are the combination of drills, listening to the cassette, and students practicing their own utterances either in monologues and dialogues. Students perform monologues when the topics are mostly about themselves, describing things, and explaining how something is done or made. Dialogues are performed when the utterances are transactional, involving at least two people and covering several speech functions.

## METHOD

This research was a case study design under qualitative approach. This research used a case study to find out factors that affect students' learning interactions and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL Classroom in the academic year of 2021/2022. The researchers used purposive sampling (judgment sampling) as a sampling technique. The idea behind purposive sampling is to concentrate on people with certain criteria who will be better able to help the research run well. This research conducted at English Education Department in second semester at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon in academic year of 2021/2022. Who taking speaking for general purpose subject. In second semester students involved 18 students consist of 14 females and 4 males. Data were collected using questionnaire and interviews. Then the questionnaire data was made into percentages following the number of respondents who choose the options from the questionnaire. The results of the interviews were used to connect the questionnaire data to the participant's responses.

**Table 1. Participant**

No	Gender	Age	Total
1.	Male	18 – 21	4
2.	Female	18 – 20	14

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the results of questionnaires conducted at English Education Department in second semester at Universitas Muhammadiyah Cirebon in the academic year of 2021/2022. The results of this study were described in the following table below:

Table 1. describes the categories of students interaction, themes and examples on each theme according to Bolliger and Martin [7], while Table 2 describes the categories students engagement, themes and examples on each theme according to Fredricks et al. [4]

**Table 2. Categories, themes and indicators for each theme according to Bolliger and Martin**

Category	Themes	Indicators
	Discussion	Discuss an idea with another learner, argue regarding another learner's claim,
Learner-learner interaction	Sharing of experience and ideas	Give another learner an example from previous experience, expresses an idea to another students
	Collaboration with peers	Collaborate with another learner in solving a problem, collaborate with another learner in presenting an idea
	Instructors can support and encourage student participation	Instructor goes to the group to encourage them to continue solving the problem despite its difficulty, instructor approaches a student to advance her problem solving;
Instructor-learner interaction	Instructors provide timely feedback	Instructor goes to the group to encourage them to continue solving the problem despite its difficulty, instructor approaches a student to advance her problem solving;
	Instructors set expectations for the course	Instructor describes what is expected from the group's discussions, instructor describes what is expected from a project.
Learner-content interaction	Engages with instructional materials	Reads a paper from the course's materials, solves a problem;
	Spends time on content	Spends time on reading a paper, spends time on solving a problem.

Based on table 1, there were three categories of students' interaction such as learner-learning interaction, instructor-learning interaction, and learner-content interaction. According to Bolliger and Martin [7] Stated that these categories can be factors that affect students' learning interaction in online learning at EFL classroom. In online learning, the factors that affect students' interaction make their presence more visible to enhance the atmosphere of interaction with other students and their instructors. That can be seen and assessed by distributing questionnaires and convinced by interviews.

Focusing on the role interaction plays in engaging students in distance education Bernard et al., [8] have proposed 3 types of interaction: student-student interaction, student-content interaction, and student-teacher interaction. Student-student interaction includes student interaction with individual students or in small groups, in a synchronous and asynchronous manner. This type of interaction motivates students and evokes social presence; it also aims to create a sense of community for the learners [7]. The learning media used such as discussion boards, chat rooms, blogs, and group projects are effective in encouraging students' learning interaction in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL Classroom in the academic year of 2021/2022.

**Table 3. Categories, themes and indicators for each theme according to Fredricks et al.**

Category	Themes	Indicators
Behavioral Engagement	Adhering to classroom norms	Behave according to the norms set by the teacher,
	Involvement in learning and academic tasks	Effort, contributing to class discussion
Emotional Engagement	Positive emotions	Interest, happiness,
	Negative emotions	Boredom, sadness
Cognitive Engagement	Problem solving	Solving a problem, expresses preference for a solution of a problem;
	Understanding and mastering the knowledge	Understand the learning material, discusses the learning material,
	Acquiring skills	Develop a cognitive skill, develop a met-acognitive skill

Based on table 2, there were categories of students' engagement such as behavioral engagement, emotional engagement and cognitive engagement. According to Fredricks et al [4] stated that these categories can be factors that affect students' engagement in online learning at EFL classroom. Behavioral engagement is seen in terms of the time and effort that students spend in learning and carrying out activities in an effort to learn, taking advantage of attention, participation, and effort. This type of engagement is considered a strong indicator of student educational outcomes [9]. Emotional engagement, on the other hand, includes students' emotions towards the learning process, context, peers and teachers, whether negative or positive, and their sense of belonging. Finally, cognitive engagement reflects a student's level of involvement in an activity, or task, in terms of thinking how to approach it.

