

## An Analysis Of 10th Grade High School Students' Learning Approaches in the Context of EFL Online Learning

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### Abstract

*The globalization and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning needs students to adopt a better approach to learning. As there are two types of approaches namely surface approach and deep approach, it is needed to investigate which are students leaning towards to, including the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence them especially in the sudden transition of online learning in pandemic situation. Using the modified R-SPQ-2F and a semi-guided interview, the study was conducted in one high school in North Bali. Using Slovin formula, there are 200 respondents who participated in the study. The modified R-SPQ-2F were analyzed using the mean score analysis and the results are students leaning towards the surface approach in the context of EFL Online learning. The interview analyzed with interactive model analysis gives comprehensive view of the supporting and inhibiting factors of the deeper approach. Turns out personal motivation, teachers' style of teaching, and environmental factors directs their approach. These findings showed that the student learning approach is one way to evaluate the learning process. Teachers, students, and government should consider this to re-adjust the current learning situation to improve the quality of education.*

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, English as Foreign Language, Students' Approach to Learning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The vast development of technology turns the world to be more globalized. This change gives more pressure in the education world to change the teacher centered learning to be more student centered (Wijaya and Salis 2022). According to Widodo and Wardani (2020), the student centered learning should be focuses on building the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which are Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, Communication, and lastly Collaboration. Thus, students are required to be more active in the learning process while adapting to the necessary skills whereas teacher supports them as a facilitator.

One of the factors that affect the dynamic process of learning, is Students' Approach to Learning (SAL). According to Marton and Saljo (1976) who introduced the theory, claims there are two types of approaches namely deep approach and surface approach. Supported by present studies, SAL is one of the elements in the learning process that affect students' academic outcome in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Mensah, Argyriadis, and Arkoh 2019; Puteh et al. 2018;

Smarandache et al. 2020). The types of SAL are determined by many factors such as the context of learning, learning orientation, and students' characters.

Based on Marton and Saljo's (2005) idea, the surface approach refers to a strategy to learn with minimal effort, focuses on instant gratification, memorization dependent, and learning just to pass the test. Whereas students who implements the deep approach to learning tend to have critical thinking, high curiosity, and apply the knowledge to real life situation.

In the Indonesian context, students are found to achieve academic success through surface approach (Mansir and Karim 2020; Santosa 2018). The study resulted in the learning process is inclined to be teacher centered and students highly respects their teacher as a source of knowledge (Santosa 2017, 2018; Santosa, Ratminingsih, and Adnyani 2021). Budiarta and Santosa (2020) stated that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is important to incorporates technology, innovative way of teaching, and encourage students to be active in their learning process. Since the advance of the world require students to be able to use the 4 skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century in their life.

Previous studies of SAL mostly conducted in the higher education level (Chong Teoh 2015; Mensah et al. 2019; Santosa et al. 2021; Shaik et al. 2017). There few studies that identify SAL in the high school level. As one factor that could lead to the academic outcome and meaningful learning process, SAL identification should be done especially during the shift of online learning process in the pandemic specifically in the English learning process.

Thus, the current study focuses to investigate the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students' learning approaches of learning English through online during the pandemic situation in one of the high schools in Buleleng Regency, Bali. In order to solve the problem, this research has three research questions, namely:

1. How are the Students' Approaches to Learning (SAL) in grade 10 of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja in the context of EFL online learning during a pandemic?
2. What are the supporting factors that influence students' learning approach in Grade 10 of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja in the context of EFL online learning during a pandemic?
3. What are the inhibiting factors that influence students' learning approach in Grade 10 of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja in the context of EFL online learning during a pandemic?

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used the embedded mixed-method design with quantitative as the dominant. The quantitative method is in the form of questionnaire whereas the qualitative is through semi-guided interview. The embedded mixed method is a method that consist of both quantitative and qualitative data that supports one another (Ary et al. 2010; Creswell 2009, 2012).

