

Students' Appraisal on Joining an English Course through Online Learning System

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Abstract: Online learning has become a more popular learning system in higher education especially in Indonesia. Previous research studies on online learning system had been carried out, nonetheless most of them revealed the result of its system in general but none focused on the specific course. By using a narrative discourse approach, this study aims to find out the type of appraisal used by students joining English Professional Course at BINUS Online Learning, to reveal the evaluative meaning of students' appraisals on the course and to find out the impacts of students' appraisals toward the development of the English Professional Course. WhatsApp (WA) was used as the media to get the data from six students joining the course from six different learning centres. Appraisal theory is used as the approach to analyse the data. The results shows that students' attitude toward the course is more on positive feelings than the negative ones and some critics have impacts toward the development of the course.

1 INTRODUCTION

Online learning has become more popular since the internet provides opportunities for people to study courses without obligation to do interaction physically (Marija, 2012). Previous studies have revealed students' perception toward online learning that they were motivated by the material designed and its system of learning (Hart, 2012). Some positive and negative attitudes toward the online learning system were the result of joining this program (Endut, Isa, Azis & Jono, 2012; Zamari, Adnan, Idris & Yusof, 2012) a strong evidence that online learning is as effective as the traditional model of learning (Hannay, 2006; Nguyen, 2015; Ni, 2015).

Bina Nusantara (BINUS) University Jakarta by a decree of number 146/E/O/2014 issued by The Ministry of Education on 10 July 2014 currently offers five bachelor degree programs with four credits of English Professional Course. The students learn four language skills in 10 weeks which cover 16 sessions via Learning Management System (LMS) which includes the discussion forum, individual and group assignments and quizzes. They meet the lecturer through video conference where they can communicate virtually like in the real class.

This video conference is very effective in doing the virtual class in online learning classes (Pandey & Pande, 2014).

The main purposes of this research study are to find out the type of appraisals used by students joining English Professional Course, to reveal the evaluative meaning of students' appraisal on English Professional Course after they join the course and to find the impacts of students' appraisal toward the development of the English Professional Course. This finding is significant for the Course Outline Content development and its material, including type of quizzes, personal and group assignments, and final exam variations based on its better learning outcomes. It is also significant for the lecturers and tutors who are responsible to handle video conferences and weekly discussion forum to prepare and provide updated material needed by the students.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Narrative Discourse

Narrative discourse is commonly used by researchers to enable them both to describe the

research and to approach their objects (Tomaščíková, 2009). It is used as an approach to get the data from the respondents by using narrative that commonly states the event and conveys contextual complexities and helped to interpret other types of evidence (Jameson, 2005; Lindgren & McDaniel, 2012). Mostly, it is used to get the data by having interviews or dialogues which nowadays some social media can be used to communicate not only by face to face dialogue but also can be used as the tools to get the data (Shlezak, 2015).

2.2 Appraisal Theory

Eggins and Slade (Eggins & Slade, 1997) stated that appraisal refers to the attitudinal colouring of talk during a range of dimension and has attitude containing affect, judgment, appreciation, and amplification while Martin's (Martin & Rose, 2008; Oteiza, 2017) focuses on an analysis of meanings in context then it moves towards rhetorical effects (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2008). Moreover, Martin and White concern on appraisal in judgment, affect and appreciation which link to one another with affect as the domain in between as it can be seen in picture 1.

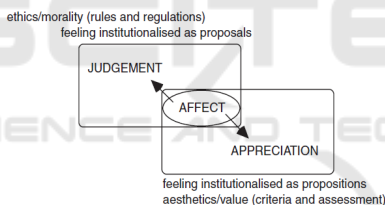


Figure 1. Judgment and appreciation by (Martin & White, 2005).

According to them (Martin & White, 2005), the maps of feeling (affect, judgment and appreciation) offered as a tool for those who need something to manage the analysis of evaluation in discourse. They also provides for analyses of those meanings by which texts convey positive or negative assessments (Arunsirot, 2014; White, 2015). Attitude in appraisal theory by Martin (Martin & White, 2005) contains affect which concerns with registering positive and negative feelings whether feeling happy or sad, confident or anxious, interested or bored, appreciation that involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena. He related his theory of appraisal to Halliday (Martin & White, 2005; Halliday, 1978) by relating to these realizations comprise modification of participants and processes, affective mental and behavioural processes, and modal Adjuncts (picture 2)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affect as 'quality' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - describing participants - attributed to participants - manner of processes • affect as 'process'¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - affective mental - affective behavioural • affect as 'comment' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - desiderative 	a sad captain the captain was sad the captain left sadly his departure upset him he missed them the captain wept sadly, he had to go	Epithet Attribute Circumstance Process (effective) Process (middle) Process Modal Adjunct
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Figure 2. Type of Affect.

