

Asynchronous Learning in Online English Class: Indonesian College Students' Problems and Coping Strategies

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Abstract

Despite its prominence, research on asynchronous learning addressing students' issues and coping strategies, particularly in Indonesian EFL context remains sparse. This study aimed to address the research gap and uncover the students' issues in an asynchronous English class and how they cope with these challenges. The data were collected through questionnaire distributed to 67 students at an Indonesian university. The findings indicated certain issues that arise during asynchronous English lesson. The students found that a poor internet connection, social media distraction, a lack of interaction between students and the teacher as well as among students, and a lack of opportunities to practice English as their primary learning barriers. The findings also revealed that the activities that students took to deal with these problems, making a smart move in asynchronous English class, was effective. Despite the numerous distractions, the students strove to maintain their focus on the materials. However, as their strategies in asynchronous English class, students did not attempt to contact their teacher to inquire about the materials, and they did not establish a timeframe and learning objective. Limitations and recommendation for future research are discussed.

Keywords: *Asynchronous learning, online class, students' problems, students' strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

After the Covid-19 has spread rapidly in the world, Indonesian government took a big move to have the school and university closed. The learning process is done at home through an online learning because the direct interaction in the class among students and teachers as a crowd can be one of the most significant factors in spreading out the disease (Ariyanti, 2020). It was stated in Circular Letter (SE) No. 4, 2020, signed on March 24, 2020 about The Implementation of Education Policies in an Emergency Period of Corona Virus Spread. This situation forced the Indonesian government to change the conventional teaching and learning to online classroom (Agung et al., 2020). The school was closed and the students should learn from home. In this kind of situation, the learning process should be done in some ways to provide the students with the materials and tasks like they used to have in traditional classroom such as learning by using Edmodo, Google Classroom, etc. This learning process should also be supported by an appropriate method. One of the methods is asynchronous learning method.

The term asynchronous learning become popular lately among educators and learners. Asynchronous learning is a learning method that let the student study on their own schedules which is totally different to the regular classroom (Fajar & Larasati, 2022). Teaching and learning process in asynchronous class is flexible in time. Both students and also the teacher/instructor are free to participate in class and to access the materials whenever they want (Syafrizal et al., 2021). The teachers or the instructors usually shares the course materials such as texts, videos, recordings, assignments, etc.) in their learning management system (Rigo & Makus, 2021; Öztürk, 2021). Asynchronous learning differs from typical classroom instruction in that it provides flexibility for both professors and students. As a result, several studies on this learning approach have been conducted. Positive perception was showed by the students towards the asynchronous classroom (Farrah & Hatem Al-Bakry, 2020). Based on the study conducted by Dewi et al. (2019), students' positive perceptions are including positive perception on flexibility of time, flexibility of place, the instruction or guidance and also the topic in the design of asynchronous online class. Also, a similar study was also conducted in speaking class by Nurwahyuni (2020), which found that the students have positive perception on asynchronous class since it can help them to be less anxious. Besides those studies, Malik et al. (2017) found that female students have positive attitudes on asynchronous learning than male students.

Some studies also focus on the students' satisfaction of asynchronous learning. A recent research in Oman found that pupils are quite satisfied with asynchronous learning (Al-omairi & Hew, 2022). They feel they had a positive learning experience and are inclined to advocate and recommend this learning approach. It is in line with the result of the study from Dziuban et al. (2007) which most of the students are genuinely satisfied with their learning experience. However, Hisham et al. (2004) in their study found that the students' satisfaction in asynchronous learning is great as well as in synchronous learning in term of the content, personalized feedback, interface and learning community.

Based on the preceding asynchronous learning study, little is known about students' challenges and coping methods in an asynchronous learning environment, particularly in Indonesia. As a result, the purpose of this study was to bridge the gap and add to the body of knowledge on asynchronous learning challenges. The following research questions guided the whole part of this study:

1. What are the students' problems during the asynchronous learning in English class?
2. How do the students solve their problems related to asynchronous learning in English class?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Asynchronous learning can be said as a kind of independent learning since the students have to manage their learning process and time by themselves using online learning media and platforms. The interaction in asynchronous learning does not happen simultaneously and it focus on the students' work and assignment (Serdyukof, 2019). Asynchronous learning lets each student control over when, where, and how they like the learning process happens (Nurwahyuni, 2020). The same explanation also offers by Fadhillah et al. (2021) that in asynchronous learning can finish their learning process on their own pace by using online learning platforms or Learning Management Systems (LMS). According to Fajar & Larasati (2022), there are various online learning platforms can be used by teachers and students in learning, such as Quipper, Zoom, Google Classroom, Edmodo, etc. These learning platforms is expected to provide all the students' need in learning, especially feedback. In addition, Syafrizal et al. (2021) finds that the

use of Trello application can help the students in asynchronous speaking and writing class effectively. Trello is an online application which provides a kind of online board to help students in organizing tasks, notes, projects, files, etc. Besides the platforms, the media and content provided in the platforms is also important. A study conducted by Rahman et al. (2022) finds that using learning video in asynchronous English class is fun, effective, efficient, enjoyable, and easy to use. This video, which is provided by the teacher, can increase students' comprehension and motivation on the material, and also can help the students in enhancing their vocabulary.

The implementation of asynchronous learning is studied by Purnamasari (2021). This study finds that there are three important things that should be taken into account by the teachers in implementing asynchronous learning. First is preparation, including prepare the lesson plans, syllabus, materials, and also their gadgets. The second one is delivering process where the teachers deliver the materials and assignments in the learning platform. The last is assignment and discussion that can be responded by the students at any time. This implementation of asynchronous learning in English classroom is more effective rather than the synchronous learning in Indonesia since it provides an independent curriculum, streaming video, virtual libraries, and college posts that be accessed anytime and anywhere (Fadhilah et al., 2021).

Furthermore, some studies tend to discuss about the advantages of asynchronous learning. Those advantages based on Sulha et al. (2021) are related to the learning flexibility, students' learning pace, and learning choice. Learning flexibility according to Rigo & Makus (2021) is about learners' independency to manage their learning time since asynchronous learning enables learners to be independent and manage their learning time. Next advantage is related to students' learning pace. Not all learners can understand the material in the same way and the same time. So based on Nurwahyuni (2020) the students who have already understood the topic can move to the next topic, and for those who have not understood can relearn the materials. The last one is learning choice that the students are free to discover and learn more about the topic (Öztürk, 2021; Sulha et al., 2021). They can browse the topic from different sources on the internet.

There are many researches that study about asynchronous learning. The findings of those research still become an important issue to discuss since many English classes implement this

learning method for its simplicity and advantages. However, the teachers should also understand asynchronous learning from students' point of view, including their problems, and how they cope those problems in asynchronous English class. These two topics would be discussed in this study.

METHOD

In order to identify the college student problems and coping strategies in asynchronous learning, this research employed a descriptive quantitative research. This descriptive quantitative research use number to measure reality objectively and then describe them (Williams, 2007). The participants of the research are 67 university students in Indonesia that were chosen by using purposive sampling technique. These students were chosen since they have attended asynchronous learning in university for at least one semester. So, the data would be based on their experience.

The data were collected by using questionnaires. The first questionnaire is about the students' problems in asynchronous learning. It consists of 25 statement related to the students' problems. The second questionnaire is about the students' coping strategies which consists of 12 statements. The questionnaires were adapted from Barrot, Llenares, & del Rosario (2021). In order to simplify the data collection procedure, the questionnaires were given in Google Form. So, the students could access it from anywhere. The questionnaire is using Likert scale with four scales, namely strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. After that the data were analyzed and presented by using percentage. Finally, the data would answer the research questions from this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses and presents the result of this study. There are two points of discussion, they are (1) students' problems during the asynchronous learning in English class (2) Students' strategies to solve their problems related to asynchronous learning in English class.

Students' Problems during the Asynchronous Learning in English Class

Students' problems from the result of the questionnaire can be divided into four categories. The first problem is related to the students' self-regulation or how they manage their learning process. The second problem is related to the technology used and their skills in operating the technology. Next is related to the learning environment while having an asynchronous learning. The last one is about learning problems itself or related to the materials, process, and assessment. The percentage of the students' answer for each category can be seen in table 1, table 2, table 3, and table 4 as the following.

