THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON STUDENTS' SOCIAL SKILLS: TEACHERS' REFLECTION TOWARDS ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASS

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the negative impact of the pandemic on their social skills on speaking skill development. The shortcomings of a past pandemic era had impacted the offline English foreign learner (EFL) classroom in the new era. The dozen of difficulties and challenges that were faced by the students affected English speaking skills as one of the productive skills in language learning. As the core of English-speaking substances, online learning influenced the students' social skills development, raising speaking anxiety due to the issue. The research was conducted using the qualitative narrative method. The data was collected by interviewing three secondary teachers using semi-structured interviews, and the results were analyzed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). The finding is found that the pandemic has increased the students' anxiety which has become the common factor that has been decreasing the students' social skills; it is caused by the ineffective teaching procedure, learning media used, and activities that have been implied during the past pandemic era. Furthermore, despite that negative effect, this finding can be further developed to improve teaching methods in other emerging education conditions. In addition, an observation method is suggested to get the actual condition.

Keywords: pandemic impact, post-pandemic, speaking class, social skills, teacher reflection

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has impacted many aspects of daily life. In this digital era, the shortcomings of having online classes have been reduced by the advancement of technology (Ulvik, Jensen, & Eide, 2021). However, these advantages are absent in some areas and cannot be utilized. It is inevitable for students to experience degradation in regard to their communication when they have online classes (Sampson & Yoshida, 2021). This occurs due to the lack of social activity that can be done online; moreover, with their limitations, having two ways of communicating is proven to be a challenge (Gacs, Goertler, & Spasova, 2020). The students would tend to prefer to be engaged in other activities instead of doing the aimless assignments given by their teacher due to the lack of supervision.

It is known to the public that there are more than often cases where students are given a task without any consideration for their real situation out there (Wang et al., 2021). Some students would spend most of their time doing anything but studying. This phenomenon has caused the students not only miss out on the opportunity to gain knowledge but also their skills in socializing with their classmates (Henry & Thorsen, 2021). If this kind of phenomenon occurs for a long period of time, it will inevitably cause difficulties in social aspects in an EFL classroom.

Over the past two years, more studies have been focused on the challenges and innovations to overcome the emergence of education during the pandemic (Brownhill, 2022; Ekoç, 2021; Gacs, Goertler, & Spasova, 2020; Meşe & Mede, 2022; Payne, 2020). Students are reported to be uncomfortable during online learning due to the isolated feeling toward the remote learning process (Ekoç, 2021) and increased

students' speaking anxiety (Payne, 2020). Since the pandemic promptly transpires, it decreases the students' readiness during the English learning process (Gacs, Goertler, & Spasova, 2020). Hence, it affects how they overcame the difficulty of using digital devices during the online learning process (Meşe & Mede, 2022) and its adaptation process throughout the pandemic (Brownhill, 2022). However, fewer studies have investigated the impact of the emergency of education during the pandemic on students' social abilities in English speaking performances.

Therefore, this research focuses on the causes of emergency education to the decrease of students' English-speaking skills and its effect on their social abilities during interactive learning activities in the post-pandemic era. Hence, to identify the hindrance of social abilities in English-speaking performance, this research conducts two research questions: (1) What is the teacher's perception of the impact of emergency education in the pandemic era on students' social skills in English-speaking activities? (2) How does the teacher classify the students' social abilities on English speaking skill performance?

As a significant aspect of soft skills that go a long way toward improving students' language proficiency in meaningful interaction, social skills are pivotal in enhancing students' skills to learn English, especially speaking (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Moreover, social skills will be able to provide satisfactory interactions between students (Bashori et al., 2020). Therefore, interaction skills are commonly found to be influenced by social status, age, and value (Turner, Li, & Wei, 2021). As it is one of the interpersonal skills, the ability to engage in interaction becomes an indicator of someone's social skills (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017).