Table 2.8 Types of appreciation

	Positive	Negative
Reaction: impact 'did it grab me?'	arresting, captivating, engaging ...; fascinating, exciting, moving ...; lively, dramatic, intense ...; remarkable, notable, sensational ...	dull, boring, tedious ...; dry, ascetic, uninviting ...; flat, predictable, monotonous ...; unremarkable, pedestrian ...
Reaction: quality 'did I like it?'	okay, fine, good ...; lovely, beautiful, splendid ...; appealing, enchanting, welcome ...	bad, yuck, nasty ...; plain, ugly, grotesque ...; repulsive, revolting, off-putting ...
Composition: balance 'did it hang together?'	balanced, harmonious, unified, symmetrical, proportioned ...; consistent, considered, logical ...; shapely, curvaceous, willowly ...	unbalanced, discordant, irregular, uneven, flawed ...; contradictory, disorganised ...; shapeless, amorphous, distorted ...
Composition: complexity 'was it hard to follow?'	simple, pure, elegant ...; lucid, clear, precise ...; intricate, rich, detailed, precise ...	ornate, extravagant, byzantine ...; arcane, unclear, woolly ...; plain, monolithic, simplistic ...
Valuation: 'was it worthwhile?'	penetrating, profound, deep ...; innovative, original, creative ...; timely, long awaited, landmark ...; inimitable, exceptional, unique ...; authentic, real, genuine ...; valuable, priceless, worthwhile ...; appropriate, helpful, effective ...	shallow, reductive, insignificant ...; derivative, conventional, prosaic ...; dated, overdue, untimely ...; dime-a-dozen, everyday, common; fake, bogus, glitzy ...; worthless, shoddy, pricey ...; ineffective, useless, write-off ...

Figure 3. Types of appreciation (Martin & White, 2005).

The three frameworks are provided by Martin and White (Martin & White, 2005) to analyse text that related to affect as quality, processes and comment. Martin in picture 3 divides the types of appreciation into two categories positive and negative and focused on the reaction, composition and valuation.

3 METHODS

Six students of BINUS Online Learning joined English Professional class at the odd semester period 2 from September – November 2017 which were selected based on the six different centres. (L) Lady from Jakarta, (K) Karina from Palembang, (C) Cathryn from Malang, (Y) Yohanes from Semarang, (B) Baskara from Bekasi, and (E) Erwin from Balikpapan - Borneo. The different locations may contribute the different appraisal

Narrative discourse is used to take the data from the participants which allows the researcher to do semi structured interview by using WhatsApp (WA) messenger as the semantic notification (Al-Khawaldeh & Mashaqba, 2016; Sánchez-Moyaa & Cruz-Moyab, 2015). The chat via WA was carried out for a week and the result of the chat through this application was used as the raw data of the research. The sentences as the data was then jotted down into the main data for analysis. The unit of analysis of this study is the students' appraisal which contains

their attitude in joining the English class via online learning.

4 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this discussion, the emoticons used by the students during the discussion are omitted since the emoticons sometimes do not support their ideas and opinion written. Therefore, the discussion is mainly about the words as semantic unit used in the discussion.

4.1 Students Attitudes

4.1.1 Reason for Joining Online Learning

Online learning is mostly offered for those who want to continue their study but has no time to join the regular class that force them to join the classes physically. This traditional system of learning does not allow them to do both working and studying at the same time (Matsunaga, 2016).

