

EFL STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHY EXPERIENCE DURING LEARNING READING IN ONLINE CLASSROOM: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT 10TH GRADE OF MA MATHLAUL ANWAR PAMEUNTASAN SOREANG

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Abstract

This research, titled EFL Students' Emotional Geography Experience During Learning Reading in Online Classroom: A Qualitative Study at 10th Grade of MA Mathlaul Anwar Pameuntasan Soreang, aims to (1) investigate students' emotions while learning reading in an online class during the pandemic, focusing on physical, moral, and professional geography, and (2) identify the factors influencing students' emotional geography experiences during online reading lessons in the pandemic. This qualitative study was conducted at MA Mathlaul Anwar, involving 10th-grade EFL students. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews, and analysed in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Findings were categorized into physical, moral, and professional geography. The study found that (1) students face challenges in online learning, including difficulties in understanding the material, limited interaction, and accessibility issues, but they adapt by developing strategies and utilizing resources such as internet data provided by the school, in terms of physical, moral, and professional geography; (2) based on interviews with 6 students, factors influencing emotional geography in online learning were identified, such as difficulties in understanding the material, long sessions causing boredom, poor communication, and internet connectivity issues, while some students appreciated the flexibility of learning at home.

Keywords: emotional geography, online learning, reading

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in early 2020, significantly disrupted societal norms, including education. Face-to-face classes were quickly replaced by online learning, impacting both teachers and students worldwide (Corbera et al., 2020). Indonesian students learning English also faced challenges in adapting to this shift. Online learning introduced complex emotional geographies, with UNICEF Indonesia reporting that over half of students felt pressured to remain productive during the pandemic, and many experienced stress, frustration, and a lack of focus.

Emotional geography, as defined by Hargreaves (2005), explores emotional understanding and misunderstanding in human interactions, shaped by spatial experiences of proximity and distance. This framework includes physical, moral, professional, social, and political geographies (Hargreaves, 2001). Emotional geographies can help teachers better understand and address students' emotional states, which are critical for engagement and learning. Misreading students' emotions, such as mistaking boredom for disinterest or aggression for frustration, can hinder effective teaching and learning.

Research highlights the significant role of emotional geography in online education. Milla (2020) emphasized the environment and family support as key factors influencing students' emotional geography in online classrooms, while distance from school had minimal impact. Fatimah (2020) identified four of Hargreaves' five emotional geographies—physical, social, political, and professional—as prevalent among EFL teachers and students. Rejeki, et al (2018)

further explored the emotional geographies of male EFL teachers in rural areas, focusing on their strategies for managing these challenges.

For Indonesian students, emotional geographies during online learning reveal critical aspects of physical, moral, and professional dimensions. These three areas are central to understanding students' emotions, while social and political geographies, which focus on ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and political differences, are not relevant to this context. Teachers must address these emotional geographies to foster better connections and improve student engagement in online classrooms.

This study aims to investigate the physical, moral, and professional geographies of Indonesian Senior High School students during online learning in the pandemic era. By narrowing the focus to these three dimensions, the research seeks to offer a clearer understanding of the emotional challenges faced by students and provide insights for educators to enhance emotional and educational outcomes.

METHOD

This qualitative study was designed to explore the emotional geography experiences of EFL students during reading lessons in online classrooms. The study was conducted at MA Mathlaul Anwar, with the 10th-grade EFL students as the focus group. This type of research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena through active participation and observation in natural contexts (Creswell, 2014), particularly by considering students' emotional responses to online learning environments during the pandemic.

Data collection was carried out through two main methods: distributing open-ended questionnaires via Google Forms and conducting in-depth interviews with selected students. These data collection techniques provided insight into the students' emotional experiences while learning to read in an online classroom setting. The data sources were 40 students from the 10th Social A class at MA Mathlaul Anwar, selected using convenience sampling due to the school's strategic location and the unique challenges students faced during the pandemic's online learning.

The data analysis followed a structured process involving three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and generating conclusions. The researcher transcribed, summarized, and reduced the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. This data was then coded and classified based on the three categories of emotional geography: physical, moral, and professional geography. Finally, the researcher analyzed the data to identify patterns and draw conclusions regarding the emotional geography experiences of the students during online learning.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The Emotions Students Experienced while Learning Reading in an Online Class during the Pandemic Situation

The research findings are categorized into three areas: physical geography, moral geography, and professional geography, as outlined below:

In physical geography, the study reveals that many students found online learning challenging. While most studied descriptive (85%) and narrative texts (32%),

Jenis teks bacaan apa yang telah Anda pelajari selama pembelajaran online dalam pelajaran bahasa Inggris?
40 jawaban