Table 1

Students' Self-Regulation Problems

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Delay study time so the task not fully completed by their deadline.	3%	4%	65.2%	25.8%
2.	Delay study time so it should be rushed to be completed.	4.5%	19.4%	61.2%	14.9%
3.	Fail to get appropriate help.	3%	4.5%	71.2%	21.2%
4.	Difficulty in focusing on the materials.	1.5%	25.4%	64.2%	9%
5.	Limited preparation for the class.	3%	26.9%	61.2%	9%
6.	Poor time management skills	1.5%	19.4%	65.7%	13.4%
7.	Fail to properly use peer learning strategies.	6%	46.3%	43.3%	4.5%

The issue of peer learning strategy among the students appears as the main problem related to students' self-regulation. There are 46.3% of the students agree and 6% of them strongly agree with the statement that they fail to learn in peer group in asynchronous class. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Fabriz et al investigation's in Germany (2021). It was discovered in that study that students in the asynchronous English learning group have less social connection since the asynchronous class solely delivers assessments and recorded

lectures. Also, the interview results in the study conducted by Moallem (2015) convince that the students is stress when they should wait for their friends to respond them in asynchronous class. They also said that the class is not dynamic in term of communication. So, asynchronous learning provides lack of personal interaction between learners and it seems hard to impossible to happen (Rigo & Makus, 2021; Sulha et al., 2021).

However, more than a half of the students choose disagree and strongly disagree with the statements given in the questionnaire related to students' self-regulation. By this result, it can be said that (1) the students could handle their study time and tasks in asynchronous English class; (2) the students also do not delay their study time so they could hand it on time; (3) the students could get appropriate help during asynchronous English class; (4) the students could focus on the materials given; (5) the students prepare well for study in asynchronous English class; and (6) During asynchronous English lesson, the students have excellent time management abilities.

The next issue in asynchronous English class is related to the technology used by the students and their skills in operating the technology to support asynchronous learning. The result of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Students' Problems on Technology Used

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Resist learning technology.	3%	0%	52.2%	44.8%
2.	Difficulties in learning a new technology.	3%	11.9%	64.2%	20.9%
3.	Lack ability to effectively use technology to facilitate learning.	3%	17.9%	62.7%	16.4%
4.	Poor understanding of directions and instructions.	1.5%	16.4%	61.2%	20.9%
5.	Using an outdated technology.	7.5%	20.9%	59.7%	11.9%
6.	Low bandwidth and slow processing speeds to access the materials.	10.4%	44.8%	40.3%	4.5%

7.	Technical difficulties in accessing and completing learning materials and task.	1.5%	25.4%	64.2%	9%
8.	Financial problems .	6%	25.4%	61.2%	7.5%

From the students' answers on the questionnaire, the only problems that most of the students' faced related to technology used is the low bandwidth and slow processing speeds to access the materials in learning management systems. More than a half of the students agree that they have a problem in accessing the materials given due to the bad internet connections in their area. It causes the students cannot access their learning management system (Napitupulu, 2022). This issue also become one of the findings in the researches about asynchronous learning that were conducted in Philippines (Barrot et al., 2021; Abadilla et al., 2021) and Kurdistan (Ismael, 2021). In addition, bad internet connection also makes the students struggle to access and reply the feedback from peers or the teachers (Knowles, 2022).

In the other hand, the students do not have any issues with the other statements: (1) The students want to learn technology; (2) The students do not have any difficulties in learning a new technology; (3) The students are able to use technology effectively to facilitate learning; (4) The students can understand the directions and instructions during asynchronous English class; (5) The students have a new gadget/technology; (6) The students do not have any technical difficulties in asynchronous class; and (7) The students do not have financial problems in providing the technology needs.

Learning environment in English asynchronous learning can be one of the student's problems. The following table shows the students answer related to their learning environment.

Table 3
Students' Learning Environment Problems

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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1.	Online distractions such as using social media during learning.	1.5%	52.2%	38.8%	7.5%
2.	Distractions at home as a learning environment.	1.5%	28.4%	59.7%	10.4%
3.	Difficulties in selecting the best time and place for learning.	1.5%	28.4%	59.7%	10.4%

During asynchronous English class, more than a half of the students experience some distractions such as checking the social media. Only 38.8% of the students disagree and 7.5% said strongly disagree that social media can bother their focus in learning English. The study related to social media as a distraction among the students was conducted by Agarwal et al. (2021). It is confirmed that the social media is frequently used by the students and it becomes a common source of distraction. The students think that they need to check their social media every time they could to stay connected to their online friends and to avoid the feeling of fear of missing out or known as FoMO (Koessmeier & Büttner, 2021). Besides, the students do not have other problems related to asynchronous learning environment such as distractions when learning English at home and difficulties in selecting the best time and place to learn during asynchronous English class.