Table 1. Students' attitude for choosing online learning

Affect	Feeling positive /negative	(L) online learning is the perfect way for me (K) online learning is a flexible study for me (C) Joining online learning it's good to learn time management (Y) an English class online is a good option for people who are busy, because of the flexibility it offers (B) It will much more easier if i use online learning method (E) Online learning is so flexible, so i can manage my own time
	Feeling to reacting to some specific emotional trigger	(C) because online learning doesn't mean we can relax like regular learning (C) We have double responsible. Responsible in our office, but we also have responsible for our study
	Feeling of group reaction	(L) I'm not really comfortable going to the college to study which actually takes time just to get there (K) online learning is a flexible study for me (C) Joining online learning it's good to learn time management (Y) an English class online is a good option for people who are busy, because of the flexibility it offers (B) It will much more easier if i use online learning method (E) I choose online learning because i have no spare time to join regular class (B) Hmm, the other reason because <u>binus</u> has good accreditation
Judgment	Praise	(C) I feel that I have to manage my time well, because online learning doesn't mean we can relax like <u>regular</u> learning
Appreciation	Reaction	

Table 2. Students' attitude toward English Professional Class

Affect	Feeling positive /negative	(L) it actually helps me to practice again, I live and work in Bali, people here mostly speak English (K) I think it is important to learn English professional because we need basically this subject to improve English skills, especially in writing and speaking (C) It's interesting for me in joining English Professional Class. (E) Honestly i was very excited, because i love english, i like to learn english. (E) I know i need more practice, i really want to speak english fluently
	Feeling the surge of emotion (processes)	(B) First, I thought it's my chance to improve my English Communication Skills. So, I can speak English fluently. Get the job I want. Indeed travel the world. ^^
	Feeling on scale of intensity	(C) I feel excited when I know I got English Professional Class.
	Feeling of satisfaction, happiness and security	(C) I feel excited when I know I got English Professional Class. (Y) Well, I think of this course as a refresher for all the things I've been learning with the final test (B) My plans in May, hopefully as I expected more. I am afraid it's the same day (C) Honestly i was very excited, because i love english, i like to learn english. (B) Now I know how to deliver powerful English presentations and speeches. Feel calmer, and more powerful when speaking English (E) With the practice assignments like a video presentation, i think my speaking in English is improved
Judgment	Admire	(L) it actually helps me to practice again, I live and work in Bali, people here mostly speak English
	Criticize	(C) Even though I use English as a communication language in my job, but I do rarely doing presentation.
	Praise	(C) In this class, I got new thing how to do presentation, and it helps me a lot in case in the future I have to do it. (E) With the practice assignments like a video presentation, i think my speaking in English is improved

Table 1 shows that the three categories of appraisal are used although not every aspect is used. According to their responds, online learning is the

perfect way for them to study since they also work. They choose the program with the positive feeling about the flexibility of its method. Y states that for busy people this program is a good option. A bit different to Y, B points that one reason is he can manage his own time by joining the program. The other idea is stated by C that joining the program means a consequence that she has double responsibilities on both her work and the study. Only one judgment is responded by B in a type of praise. He shows his feeling of praising the institution in which the program is held by stating "Hmm, the other reason because Binus has good accreditation". On the contrary, C has a feeling of insecurity by stating "Learning online does not mean she can be relax like regular class". She shows her insecurity because of her experience.

4.1.2 Ideas on English Professional Course

Table 2 shows only two categories are responded by the students that B has a positive attitude for a hope that by learning this course he can speak English fluently. A better hope is the realization of the positive attitude. Different idea from B, a graded feeling of happiness is shown by C by using the word 'excited' instead of using the word 'happy' or 'glad' to reflect her happiness in joining the course. Her reason of this attitude is because of her work environment where most people use English. The same as C, Y also states his positive feeling that the course becomes a refresher for his previous skills and knowledge of English.

The feeling of insecurity raised by B on his thought of the time for final examination which might be the same as his plan to go abroad. On the contrary, he also shows his confident feeling that he believe by joining this course, he can do good presentation which can make him feel calmer, and more powerful when speaking English.

Judgment toward this course are stated by L and C. L shows her admiration on the place in Bali where almost all speak English and by joining this course, it helps her to practice using English which later will help her with her job. C shows her judgment by criticizing herself on not so often doing English presentation and at the same time she praises the course which she believes it gives her the way to do good presentation and it will helpful for to do in the future.

4.1.3 Discussion Forum. Discussion Forum Is a Weekly based Forum in Which a Lecturer and Students Share Ideas about the Material Learned

This forum plays important roles in online learning since it is updated weekly. This forum is different from the main materials which have already been available and ready to access materials since the course starts (Huss & Shannon, 2013).

Table 3. Students' attitude toward discussion forum.