Social skills are mainly constructed through verbal and nonverbal channels. Mehrabian (1969) has believed that students with high or lower social skills in English speaking would be clearly detected by the channels shown. Verbal clues can be exemplified by communication strategies. According to Tarone's taxonomy, there are frequent types of communication strategies in English-speaking practice: topic avoidance, native language switch, and coinage (Herd, 2015). Furthermore, non-verbal clues are shown by using body language, gestures, eye contact, and vocal performance variety (Mehrabian, 1969). The presence of these clues can convey indications of students' readiness during interactions in speaking skill practices.

In English speaking practices, social skills have been proven to significantly affect speaking performance. The ability to speak in an English learning process is a product that becomes an indicator that students have successfully mastered language learning (Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Furthermore, the salient influence of a language product could be observed from the learning progress (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019).

As an immediate substance of English learning progress, the existence of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) becomes the main factor that will affect the quality of students' language product or output (Sevinç & Backus, 2019). WTC (Figure 1) is proposed to strengthen students' readiness in their communication process (Bensalem & Thompson, 2021).
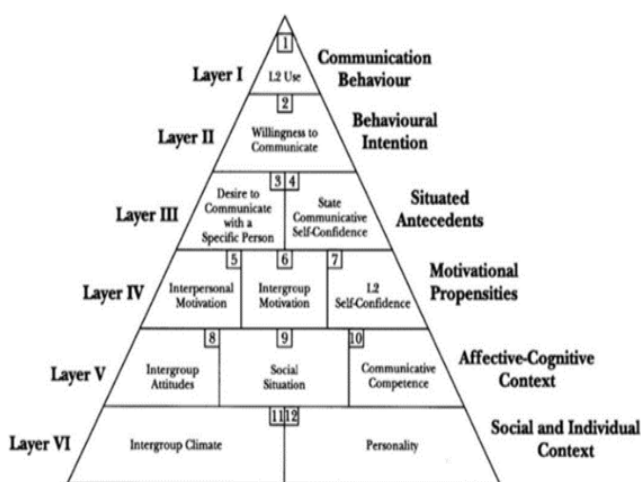

Figure 1 Willingness to Communicate
(MacIntyre & Wang, 2021)

According to Figure 1, the quality of language learning products will be influenced by those several stages. Ultimately, the main objective is the student's behavior in which they use the language as the final product of language learning (Liu, 2020). In WTC, social and individual contexts become the foundation that will influence communication behavior. It also captures the students' interaction process with others in a second language (L2) (Wongsa & Son, 2022). Crowning it all, it highlights that WTC holds pivotal parts in the language learning process.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative narrative design to approach teachers' experiences during teaching English speaking skills in the post-pandemic era. They use the design to collect and analyze rich narrative accounts of teachers' experiences during teaching. The research recognizes the researcher's reflexivity as a primary instrument not only for collecting, interpreting, and re-presenting 'data' (i.e., stories of teaching experiences) but also for viewing knowledge and knowledge as interdependent and embedded in history, context, culture, language, experience, and understanding (Etheringthon, 2019).

The participants of this research are three secondary teachers located in the border area of East Kalimantan. Researchers consider the involvement of teachers in the border areas due to the rise of issues in the development of English-speaking skills in rural areas. Thus, this research tries to explore the various causes of the issues. The participants have been teaching English for about three to five years and have
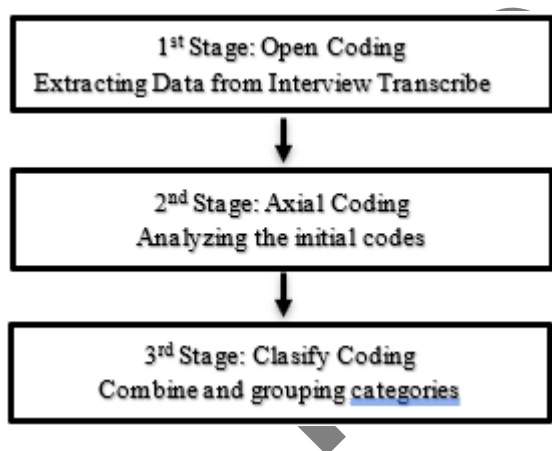
experienced multiple transitions in teaching conditions from before to after the pandemic. Their experience results are collected using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions.

