



Emotions of Students of German Department of Universitas Negeri Malang While Taking Online Lecture *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch*

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Abstract. This study discusses the emotions experienced by students who have to take online lectures for the *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* (Basic German Skills) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Emotions are important because they can decrease or increase students' learning motivation. Therefore, educators among adult learners need to know students' emotions during learning because this can hinder or motivate students in the learning process. The purpose of this study is to describe the emotions of students of the German Department of Faculty of Letters, State University of Malang when they take online lectures at *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch*: In which situations these emotions arise and to describe practical implications for online teaching and learning at the German Department. In this study, the instruments used were questionnaires and interviews. These two instruments were chosen to find out the respondents' experiences when taking online *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* lectures during the pandemic. There were about 20 statements submitted to the respondents. All of these statements contain elements of emotions experienced by respondents when online lessons took place, such as happiness, pride, confidence, satisfaction, annoyance, embarrassment, afraid, and so on. The results of this study indicate that there are four complex emotions which are a combination of basic human emotions that are often experienced by students simultaneously during online learning sessions. The four emotions are confusion, dissatisfaction, satisfaction, and frustration.

Keywords: emotions · *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* · Covid-19 pandemic

1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the learning process at the German Department, Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang (State University of Malang) in recent semesters and switched from face-to-face to online learning. The lectures on basic German skills or *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* consisting of Deutsch 1, 2, 3, and 4 are offered to students in the first to fourth semesters. These online lectures at the university are being held to avoid increasing the number of people infected with Covid-19.

Emotions play an important role as they can decrease or increase students' motivation to learn. In addition, educators among adult students need to know students' emotions

- while they are learning - because it can hinder or motivate students in the learning process. This study discusses the students who had to take online lectures for the lecture *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Swain states in his research that emotions are not personal reactions within individuals but interpersonal events whose meaning is socially and culturally derived and internalized from interactions with other people [1]. Mukhopadhyay et al. mention in their study that human emotions are so complex, and this psychological state can be reflected by a learner's basic emotions, which are a combination of two or more emotions that can be reflected on the face over some time [2]. The results of their research stated that there are four complex emotions, which are combinations of basic human emotions that a student often experiences together during online study sessions. The four emotions are confusion, dissatisfaction, satisfaction, and frustration. The focus of emotion research is not on 'emotions' per se but discusses how these emotional discourses are used (e.g., in adult learners), what role these discourses play (e.g., online learning), and the meaning of these discourses has changed.

Based on the above introduction, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1. What emotions do students experience when they attend online lectures, especially in the course for basic German skills?
2. In which situations do these emotions appear in online learning?

This study aims to describe students' emotions when attending online lectures on basic German skills and the situations in which these emotions arise.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Emotions

Since the 1970s, the concept of emotion has been examined in various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, ethnology, cognitive science, cultural and literary studies, political science and law, economics, computer science, artificial intelligence research, etc. The famous researcher in the field of emotions, Izard, mentions a list of primary or basic emotions, namely: (a) interest, (b) joy/happiness/satisfaction, (c) sadness, (d) anger, (e) dislike and (f) fear [3].

Emotion is viewed as a coordinated multi-component process of psychological sub-systems, including affective, cognitive, motivational, expressive, and physiological processes [4]. Izard [5] claims that emotion is measured into the following components using the multi-component model [6–8]:

- 1) Affective: Every emotion has a psychological experience. This statement is also called the "emotional core" of emotions. ("I am very happy.")
- 2) Cognitive: This component deals with thoughts and judgments related to emotions. ("This will have a positive impact on me.")
- 3) Expressive: Different emotions go hand in hand with distinctive verbal and non-verbal expressions. ("My feelings are full of joy.")

- 4) Motivation: Emotions lead to appropriate behavior. (“I enjoy it so much that I don’t want to stop.”)
- 5) Physiological: Components of bodily responses caused by emotions. For example, the heart rate or the conductivity of the skin depends on the emotional state. (“My heart beats faster with joy.”)

Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia [9] give an example that students’ fear of exams can be nervous or anxious (affective); concern about failing exams (cognitive); increased heart rate or sweating (physiological); the urge to run away from a situation (motivation); and fearful (expressive) facial expressions. Emotions also have a social function: we can share our feelings with others. In addition, emotions influence how we do things with others, invite and encourage social interaction, and play a role in building, maintaining, and damaging relationships with others [3].

2.2 Classification of Emotions

Emotional expression is an integral part of interpersonal relationships. Emotions play a significant role, especially in relationships with other people.

2.2.1 Ekman’s Basic Emotions

Many authors have argued that basic emotions should be associated with distinctive, universal nonverbal expressions, neural and physiological components, subjective experiences, and regulatory and motivational traits [10–12]. The most popular list is usually called “The Big Six,” compiled by Ekman et al. [13] in their study on universal emotion recognition based on facial expressions. Joy, sadness, fear, surprise, anger, and disgust were on the list and are still the most acceptable basic emotion categories [14].

2.2.2 Plutchik’s Structural Model of Emotions

Emotion analysis was first started in 1966. In the 1980s, Robert Plutchik divided emotions into eight basic categories. The eight basic emotions are as follows:

- 1) Joy
- 2) Sadness
- 3) Anticipation (curiosity/hope)
- 4) Surprise
- 5) Trust (acceptance/trust)
- 6) Disgusted
- 7) Fear (panic)
- 8) Anger

According to Plutchik [15], joy and sadness are opposites because one implies ownership or gain, while the other means loss. Surprise and expectation are opposites because one tells the unpredictable and the other the predictable. In contrast, trust and disgust are opposites because one implies consumption and further expulsion or renunciation. Anger and fear are opposites because one can attack, and the other can flee.

2.2.3 Emotions in Education

According to Forgas [16], emotions, feelings, and moods are an integral part of the effect in psychology. Two variants of the term are commonly used in the research literature: emotion and mood [9]. In the educational literature, the period affective is widely used to denote various non-cognitive constructs, including emotions, self-concepts, beliefs, motivations, etc. [17]. In pedagogy, there is increasing research interest in emotion in academic achievement and various disciplines [18, 19]. What is surprising, however, is that the connection between education and emotion is rarely observed [20]. The study of emotions in science generally focuses on joy, interest, hope, pride, anger, fear, frustration, and boredom [21]. Until the last decade, the study of emotions has not attracted the attention of researchers [9]. Two exceptions are studies on exam anxiety [22, 23] and reflections on the causal relationship between success and failure [24].

2.3 *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch*

Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch courses are presented starting from the first semester under the name Deutsch I to the fourth semester under the name Deutsch IV. These courses aim for students to have German language skills equivalent to B1 by the framework of the European language curriculum.

2.4 Online Learning

Online teaching and learning bring with them a new set of parameters. Online learning is not the same as face-to-face learning. Everyone's identity becomes something uncertain and ambiguous. The internet is like a mask that can hide our skin color, body shape, size, age, accent, income, and fashion sense [25]. There are many studies on this online learning phenomenon. Much of it has to do with the comparative effectiveness of different modes of teaching and learning. However, some research has also been on student experiences and even the emotions associated with online learning experiences. Kort, Reilly, and Picard [26] tried to develop a model of emotion related to various phases of learning. They identify several factors that determine different emotional states and hope to eventually design a computer-based system so that teachers can recognize students' emotional positions in education.

Online learning provides an opportunity for adults to learn and escape from the constraints of space and time [27]. Research on online learning in adult education over the past three decades has highlighted the benefits and challenges that adult learners face in participating in distance education and online learning programs. These challenges include the difficulties of adult learners in managing their work, family, and learning obligations [28].