Affect	Feeling positive /negative	(L) I think forum is the good way for discussing the material. (Y) Forum and assignments are good, but I'd like to suggest that the topics on the forum can be more diverse.
	Feeling the surge of emotion (processes)	(B) About the forum I find it easier to understand when you provide some links that present the material in simpler form. (E) So, they know what is happening in the world at the moment.
	Feeling on scale of intensity	(L) I like that you send us some links related to the topic in the forum and you give responses almost every week. (B) About the forum I find it easier to understand when you provide some links that present the material in simpler form.
Feeling of satisfaction, happiness and security	(K) I can give my opinion and answer based on my own opinion by the forum.	(E) I learned a lot
	(B) My suggestion for your next English class: you can take latest news as the topic in forum, such as digitalization era, 'scam' 'scold', etc.	
Judgment	Criticize	
Appreciation	Reaction	(B) the topic really help me to improve my English (E) The forum is very helpful, especially links that you shared

Table 4. Students' attitude toward Quizzes and Assignment.

Affect	Feeling positive /negative	(L) The quizzes are mostly about grammar so it's not that difficult. (K) Unfortunately, I got a bad score on second quiz due to the limitation of time and the deadline. (C) In my opinion, both assignment either group or personal are good enough to make us very practice for reading comprehension, listening, writing, and speaking. (E) About the quiz, I think like his post when 'Choosing the answer'. Because they look straight, but it's okay. (E) With the previous assignments like a video presentation, I think my speaking in English is improved. (E) Although I'm a beginner I've ever graduated because of type of assignment (making video), it wasn't extra effort.
	Feeling of satisfaction, happiness and security	(L) The most challenging task for me on the assignments was speaking; it needs time to prepare, practice, record, edit, and upload. Overall it all good. (C) But as the end of the day, I realize that it made myself learn a lot, I have to go there every process if I want to gain the result. (C) Especially for video making, to be "good" we to be more creative how to make interesting reason with our grammar, although we are not smart and unable to see face to face directly. (Y) Quizzes and exams are always very interesting but I think it's fine. (B) About the quiz, I think like his post when 'Choosing the answer'. Because they look straight, but it's okay. (K) I think the quiz has been appropriate with the curriculum.
	Judgment	Admire Criticize (K) The deadline should be on two weeks, but suddenly the deadline change into that day (the day I have to take the quiz) so I just have a little time to do it. (K) After I finish my quiz with a bad score, the deadline change into two weeks again... too much busy. (E) But about the multiple choice questions I think that is not effective, because we searched answer on internet.

Table 3 shows students' appraisal in three categories; affect, judgment and appreciation. From the aspect of affect, L shows her positive feeling that she can discuss the material with the lecturer or tutor. Y also shows his positive feeling but criticizes the content of the discussion in the forum

Apart from the negative and positive feeling they share, B and E show their understanding by using the word 'know' and 'find it easy' as mental processes which show the feeling that they have positive feeling about the forum. L uses the word 'like' with the intensity of low valued end (Oteiza, 2017) to show that from the forum she learns something from the links given in the forum. In judgment criteria, B criticizes the lecturer about the topic and suggests that the topic should be updated while he also appreciates the topics in the forum which supports him to improve his English.

4.1.4 Quizzes and Assignments

Quizzes and assignments are components in online learning processes (Buzzetto-More, 2008) to figure

out students' learning achievement. Table 4 shows students' attitudes toward these two components that only affect and judgment. All students show the positive and negative feelings toward the quizzes and assignments. L and B have the positive feeling about the quizzes that are easy to do, while K shows both positive and negative feeling. On the contrary, K states negative feeling because of her bad score due to the time limitation.

The feeling of insecure is shown by Y by stating "Quizzes and exams are always nerve-wrecking but I think it's fine". On the contrary, C feels secure by stating that "But at the end of the day, I realize that it made myself learn a lot, I have to go thru every process if I want to gain the result". Only one student admires the quizzes and assignment that is appropriate with the curriculum (course outline). On the contrary, K criticizes the deadline of the quiz which changes by system while Erwin criticizes the assignment by stating "But about the multiple choice question, I think that is not effective, because we searched answer on internet." This indicates that the assignment should be considered to change.

4.1.5 Final Examination

Online learning students have to do the test at the end of the course (Buzzetto-More, 2008) by attending physically to the campus or centres. Four skills are tested; listening, reading, writing and speaking. The three of them are done in campus' computer laboratories except speaking test which is done by video conference.

