

## ABSTRACT

Sulistyowardani, M. (2021). *Exercising agency to address learners' learning difficulty in EFL online classroom: The case of five Indonesian public junior high school teachers*. Yogyakarta: The Graduate Program in English Language Studies, Universitas Sanata Dharma.

Current studies in Indonesian EFL context during the implementation of online learning in the pandemic have identified that learners are facing difficulties in learning. These difficulties are influenced by the interaction between the change in their learning environment and their individual characteristics. In several cases, the use of online learning negatively affects some of learners' traits, such as motivation and affect/emotion. In other cases, some of learners' characteristics which are already possessed are found not to be compatible with the features of online learning.

Teachers' exercise of agency, particularly ones which are guided by the principles of inclusive pedagogy, holds important roles in overcoming learners' difficulties in learning. However, in Indonesia, there has been a criticism arguing that teachers' exercise of agency is aimed to ensure the fulfillment of the policies stipulated by the macro-level actors. This raises a question of whether or not EFL learners' difficulties in learning would be addressed by the teachers.

EFL online learning context possesses such a diverse individual differences, learning environment, and difficulties in learning. Therefore, this study aims to provide a thorough investigation of how EFL teachers in Indonesia respond to learners' learning difficulties in EFL online learning context seen from the lens of Inclusive Pedagogy (IP) and Language Teacher Agency (LTA). Pantić & Florian's (2015) three principles of IP would serve as the guiding value of this study. Meanwhile, Leijen et al.'s (2019) model of teacher agency would shed a light on the factors contributing to agency and how they are negotiated. The study focuses on addressing these questions: (1) the differences among EFL learners which contribute to difficulties in learning during the implementation of online learning, (2) EFL teachers' exercise their agency to respond to the difficulties, and (3) the factors contributing to their agentic responses.

Considering the exploratory nature of the data and the new setting in which this study was carried out (i.e. EFL online classroom), multiple or collective case study was chosen to investigate this particularity of the case since it was hoped that, by investigating several participants with similar cases, the result "will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (Stake, 2005, p. 444). Three-staged-interviews were performed in order to collect in-depth and richer data, while also serves as triangulation. Thematic analysis was used to answer the all of the three questions.

Addressing the first question, the finding suggests that the identified differences include diversity in terms of: motivation, autonomy (especially self-regulation), learning style, aptitude (especially working memory), affect, and personality. Highlighting the fact that IDs are context-dependent, this study also suggests the contribution of 'home' as the new cultural/structural/material dimension of classroom, which is diverse one student to another. Addressing the second research question, the finding shows that various agentic actions were taken to respond to the problems. They are grouped as: (1) home visitation, (2) individual approach to students, (3) lowering the bar, and (4) performing trial and error. Addressing the third question, the participants' exercises of agency were influenced by various factors, including pedagogical competence (e.g. personal and pedagogical beliefs); pedagogical situation, which concerns to what extent learners' home could replace the roles previously hold by school in face-to-face setting in cultural/structural/material aspect; EFL teachers' emotions; and pedagogical purposes.

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Penelitian terkini dalam konteks pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia (English as a Foreign Language, EFL) selama penerapan pembelajaran daring di masa pandemi menunjukkan bahwa peserta didik menghadapi kesulitan dalam belajar. Kesulitan-kesulitan ini dipengaruhi oleh interaksi antara perubahan lingkungan belajar dan karakteristik individu mereka. Dalam beberapa kasus, penggunaan pembelajaran daring mempengaruhi beberapa sifat peserta didik secara negatif, seperti menurunkan motivasi dan mengganggu afeksi/emosi. Dalam kasus lain, beberapa karakteristik peserta didik yang sudah dimiliki ternyata tidak sesuai dengan fitur pembelajaran daring.

Praktik agensi guru, khususnya yang berpedoman pada prinsip-prinsip pedagogi inklusif, memegang peranan penting dalam mengatasi kesulitan peserta didik dalam belajar. Namun, di Indonesia, ada kritik yang mengatakan bahwa pelaksanaan agensi guru berpusat pada pemenuhan kebijakan yang ditetapkan oleh pelaku tingkat makro. Hal ini menimbulkan pertanyaan apakah kesulitan peserta didik EFL dalam belajar akan diatasi oleh guru.

Mengetahui beragamnya perbedaan individu, lingkungan belajar, dan kesulitan belajar dalam konteks pembelajaran online EFL, penelitian ini bermaksud menginvestigasi bagaimana guru EFL di Indonesia menanggapi kesulitan belajar peserta didik dalam konteks pembelajaran EFL daring dilihat dari lensa Pedagogi Inklusi (Inclusive Pedagogy, IP) dan Agensi Guru Bahasa (Language Teacher Agency, LTA). Tiga prinsip IP dari Pantić & Florian (2015) akan menjadi panduan dari penelitian ini. Sementara itu, model agensi guru Leijen et al. (2019) akan menjelaskan faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap agensi dan bagaimana mereka dinegosiasikan. Studi dimulai dengan menyelidiki: (1) perbedaan di antara peserta didik dan kesulitan belajar, (2) latihan keagenan guru EFL untuk menanggapi masalah, dan (3) faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap tindakan pedagogis peserta.

Mempertimbangkan sifat eksplorasi data dan konteks baru di mana penelitian ini dilakukan (yaitu kelas EFL daring), studi kasus kolektif (multiple case study) dipilih untuk menyelidiki kasus ini karena diharapkan, dengan menyelidiki beberapa peserta dengan kasus serupa, hasilnya "akan mengarah pada pemahaman yang lebih baik, dan mungkin teori yang lebih baik, tentang kumpulan kasus yang lebih besar." (diterjemahkan dari Stake, 2005, hlm. 444). Wawancara tiga tahap dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data yang lebih mendalam dan lebih kaya, sekaligus berfungsi sebagai triangulasi. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengolah data yang diperoleh.

Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan mencakup keragaman dalam hal: motivasi, otonomi (terutama pengaturan diri), gaya belajar, bakat (terutama memori kerja), pengaruh, dan kepribadian. Menyoroti fakta bahwa ID bergantung pada konteks, temuan menyoroti kontribusi 'rumah' sebagai dimensi budaya/struktural/material baru di kelas, yang beragam antara satu siswa dengan siswa lainnya. Menjawab pertanyaan penelitian kedua, temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa berbagai tindakan agen telah dilakukan untuk menanggapi masalah. Mereka dikelompokkan sebagai: (1) kunjungan rumah, (2) pendekatan individu kepada siswa, (3) menurunkan standar, dan (4) melakukan *trial and error*. Tindakan tersebut dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor, termasuk kompetensi pedagogis (misalnya keyakinan pribadi dan pedagogis); situasi pedagogis, yang menyangkut sejauh mana rumah peserta didik dapat menggantikan peran yang sebelumnya dipegang oleh sekolah dalam pengaturan tatap muka dalam aspek budaya/struktural/materi; emosi guru EFL; dan tujuan pedagogi.