Then based on table 1 and table 2 regarding students' interaction and engagement, which were used as questionnaires and interview guidelines. There were 15 statements to answer the research question. Questionnaires were given to respondent with using Indonesian so that more comfortable and free to answer them. The statement of questionnaire and the result in the table below:

**Table 4. Questionnaire response**

No	Statement	Yes	No
1	Online learning is a learning system that can provide a different learning experience for students	100%	0 %
2	I discuss and communicate with my friends in online class about speaking for general purpose courses	72%	28%
3	Lecturers provide direction and provide feedback to students in discussing solving a problem	100%	0 %

4	I exchange opinions and share ideas with friends in speaking for general purpose courses	61%	39%
5	In the online speaking learning process, I focus on the content of the material	83%	17%
6	Lecturers help students who have difficulty understanding the material	100%	0 %
7	The lecturer explains the learning material by giving examples	100%	0 %
8	I can understand the instructions in the given material	94%	6%
9	I always do the assignments given in the speaking for general purpose course	100%	0 %
10	I am very enthusiastic and very interested in online learning for general purpose speaking courses	61%	39%
11	I always give my full attention when learning speaking for general purpose subject	83%	17%
12	Learning speaking in online learning is boring due to lack of practice in speaking skills	61%	39%
13	I can understand and master online learning about speaking for general purpose courses	39%	61%
14	I give my best effort during online learning because it is the student's obligation.	100%	0 %
15	Speaking courses can grow students' skills in speaking skills	100%	0 %

Table 4 shows the result of questionnaire data that had been percentages according to the participant's responses. Looking at responses to items 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 14, and 15 of the questionnaire on table 4, it is apparent that the majority of participants choose yes answer (100%).

Table 4 shows that the type of interaction occurring in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject in item 3, 6, 7 was lecturer-students interaction with percentage 100 %. This finding is in line with the result of interview:

**Student 1:** *“In online learning, lecturers can provide an approach that makes students comfortable while studying. When giving detailed instructions to students and lecturers provide timely feedback.”*

**Student 2:** *“In my opinion, the most dominant interaction is between lecturers and students. Because during online learning, students are much more passive. However, the teacher can invite students to interact during learning.”*

**Student 3:** *“In my opinion, the factors that most affect students' learning interaction and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject were lecturers and students. Because students would see how the learning atmosphere was given by the lecturer, then the students themselves choose whether to be passive or active in interacting.”*

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The answers from students 1, 2, and 3 indicated that their opinion about students' interaction that appears is the interaction between lecturers and students. Therefore, factors that can affect the interaction itself were the lecturer and the students. The environment and interaction are more enjoyable and lively the more they participate in online learning.

Table 4 shows that in item 2 with 72% choosing yes and 36% choosing no, then in item 4 with 61% choosing yes and 39% choosing no. The results of the data mean that student-student interaction and student-material interaction play a role in online learning on speaking for general purpose at EFL classroom in academic year of 2021/2022. Although not the majority of participants voted yes. These findings can be proven by answers from interview participants:

**Student 4 :** *"I'm one of those who don't actively interact when online learning because I can't understand the material, but the instructions given by the lecturer can be understood."*

**Student 5 :** *"I can be said to be active or not because it depends on the learning atmosphere. The material can be understood because the instructions given are very clear."*

**Student 6 :** *"In my opinion, the dominant interaction is lecturer-student interaction and student interaction with the material. Examples of lecturer-student interactions are lecturers who ask questions, and student interactions with the material because many students ask questions about the material."*

The answers from students 4, 5, and 6 indicated that in their opinion, interactions in online learning on speaking for general purpose between students and students-material still occur. This finding means that Instruction on the material provided and the focus on learning material are factors that need to be considered.

Table 4 shows type of engagement occurring in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject in item 9, 11 were behavioral engagement. In item 9 with 100% choosing yes and 0% choosing no, then in item 11 with 83% choosing yes and 17% choosing no. based on items 9, and 11 show that the most affecting factor for student' engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL classroom in academic year of 2021/2022 was behavioral.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to determine factors that affect students' learning interactions and engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose subject at EFL Classroom in the academic year of 2021/2022. Based on the results of research, it shows that the most dominant factors that affect in online learning on speaking for general purpose was the interaction between lecturers- students and behavioral engagement. It can be concluded from the findings that the researchers found that the factors affecting students' learning interaction in online learning on speaking for general purpose were lecturer and students with 100% choosing yes. While the factors affecting students' engagement in online learning on speaking for general purpose was behavioral with 100% and 94% choosing yes.

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