Table 5. Students' attitude about Final Examination.

Affect	Feeling positive /negative	(L) In the last speaking test, I had difficulty with internet connection to give a presentation. (K) Even the final test is high tense enough, because I can't stop to see the time when so fast haha. (K) Just watching an email to good question mean. (E) The final exam was so difficult, and the time given was not enough. (E) But the exam was excellent.
	Feeling of satisfaction, happiness and security	(L) Listening is the easiest compare to the others? (C) It was my first time did the final exam online so I can recall in the previous study (diploma) I could on paper. (C) Nervous is human thing, I still remember on the day speaking exam... sometimes I feel I failed. (E) Listening part was easier than reading because we can focus on conversation, we could not focus on the reading part because the time was running out.
Judgment	Admire	(C) I surprised on your feedback. I motivate myself I can pass. The test was just alright.
	Criticize	(E) For the final exam, I think it's better if we can do it in a lab with a headset and high outside so that other people can't see our screen and we can be more focus. (L) we didn't get information about video conference speaking for final test at the time. If only we knew, we would prepare and do better mean. Haha. (E) But for the final exam, I think you should give us a longer time limit for listening test. It's quite difficult for me to answer the 2nd question when the time is running out.
	Prize	(C) I think it's more effective and efficient final exam via online, but it's still over the whole thing. I mean speaking, reading comprehension, listening and writing skill.
Appreciation	Reaction	(B) But as you think that the final test represent the material you learned? (B) Sure, absolutely yes mean. Especially for writing test. The email and essay I've done before.

Table 5 shows that students share the feeling of positive negative and feeling of satisfaction, happiness and secure. They also state their judgment by admiring and criticizing. Appreciation is the last part stated by the students as a reaction to the final test. Three students share different feeling about the final test. L has negative feeling caused by the Internet problem when she took the speaking test via video conference, while K has both negative and

positive feeling about the final exam. Her positive feeling is on her writing test but not on her listening and reading test. She felt nervous because of the counting down time shown on the screen when she did the test. The same as K, E feels the same thing as when he did the test he felt that his time to do was too short.

The feeling of confidence has been stated by two students, L and E who have the idea that listening test is the easiest parts but not the other skills, especially reading. C feels insecure by being nervous when she took speaking test via video conference and when she did the listening and reading test since it was her first experience. For final exam. Only C states that she admires the examiner because her examiner gave her good feedback that motivated her to do the best and she finally did it alright. On the contrary, two students criticize the final exam, especially the listening one. L felt that she did not focus in doing the listening test since she needed a headset for the better result while B criticizes the writing test by stating “*the time is limited and the questions is more than one*” The last is C’s feeling to praise the final examination. And she appreciates the final exam system which involves the four skills at once which on her previous experience those skills are normally tested separately.

4.2 The Impacts Of Students’ Appraisal

Students’ appraisal toward the English Professional Course has impacts for the development of the course, especially from the negative and positive feelings and the judgment about the process of running this course. The result of the appraisal impacts in three parts; the discussion forum, the quizzes and assignment, and the final examination. The first is about the discussion forum which suggests the necessity to pay attention on weekly topic for discussion which should be relevant and up to date. It is essential for the students to have the newest and more interesting topics that can develop not only their language skills but also their knowledge. From the students’ appraisal, it can be seen that they have more positive attitude toward the quizzes and assignment. Besides, it is also crucial to know the points the students criticize. The first point to consider is the type of the quiz which currently focuses on grammar in multiple choices type. It needs to be revised or enriched.

The last is the final examination. From the students’ appraisal, it can impact on the design of

the final test, especially on the speaking and writing tests. For the speaking test, it should consider to let the students know the way how to conduct the test, so students can prepare not only the topics but also the internet connection since the bad connection of the internet will influence their performance. For writing test, it should be consider the number of the questions and the clear instruction to do it.

5 CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it can be concluded that the most types of appraisal used by students in presenting their attitude are in affect and judgment. They rarely use appreciation point of view. Moreover, their attitude toward the English Professional Course is more in positive feeling that they are happy to join the course and believe by joining the course they can improve their English which is very important for their job or future.

Students’ judgments on the English professional Course create impacts in developing the course, especially in the discussion forum topics which should be up to date and in the quizzes and assignments which should be updated as well since students have known the key answer of the assignments.

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