The last issue that should be taken into account is related to the students' learning problems itself. The students' answer can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Students' Learning Problems

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Not satisfied with an asynchronous English class.	3%	28.4%	55.2%	13.4%
2.	An asynchronous English class is less interactive.	7.5%	52.2%	32.8%	7.5%
3.	Not confident to contact my lecturer to ask about materials.	13.4%	38.8%	41.8%	6%
4.	Lack of speaking and writing practice.	4.5%	47.8%	40.3%	7.5%

5.	More assignments during asynchronous English class.	13.4%	32.8%	49.3%	4.5%
6.	No feedback from the lecturer in the tasks and assignments.	4.5%	42.4%	48.5%	4.5%
7.	Easy to copy friend's task.	3%	14.9%	55.2%	26.9%

According to the students' answer, there are three main problems related to English learning in asynchronous class. The first is the students agree that asynchronous English class is less interactive. It happens because asynchronous learning was designed by most of the teacher to be more content-oriented or one way communication (Fabriz et al., 2021). The next problem is that there are more than a half of the students finds that they are not confident enough to contact the lecturer to ask about the materials. So, if they do not understand the materials, they choose to keep silent and do not try to reach their lecturer. Meanwhile, the communication between teachers and students is the most important part in learning process. The openness of the teachers to build a good communication can build the students confident to do so (Misra & Mazelfi, 2021). The last is the students seldom practice their speaking and writing in asynchronous English class. It is believed that in asynchronous English class, the students get insufficient communication activities especially in speaking (Bich & Lian, 2022). While in the research conducted by Prasojo & Srisudarso (2021), the students believe that the experience of practicing English in classroom is really matters but they do not get it in asynchronous learning.

In contrast, the students have positive answers related to the other learning problems. Those positive answers are: (1) The students are satisfied with an asynchronous English class; (2) They do not have problems with assignments in asynchronous English class; (3) The students' get feedback from their lecturer during asynchronous English class; and (4) The students said that they still cannot copy their friend's task in asynchronous English class.

Students' Strategies to Solve Their Problems Related to Asynchronous Learning in English Class

Based on the students' problems above, some strategies are asked to the students. The questionnaire related to the students' strategy to cope with asynchronous English class was given

to the students to check whether they have done these kinds of strategy or they still try to figure it out. Table 5 below shows some strategies to face problems in asynchronous English class.

Table 5

Students' Strategy in Asynchronous Learning

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Try to get used to asynchronous learning in English class.	20.9%	73.1%	6%	0%
2.	Learn and try the technology and application used in asynchronous English class.	18.2%	80.3%	1.5%	0%
3.	Prepare everything for asynchronous class.	20.9%	73.1%	6%	0%
4.	Find a right time and a quiet place to study.	14.9%	80.6%	4.5%	0%
5.	Study the problems in asynchronous class and fix it.	22.4%	73.1%	4.5%	0%
6.	Keep focus on the materials given.	25.4%	70.1%	4.5%	0%
7.	Even though so many distractions, the student keep their focus.	16.7%	69.7%	13.6%	0%
8.	Keep focus even though the material is hard to understand.	20.9%	67.2%	11.9%	0%
9.	Stop learning if they cannot understand it.	7.5%	20.9%	59.7%	11.9%
10.	Make a timeline and set a goal in asynchronous English class.	0%	14.9%	70.1%	14.9%
11.	Ask the lecturer related to the materials given.	10.4%	26.9%	62.7%	0%
12.	Ask friends to discuss about the materials.	19%	63.5%	17.5%	0%