### Setting and Participants

The participants of the research are 200 students of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja, which is located in Buleleng Regency, as a respondent of the questionnaire. The school is chosen as they are implementing the online learning to learn English during the pandemic situation. The 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are chosen since SAL should be noticed as early as possible and later evaluate the process of learning. The study also conducts a semi-guided interview with 8 students. The interview respondents are filtered with a purposive sampling technique with three characteristics:

1. Students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja.
2. Currently studying English as a foreign language.
3. Willing to voluntarily conduct interviews.

### Data Collection Method and Analysis

The data collection method differs based on the research question. For the first question, to find SAL of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in SMA N 1 Singaraja, a modified R-SPQ-2F questionnaire will be given to students. The R-SPQ-2F was originated from Biggs, Kember, and Leung (2001). The questionnaire is modified within the intended context of the study and also translated to Indonesian with back-to-back translation. For the second and the third questions, the results of the survey will further be supported with the results of interview to comprehend supporting and inhibiting factors of SAL. The instruments have been checked the validity with two experts judges using Gregory Formula (Gregory 2000).

Table 0.1 The Result Is Shown By The Following

| No | Types of Instruments            | A | B | C | D  | Result | Category  |
|----|---------------------------------|---|---|---|----|--------|-----------|
| 1. | Questionnaire                   | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 1      | Very High |
| 2. | Semi-structured Interview guide | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6  | 1      | Very High |

Further, the questionnaire is also analyzed using SPSS 25 to check the reliability by Cronbach Alpha.

Table 0.2 The Result Of The Questionnaire Reliability

| Reliability Statistics |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | N of Items |
| .897                   | 20         |

The instruments resulted both in a valid and reliable number. Thus, the distribution of the instruments to obtain data could be conducted.

The trustworthiness of the results is using the triangulation method of data types (Creswell 2012). The triangulation of the results will show high credibility if several methods used, namely questionnaires and interviews, support the results of each other.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As senior high school students in Indonesia learn English as a foreign language, to be able to transform the knowledge of the language and use it with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, they have to use deep approach as it helps to know the meaningful purpose of learning the language, communicate actively using the language, solve problems they encounter in the application of English language, and collaborate in the process of learning with their friends (Mašková<sup>1</sup> and Nohavová 2020; Yueying and Xiaodong 2016).

SAL as one of the factors that affect students achievement (Mensah et al. 2019) also acts as an evaluation of the the process of learning (Biggs et al. 2001). Summarizing previous results of studies, there are two factors that plays an important role in the adoption of SAL. The first is the intrinsic factor such as personal motivation and interest with the subject (Mensah et al. 2019). The second is the external factors such as teachers' teaching style and learning environment (Yin, González, and Huang 2018).

To answer the first question of the study, a questionnaire was given for 200 students of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade in SMA N 1 Singaraja with the following result:

Table 0.3 SAL Of 10th Grade Students In SMA N 1 Singaraja In The Context Of EFL Online Learning

| SAL       |       | DA<br>Tdap  | SA<br>tsap  |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-------------|
| N         | Valid | 200         | 200         |
| Mean      |       | 28.405      | 31.27       |
| Std. Dev. |       | 1.057880247 | 1.127611082 |

Note:

DA : Deep Approach

SA : Surface Approach

tdap : total deep approach

tsap : total surface approach

From table 1, the total surface approach is higher than the total deep approach (tsap = 31.27 > tdap = 28.405). The result implies the 10th-grade students in SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja prefer surface approach when learning EFL through online. This means students lean toward to memorizing their knowledge, studying to pass the requirement grade, and discover no purposeful meaning in learning EFL.

### **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of SAL**

To comprehend the questionnaire result, interviews were conducted to know the supporting and the inhibiting factors of SAL. The results of the interview lean towards the reasons they were using surface approach at their EFL Online learning process. The supporting factors as the second research questions resulted as follows.

Their motivation to learn the subject and interest in the English subject influence their effort to learn and able to apply the language as stated by Student 2:

"I feel interested in English because I understand the material" ... "I think English is useful because maybe someday I got the chance to study abroad, English is like the basic language or international language." (S2; M)

The statement is supported by Student 4:

"Well because the globalization era, many people are starting to be able to use English so I think I also have to be able to use English" ... "I also think it would be for my future career, so I believe we have to be able to use English" (S4; M).