The data results are analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which helps the researchers analyze participants' experiences using the social structure's perception. Thus, it supports the learner in finding the social psychology of students while practicing English. To analyze the data, researchers use a method of three analysis steps from Saldaña (2018), which are (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding. It can be seen in Table 1.

In the first stages, researchers read the interview transcribes and analyze the coding. Next, the researchers try to combine the finding and the theories. Therefore, the last researchers collect the results into several categories.

Furthermore, to acquire trustworthiness, this research uses an expert's validation of the lecturer. The validation consists of constructed evidence checked and the content of the item listed. Meanwhile, an interpretivist paradigm is used to obtain the research constructed where "the world of human experience" (Tigelaar, Sins, & van Driel, 2017) has been believed to ground this narrative research.

Table 1 Stages of Analysis

1st Stage: Open Coding
Extracting Data from Interview Transcribe

↓

2nd Stage: Axial Coding
Analyzing the initial codes

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3rd Stage: Clasify Coding
Combine and grouping categories

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section elucidates the findings and discussion of the research questions, which indicate the social skills of the students. It is divided into two parts; the first one is the teacher's notion of the influence of emergency education in the pandemic era on the student's social abilities of English speaking performances, then the second part discusses the teachers' strategy classification of the students' social skill that appears towards class interaction. Regarding the second part, it has been classified into two different channels of communication strategy that indicate the students' social abilities in English-speaking skills.

After the offline meeting is held again, it is not that easy to immediately get a conducive atmosphere in carrying out the teaching and learning process. These changes are not far from the negative impact experienced by students in the pandemic situation. There have been many changes that teachers have experienced since the first offline class is held. Facing this situation, teachers are expected to be able to adapt so that students can participate in learning activities well.

Issues that teachers experienced during online learning during the pandemic have found that: first, difficult to supervise students' practice in English speaking skills. The difficulty in supervising makes the teacher unable to engage students in classroom interaction. This point can be understood well in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1:
"Since the pandemic, many students have complained about the lack of facilities they have to be able to join online learning. Some of them often find it difficult to complete the given task. However, over time, they have gotten used to using online media to complete tasks. However, one weakness found is the difficulty of teachers in supervising students' English development, especially in English speaking skills. Therefore, in my opinion, there are currently many mistakes and shortcomings found in the way students practice speaking skills. They have difficulty when they have to appear in front of the class."

Regarding this statement, the lack of teacher supervision during English-speaking practice has several effects. First, it will affect students' awareness of their speaking performance shortcomings. Students frequently integrate different understandings autonomously during the online learning session, which is referred to as self-direction. Here, the teacher's supervision should be able to assist students in absorbing the appropriate information in accordance with their needs. Hereinafter, the limitless speaking practice supervision affects the interaction flow in the classroom process. According to certain perceptions, the English classroom method should be able to foster constructive interactions between students and the teacher through an effective question-and-answer process and discussion.

Furthermore, after that issue, it is also found that the cause of the weakening of students' social skills in speaking performance is caused by the teacher's difficulty in finding activities that are appropriate to the teaching media used during an emergency situation. This statement has been explained clearly in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2:
"During the pandemic, I rarely use Zoom because of my difficulty using the application. The application that I use is Google Classroom, where I give assignments and explain the material in written form. But then I communicate through the WhatsApp group, where they will

ask questions. I often monitor their English speaking skills through voice notes, but then I find it difficult to ensure their social skills. Nowadays, in the new era, my students will always give a great performance individually, not for the group. They feel more confident in the individual task rather than performing in a big or small group. I think it is because of the lack of activities that involve social interaction between students that I can not enhance their self-confidence during the speaking practice. Currently, I think it is more important for them to have the confidence to be actively involved in class before the quality of their speaking skills."

Looking up this finding, it is found that the speaking activities held during the pandemic are only able to maximize students' cognitive speaking skills, but conversely do not fully support speaking skills socially in classroom interaction due to the lack of self-confidence. Hence, it becomes a new challenge that teachers have to highlight in the new form of English-speaking substances where confidence is quite important in the speaking shortcoming. It is in line with Krashen (1982) that the lack of self-confidence would influence their affective filters, which lowers the quality of language output.