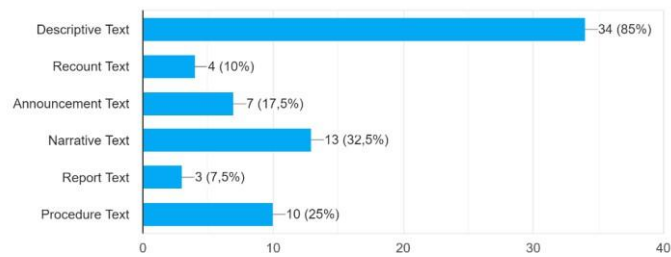


Figure 1. The First Statements of Physical Geography Percentage

In addition, 42% of students felt bored, and 52.5% struggled to understand the material.

Apa yang Anda rasakan selama belajar teks tersebut selama pembelajaran online dalam pelajaran bahasa Inggris?
40 jawaban

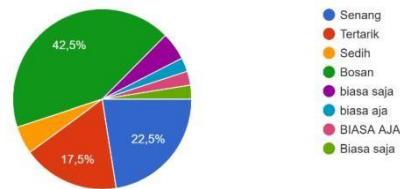


Figure 2. The second statement of the physical geography percentage

Apakah Anda memahami materi tersebut selama pembelajaran online?
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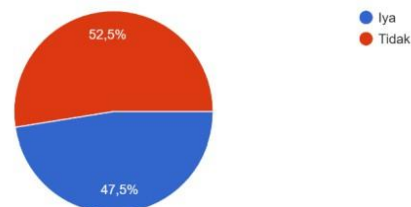


Figure 3. The third statement of physical geography percentage

Students also reported several barriers, including issues with internet data (45%) and network connectivity (32%).

Apa kendala Anda selama belajar teks bacaan bahasa Inggris di kelas online?
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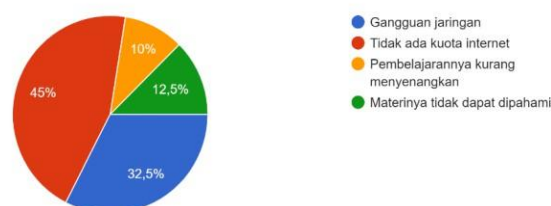


Figure 4. The fourth statement of physical geography percentage

WhatsApp emerged as the most commonly used platform (92.5%), but only half of the students found the application effective, with most spending less than 5 hours per day on learning.

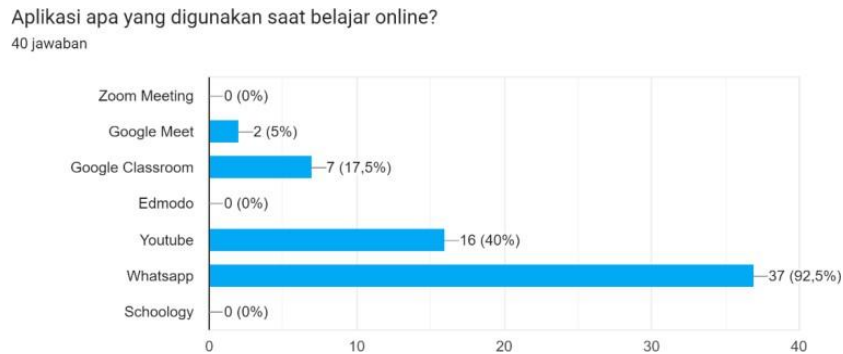


Figure 5. The fifth statement of physical geography percentage



Figure 6. The sixth statement of physical geography percentage



Figure 7. The seventh statement of physical geography percentage

In moral geography, the study highlights the differences in teacher-student and peer interactions. Half of the students reported good interactions with teachers, but 95% noted a significant gap between online and in-person learning.



Figure 8. The first statement of the moral geography percentage

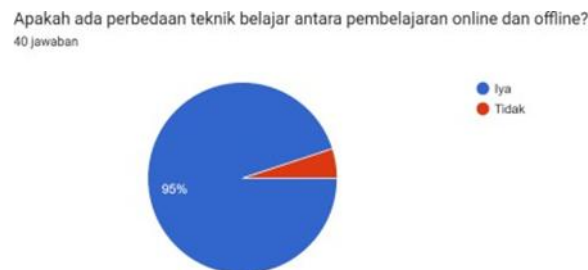


Figure 9. The second statement of the moral geography percentage

Most students (55%) had normal relationships with their peers and were able to collaborate effectively (52.5%), although some encountered challenges during online learning.



Figure 10. The third statement of the moral geography percentage



Figure 11. The third statement of moral geography percentage

In professional geography, 55% of students developed their own strategies to address issues, and 67.5% received internet data from the school to support their learning.