Motivation and interest seemed to help students enjoy their English learning process and have a meaningful learning. Smarandache et. al. (Smarandache et al. 2020) agreed to this as the findings showed the higher students interest of a subject will put more effort to their study. Their views of how important English will be used in real life, enforce them to actually able to apply English as a communicative language.

Related to students' motivation in learning, teacher's method of teaching impacts their interest of the subject. The incorporation of various media and interactive teaching creates a fun learning environment for students. Student 5 stated:

"...Yes, I believe if teacher had incorporated more movies or songs during the online learning it would not be as boring" (S5; F)

The statement is supported by Student 2 and Student 3 who were taught by a teacher with an interactive style of teaching:

"The lesson is fun since the teacher is very interactive, she pays attention to us all and encourages if any of us didn't participate at all. She often says 'it's okay just try it, it's okay to be wrong so we are not feeling intimidated at all'." (S3; M).

The right teaching method and style may improve students' interest in the subject. This finding is aligned with Santosa et al. (Santosa et al. 2021) as students able to think critically when presented with the right questions by their teacher.

Their learning environment also plays part in supporting their approach. In the case of environment, Student 5 mentioned the following:

"I think English can be applied in my daily life since I have a friend who talks about competition in English with me, even if she is in a different class... we just think English is cool and we want to practice a lot".

This finding is interesting as having a friend or partner to help them practice English not only improve their speaking but, in some way, it helps them to find motivation to learn the language.

The current study also finds some factors that inhibit SAL. As during pandemic situation, students often use memorization of the language and relying on google translates to create sentences as stated by Student 1:

"I'm not sure If I can speak fluently if there's a foreigner come to speak with me" ... "I understand the material but I don't think I could implement the material practically" "The dialogue is pre-typed, and memorized before recording so it is a bit awkward if I have to speak directly without preparation" (S1; F)

Followed by Student 2:

"If I found difficulty in writing a dialogue, I would put the Indonesian language in the Google translate and then modify the English translations for my needs"

Memorizing language makes it hard for them to actually use the language in real communication. The online learning also makes them easier to use language tools. Related to online learning, another factor that inhibits their approach is it feels monotone and feels different as they don't exercise speaking that much as stated by Student 3:

"I prefer face-to-face study as it could be a bit depressing to sit and just see the laptop for most of the time... the task feels more and more tedious to do" ... "I think I don't think I can fully apply this in real life, I still stutter while speaking" ... "it is a bit hard to practice speaking while in zoom because usually there are dominant people who act in the class" (S3; M)

Students finds that another subjects' workload is a matter they should put to calculation as stated by Student 4:

"I sometimes search for the material a day or an hour before class or when I'm free and other assignments are finished" ... "I search it just so I get the gist of the material, not very thoroughly." (S4; M)

This statement is aligned with Student 3:

"I prioritize assignments and exams first before I put extra effort to prepared the upcoming material for English class." (S3; M)

The result of the study different with the other researches previous study which resulted in the deep approach. Santosa et al. (Santosa et al. 2021) found that college students lean towards deep approach due to the lecturers asking them questions that requires reasoning and critical thinking and they felt the condition of the online learning forces them to be more independent to seek information. Students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja felt the opposite. The reason being is they felt teachers are not requiring them to be critical and the online learning felt monotone for them. Another finding by Santosa (Santosa 2018) supports that the right approach by teacher could affect students to take a meaningful and deeper approach.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to investigate SAL in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students including the supporting and inhibiting factors to adopt it. The findings show students in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja lean towards surface approach when learning EFL through online. Based on the qualitative findings, the approach students tend to do is based on the factors that influence them. The supporting factors of SAL are: their interest and motivation of the subject; teachers' style in teaching and the utilization of learning media; also, peer learning. The inhibiting factors of SAL are: memorization of language; the online learning feels monotone and lack of speaking practice; and another subjects' workload.

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