Furthermore, another case is found that one of the reasons students experience a decrease in English speaking practice happens when the teacher has difficulty managing classrooms due to the online learning situation, as in the written Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3:

"During the online meeting yesterday, my students were actively involved in interactions. Indeed, basically, my English class was deliberately constructed with interactive learning, but I found that some of my students who were very active dominated the interaction of the class. At that time, I had a little difficulty controlling the class because of the difficulty in understanding online interactions. Hereafter, I found it impactful during the onsite class. Currently, there are several students who dominate classroom learning and cover passive students. Therefore, I am actively involved in those who non-dominate the classroom."

This results in some teachers finding it difficult to engage students in classroom interaction because the involvement of students with enthusiasm and confidence dominates the class interaction process. Thus, some students with the opposite character feel pressured and choose to be silent.

Regarding these experiences, most of the negative impacts on students' social skills are closely related to the student's readiness to face the two conditions that occur in a short period of time. Referring to Excerpt 1 shows that some students may have been accustomed to interacting with teachers and classmates indirectly, but now they have to be directly involved in daily conversations in the class.

Facing the transition of these two conditions forces students to have to adapt to the new normal era. These conditions could be shocking for those who lack preparation for their learning process. Consequently, teachers need to take a pivotal role in helping students' readiness to be able to achieve learning targets in English speaking skills. Regarding that data, the causes and effects of the negative impact of a pandemic can be categorized in Table 2.

Table 2 Pandemic Effect

Excerpt	Pandemic Effect	Post-Pandemic Condition
1.	Lack of speaking supervision	-The students do not have enough content to perform their speaking skills.
		-Students faced speaking anxiety during English speaking practice.
2.	Limited activities to train students' speaking skills.	-Students do not enjoy it enough to join the interaction during conversation activities in class.
		-Students have a lack of self-confidence in speaking skills.
3.	The infirm of classroom management	-Students who have low activity tend to be silent and do not participate in interaction in class.

Facilitating students in adapting to the new situations in the post-pandemic is quite strategic. There are three things that teachers need to pay attention to in constructing a teaching strategy which consists of a classroom atmosphere, speaking activities, and affective filters (Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Essentially, these three things are related, such as maintaining a conducive class atmosphere (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). In this case, activities that can increase students' enthusiasm are needed. When enthusiasm increases, the student's motivation can grow (Krashen, 1982). Therefore, students equipped with good motivation in learning will affect their learning outcomes.

However, if the class atmosphere worsens, inevitably, it will influence students' readiness to face difficulties during the learning process. When the students feel uncomfortable, it will be difficult for them to be able to understand every explanation given to them (Dewaele & Pavelescu, 2021). If it happens, students will be lacking in terms of learning input. Thus, it can increase the students' anxiety which usually consists of worrying about making errors and lacking good insight into vocabulary or content. According to Krashen (1982), most students who

bring negative emotions to the classroom will block the learning inputs. Hence, it has a significant impact on their learning outcomes.

After discussing teachers' perception of the impact of the pandemic on students' ability to socialize during the English classroom interaction process. Therefore, this part elucidates the teachers' identify students' social abilities in English-speaking performances towards their communication strategy.

The results are divided into two categories, which are verbal and non-verbal clues. In this case, the researchers analyze students' reactions based on the teacher's observations. In this analysis, two substances are observed, starting from verbal clues and non-verbal cues.

The influence of the pandemic on students' speaking skills in socializing is increasingly seen in the early post-pandemic period. One of the things participants felt the most is when their students have their own unique communication strategies. The first results indicate a behavior where the students try to avoid speaking practice.

Excerpt 4:
"In the assignment of English speaking skills that require students to perform in public such as presentations or just telling stories. Each student has their own difficulties; one of the most unique is that there is a student who always **avoids** when it is his turn to perform. He always goes to the toilet and avoids it for a long time. I have traced that this student was always nervous, which caused a bad response in his digestion. He **has a very high fear**; this was exacerbated during the post-pandemic because, before the pandemic, I rarely found a response like this during virtual meetings."