In conclusion, the study shows that online learning presents challenges in understanding material, quality of interaction, and accessibility. However, students are adapting by using various strategies and relying on resources such as internet data provided by the school.

The Factors that Expose Students to Different Emotional Geography while Learning Reading in Online Classes during the Pandemic

The data for the research question was collected through interviews with 6 students. After conducting the research using Google Forms, the study identified several emotional geography factors, including difficulties in understanding the material during online learning, an unenjoyable learning process, overly complex applications, long learning sessions that caused boredom, and poor communication between students and teachers. Below are the students' responses regarding the challenges they faced during online learning:

The study collected data through interviews with 6 students and identified several challenges in online learning, including difficulties in understanding material, long sessions causing boredom, and poor communication between students and teachers.

Three students reported feeling bored and sad due to unclear explanations and a lack of social interaction. However, some students, like Salwa, appreciated the flexibility and quieter environment at home. Longer class durations were a common concern, with students suggesting that shorter, more interactive sessions would improve engagement.

Regarding interactions, most students had positive communication with teachers via WhatsApp, but some, like Juliansyah and Salwa, felt responses were too slow. The lack of peer interaction, particularly during group assignments, led to feelings of isolation and disengagement.

The study also explored challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, particularly issues with internet connectivity and access to resources. Some students struggled with limited access to Wi-Fi, but once resolved, they benefited from online resources that helped improve their language skills.

Overall, online learning has both positive and negative impacts. While some students enjoy the flexibility and focus it offers, others feel disconnected due to unclear explanations, limited social interaction, and long class durations. The quality of communication varies, and EFL students face additional challenges with connectivity. Despite these issues, online learning provides valuable opportunities for skill development, highlighting the need for better communication and access to resources.

Discussion

The Emotions Students Experienced while Learning Reading in an Online Class during the Pandemic

This study identifies three aspects of emotional geography experienced by MA Mathlaul Anwar students during online learning: physical, moral, and professional geography. Physical geography involves students' mixed emotions, such as boredom and sadness, due to technical issues like connectivity problems, limited data quotas, and ineffective learning applications. Clear communication between teachers and students is crucial for understanding the material (Suryani et al., 2021).

Moral geography focuses on interactions between teachers and students, as well as among peers. Some students reported positive experiences, but many struggled with ineffective communication and poor collaboration in group assignments. Moral barriers between teachers and students often lead to negative emotions (Hargreaves, 2001).

In terms of professional geography, most students were satisfied with the school's support, such as online books and government-provided data quotas. However, some students were dissatisfied with the absence of Zoom as a learning platform, which affected their learning experience.

Overall, students' emotional experiences were influenced by technology use, teaching methods, and communication during online learning. Technology access issues and ineffective

teaching strategies led to frustration, while good communication increased student engagement.

The study concludes that to improve the online learning experience, there needs to be better communication between teachers and students, more effective application use, and enhanced technical support.

The Factors that Expose Students to Different Emotional Geography while Learning Reading in Online Classes during the Pandemic

The findings revealed that students faced various emotional geography challenges, including issues with physical geography, moral geography, and professional geography. Concerns included internet connectivity, quota limits, and a lack of interaction. Students often sought locations with better signals if their local internet was insufficient for distance learning. This aligns with Wenham et al.'s (2020) study, which highlighted similar issues in distance learning, such as teachers' lack of experience and limited access to home internet. These factors reduced the effectiveness of online education.

The need for an internet quota, which can be costly, was another barrier. To address this, both schools and the government provided quotas for students and teachers, as the COVID-19 pandemic made it especially challenging for many to afford sufficient data for distance learning.

Despite these challenges, while most students reported occasional good communication with teachers, some still felt a lack of interaction. This finding mirrors the research by Rahayu et al (2020), which found that positive interactions between students and teachers during online learning contributed to a sense of well-being and comfort.

CONCLUSION

This study categorizes students' emotions during online learning into physical, moral, and professional geography. Many students found online learning challenging, experiencing boredom and struggling with the material due to issues like internet data and network problems. Teacher-student and peer interactions were affected, with students noticing a significant gap between online and in-person learning. Despite these challenges, most students developed strategies to cope, and many received internet data from the school.

Based on interviews with six students, the study also identifies other challenges such as difficulty understanding material, long sessions, complex applications, and poor communication with teachers. While some students valued the flexibility of learning at home, others felt bored and isolated due to limited peer interaction and unclear explanations. Connectivity issues further impacted EFL students. Nonetheless, online learning provided opportunities for skill development, highlighting the importance of improving communication and access to resources.

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