According to the students' answer, the students agree with some strategies that are offered in the questionnaire. This research divides the strategies into three stages, they are preparation stage, while learning stage, after learning stage. Preparation stage are very important and asynchronous English class allowed the students to do it very carefully since asynchronous

learning provides them with a flexible time (Veranika, 2017; Syafrizal et al., 2021). In order to prepare themselves before they access the materials in asynchronous English class, the students agree that they do some strategies. Those strategies are (1) The students are trying to get used to learn English in asynchronous learning; (2) The students prepare themselves and everything they need in learning English in asynchronous class; and (3) The students try to find a right time and a quiet place to study the materials given in asynchronous learning class. Besides that, in this preparation stage, it is important to take into account the technological issue since educational institutions have been forced to learn and adapt to the use of technology in the asynchronous class (Fernandez et al., 2022). Before starting the asynchronous learning, the students should prepare the equipment such as laptops, cellphones, internet connections, etc. (Ariyanti, 2020). Further, this theory is in line with the result of this study that the students learn and try the technology and application used in asynchronous English class. The students also agree that when they find problems in the technology used in asynchronous English class, they will try to study and fix it. Also, this result supports the previous questionnaire about the student's problems that the students say that they prepare themselves carefully before accessing materials in asynchronous English class.

The second stage is while learning stage that offers some strategies that can be used by the students to cope with the problem while learning the materials. Based on the students' answers in the questionnaire, almost half of the students agree that they do all of the strategies in while learning stage. They are (1) Students try to keep focus on the English materials in asynchronous English class until I understand all of them; (2) Students try to keep focus on the materials in asynchronous English class even though they get so many distractions; (3) Students try to keep focus on the materials in asynchronous English class even though it is hard for them to understand it; and (4) The students do not give up on the materials if they cannot understand it. The result of these questionnaires is in line with the students' answer in the first questionnaire. The students agree that they keep their focus on the materials in asynchronous learning even though the materials are quite difficult. From the study conducted by Moallem (2015), he divided the students into active learners (learning by trying and group working) and reflective learners (learning by thinking and individual working). The students who are reflective learners are easier to focus on the materials rather than the active learners, especially in studying a text.

The last stage is after learning stage. The students have followed one of the three strategies offered in the questionnaire, that the students ask their friends to discuss the materials in asynchronous English class if they are not satisfied or understand the materials. If the students' answer from two questionnaires in this research were compared, it can be concluded that the students try to reach their friends to talk about the materials whilst they also agree that it is hard for them to do peer and group learning during asynchronous class. The similar result is also shown in the research conducted by Öztürk (2021) that in order to understand the materials and complete their assignments, the students seldom interacted with their friends. The interactions can be divided into four categories, they are content interactions, conversation and collaboration, intrapersonal skills or reflection, and need for support (Woo & Reeves, 2008). The role of the teachers in this problem solving is to be responsible in facilitating the students' interaction and encouraging their participation in class. One of the ways to do that is by assign them for group discussion (Sulha et al., 2021).

In the other hand, the result of the questionnaire shows that the students do not set a goal and make a timeline to manage their time in asynchronous English class. Based on the study conducted by Prasojo & Srisudarso (2021), the students' goal in learning English language is also affected by their previous English language learning experience. A good English learning experience in the past will increase the students' self-confidence in completing the task and reach their goals. From the psychological point of view, there are three aspects that can also help the students in setting and reaching their goals based on (Siripol & Wilang, 2021). They are autonomy (a behavior that is controlled by the individual), competence (the need to understand the materials), and relatedness (the feeling of connected to others).

In addition, the students also feel hesitant to ask the lecturer if they do not understand the English materials given by the lecturer in their learning management systems. In this case, the study conducted by Woo & Reeves (2008) suggest the teacher to contact the students frequently and sometimes individually in asynchronous English class. Besides that, the teachers also should show up online often in order to convince the students about the teacher's presence. As a result of the active interactions, the students can learn the materials better (Xie et al., 2018). So to solve this problems, active participation from the teachers in asynchronous class should also take into account.

CONCLUSION

The problems faced by the students in asynchronous learning are: difficulties in peer learning, bad internet connections, poor control on the use of social media, less interactive learning, lack of confident to communicate with the lecturer, and less opportunity to practice. In order to cope with these problems, the strategies used by the students are: do an ideal preparation for asynchronous class, keep their focus on the materials even though they get so many distractions, and try to discuss the materials with friends. This research can bring a numerous zone for future research related to asynchronous learning. Future studies might use qualitative investigation to find more data related to this topic and study how is the role of the teachers in asynchronous English class, especially in building a good interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students.

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