Therefore, the next channel found is switching languages. Students who struggle to socialize in the interaction try to exchange their language use. Hence, the students perhaps still could participate in the flow of the conversation. This finding is picked up by Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5:
"When the first offline classes were held after the pandemic era, I found most of the students having a hard time joining the interactions. Moreover, interactions that use full English. Some of them used bilinguals if they found difficult terms; they often occurred in interactions during the learning process and when making presentations in front of the class. Some of them were also reluctant to look at the audience or me as the teacher when they made presentations. They tended to crouch and lower their voices. Actually, they had good cognitive skills; it is just that their confidence was not good enough. This resulted in the performance not being so outstanding."

The two channels above are categorized as verbal clues; therefore, there are non-verbal clues during the interaction process. In this case, it is indicated by how the students behaved during the interaction flow (Excerpt 6).

Excerpt 6:
"The students in my class are divided into two categories, the first is the student who dominates the conversation, and the second is the passive student. Students who dominate tend to limit the opportunity for other students to have the opportunity to express themselves. When I realized that, I would try to engage the passive students to join the interaction and ask the dominant ones to calm down and give time to others. The passive ones will sit quietly and not say anything except when I involve them in the discussion."

Regarding these statements, it is found that students' social skills could be detected in the communication strategy that they consciously and unconsciously use during speaking practice. Referring to Excerpt 4, students avoid joining the topic that is discussed at that time. The teacher believes that this is due to online meetings making them accustomed to direct face-to-face interaction. So that when the offline class is re-run, they experience a culture shock due to the new learning transition in the post-pandemic era.

Furthermore, in Excerpts 5 and 6, it is shown that the way students socialize with others seems uncommon due to non-verbal communication strategies, and then a lack of self-confidence is also detected during the interactive learning process. Those with less confidence have a different gesture; they avoid the interaction by lowering their head to omit eye contact during the presentation. According to Tarone (as cited in Herd, 2015), there are two basic criteria for communication strategies. First, the speaker wants to communicate meaning to the listener. Second, the speaker believes that the linguistic structure desired to communicate meaning X is unavailable to the listener (Herd, 2015). Thus, communication strategy is also often discussed as one of the language learning strategy taxonomies (Christoffersen, 2017).

Therefore, communication strategies are currently discussed in theory in pedagogical language teaching. Research conducted by Moeen, Nejadansari, and Dabaghi (2019) has discussed that the application of communication strategy during classroom activity could raise social awareness due to the information shifting during the interaction. Regarding Tarone's taxonomies, there are seven strategies that are frequently used in socialization in English-speaking practice. Tarone's taxonomies are (1) Topic avoidance: learners try to avoid specific topics. (2) Message abandonment: Learners omit the information or make it simpler. (3) The use of paraphrases: Learners use paraphrases to describe. (4) Coinage: Creating new words. (5) Native language switching: Changing the

words from the target language (TL) into the first language (L1). (6) Miming: Imitating sound, gimmick, and body language. (7) Appeal for assistance: Looking for help, e.g., dictionary.

Communication strategy in developing students' social skills is one of the important aspects of English mastery. In communication strategy, students could exchange information with other learners through verbal and non-verbal methods (Zhang, Ardasheva, & Austin, 2020; Zhangand & Goh, 2006). In other words, it includes exchanging opinions and ideas for a specific purpose. In speaking practice, the interaction could be implied by sharing culture, hobbies, and education. Therefore, the ability to socialize will help learners to get others' ideas effectively (Liu, 2020).

In the context of speaking practice, social skills can be considered important since the students need them in order to convey the message to the audience properly. Therefore, some students will use their own ways to be able to convey messages in the socialization process during the learning process. This communication strategy in social skills is varied, and the variations tend to indicate each student's issue that can be used to reduce the disturbance (Ho, 2020). Hence, communication strategy becomes the tool of language learning that helps the learner to deliver messages effectively (Christiansen & Els, 2021). Ultimately, it means that communication strategy will help the learner to overcome the lack of target language knowledge to those who want to express meaning.

Regarding the experiences that the teachers have explained, the common communication strategies that the students used are topic avoidance, message abandonment, and language switching. Topic avoidance occurs when students do not really matter what is being discussed. They will tend to remain silent and avoid such discussions (Herd, 2015). Then there is message abandonment, a way when the speaker does not know how to compose a sentence so that students will answer the question briefly (Ryan & Forrest, 2021). When it happens, the conversation will be less interesting, and lower the atmosphere of socializing.

Next, there is language switching, which happens when students use their first language to indicate many things. In this case, students are still anxious about making grammar errors. All of that has often been found in this post-pandemic English teaching and learning process. Moreover, there are several nonverbal clues that often occur, such as avoiding eye contact and panic attacks. Avoiding eye contact is often found when teachers are trying to engage their students in an interaction. Those who tend to be passive students are found to avoid engaging in eye contact multiple times.

Analyzing the interview results, based on observations conducted by the teachers, students' social skills during this post-pandemic can be categorized into two parts. The first part is the students with high self-confidence, and the second is those with low self-confidence. Students with high self-confidence tend to be free to socialize during interactions throughout the learning process. They have less anxiety than the students who lack confidence. Those with low self-confidence tend to have doubts when asked to express themselves; thus, it will affect their social skills. Therefore, there are several behaviors that occur consciously or unconsciously in students when they try to socialize verbally. The way they interact is often interpreted as a communication strategy. It plays an important role in influencing students' social skills. Based on that issue, teachers believe that they have an urgent note due to the effect of the pandemic, where they need to boost the students' social skills in English speaking practice. It highlights that post-pandemic has become the newest challenge for teachers.

CONCLUSIONS

This narrative inquiry project elucidates that teaching during the pandemic has impacted students' social skills development in English-speaking practice. As the main objective in English speaking skills, being able to communicate clearly requires students to have good social skills. However, the way teachers teach and the influence of the limitation in terms of media during the pandemic has reduced students' ability to socialize. Based on the results, it is found that anxiety has become the common factor that has been decreasing the students' social skills. This issue is frequently established by teachers in this post-pandemic era and has become the most recent challenge in teaching English.

Despite the many limitations found in the pandemic era, it has given new lessons in the development of the field of education. The surge in the provision of distance learning has many pros and cons. One of the cons concerns the teacher's awareness of the condition and readiness of students during remote teaching and its impact on their social skills. As is done in this research, it is also necessary to develop the reflection of teachers who find the low output skills of their students is also an important note in further research. It is crucial to take notes on how teachers handle students' self-readiness toward English-speaking.

The findings of this research are anticipated to be useful in emergency education, where it is sought to identify efficient teaching methods that would boost students' self-confidence and be adaptable to online learning environments. The aim of this research's educators is to make English teachers outside of the classroom aware of the significance of self-confidence in the learning objectives and goals in the lesson planning practice. Furthermore, this research implications in linguistic research perhaps can provide fresh insight into how the existence of online learning challenges is not only due to external factors like classroom conditions, the limitations of internet coverage and supporting devices, and, to top it all off, an internal factor like students' psychology, emotion, and learner behavior.

This research contains a variety of contributions, including practical, empirical, and theoretical research. Regarding the research's practical contribution, it offers reading material that can aid in educating professionals' preparation of instructors for the other emergency situation where online learning will be the only mode of instruction. Therefore, this research has discovered the most recent task in English teaching speaking techniques to assist educational research. As everyone is aware, some activities are inappropriate for online learning. In order to arrange online training tactics for speaking skills, this research looks for the fundamental idea.

Last but not least, this research combines two theoretical perspectives: MacIntyre's willingness to communicate (WTC) and Krashen's affective filters. Examining communication behavior (WTC) and the emotional in language learning has expanded the research regarding English-speaking competence confidence. Combining WTC and affective filters in this way performs theoretical development while fostering student social abilities in English-speaking practice.

After completing this phase of the research, two kinds of drawbacks are discovered during data collection. The first is finding the suit participants. In some schools, speaking skill is not taught during online learning. They only provide a paper task and evaluation. Second, the majority of assessment instructions only focus on receptive skills such as writing and reading. However, speaking practice, where it affects social skills, is not employed to be delivered. This may reflect Indonesian English education, which formerly placed more emphasis on receptive than productive learning.

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