3 Method

According to Bradley [29], qualitative research seeks an understanding of a particular situation and communicates that understanding descriptively. In this study, the instrument

used was questionnaires. This instrument was chosen to determine the respondents' experiences while attending online *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* lectures during the pandemic. 20 statements have been submitted to the respondents. All of these statements contain elements of emotions experienced by respondents when online classes took place, such as happiness, pride, confidence, satisfaction, annoyance, embarrassment, afraid, and so on.

The data from the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively by using trends and percentages. Meanwhile, the comments given by the respondents were analyzed qualitatively using the NRC Word-Emotion Association Lexicon [30] by annotating any inspirational words expressed by the respondents.

4 Findings and Discussion

There were 36 respondents involved in this study. 80.6% of the research respondents were female students, while 19.4% were male students. 72.2% of respondents used Wi-Fi when they attended *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* online lectures, while the other 27.8% used internet data packages. Meanwhile, 75% of respondents used laptops, and the remaining 25% used mobile phones.

Respondents thought that online *Grundfertigkeiten Deutsch* Lectures were not very pleasant for them. This statement can be seen from the results of the questionnaire distributed to them. Several respondents indicated that they encountered internet connection problems while studying, as described in the following comments:

- (1) "When the internet connection is stable, I can understand the materials well, and learning will be fun. However, if the internet connection is unstable, I have little difficulty attending lectures." (R4Q1)
- (2) "The learning process becomes less fun if the internet connection is not good." (R14Q1)

Joy or fun can enhance students' interactive experience in the learning process, for example, deep participation and complete immersion in activities [31]. Besides that, some think online learning is ineffective from the interaction between students and professors or between students themselves.

- (3) "In my opinion, online learning is less attractive because of the lack of interaction and outreach of educators." (R21Q1)

However, most respondents indicated that they learn interesting things while studying online. They said that studying cross-cultural understanding and the grammatical structure of the German language was new and exciting for them. In addition, some respondents said that the teaching method during online classes is not dull.

- (4) "I am particularly interested in the regional studies course material because I enjoy getting to know something completely new." (R4Q2)
- (5) "I learned a lot about the correct grammar in German and much more." (R5Q2)

- (6) “The learning method is not boring.” (R27Q2)

Activating positive emotions, such as enjoying learning, can increase students’ interest and motivation [31]. In addition, respondents also feel anxious while learning online.

- (7) “The pressure in lectures is always there even though lectures are conducted online. Many students fear answering questions incorrectly when asked by the lecturer, so they choose not to answer.” (R5Q4)
- (8) “I’m the type of person who thinks a lot about mistakes, so I’m afraid to make a mistake, and as a result, I’m rarely active in lectures.” (R29Q4)

Although the lectures were conducted online, respondents were not yet very confident. Duden defines the word “confidence” as a confident attitude; confidence [32]. According to Duden, *keyakinan* “confidence” in the Great Indonesian Dictionary means ‘trust and so on, which is perfect; certainty; provisions’ [33].

- (9) “When lectures are held offline, I get a lot of interaction, and it’s good for my confidence.” (R21Q5)

Respondents tended to be satisfied with their grades when lectures were conducted online. In the Great Indonesian Dictionary, *kepuasan* ‘satisfaction’ means ‘with something (be pleased); pleasure; relief, etc.’ [33].

- (10) “I’m happy with the skills I have because I think my ability to be rated so highly is too exceptional for me.” (R4Q7)

Most respondents found that the lecturer patiently explained the lecture material. In Indonesian, the word *sabar* means ‘patience’ (calm in the face of trials; quiet (patient)).

- (11) “[...] The lecturers patiently explained the material during online lectures, and I think the lecturers also knew that students did not like online lectures. Therefore, they were patient and tried to understand the students’ difficulties.” (R36Q10)

Many respondents felt their hearts pounded when the lecturer called them into class. According to Schwarz-Friesel, concern, nervousness, terror, dread, horror, shudder, and panic belong to the FEAR concept family [34].

- (12) “I always get nervous and pound out when my name is called or when I want to answer questions from the professor.” (R5Q11)
- (13) I agree because I was afraid that I was being asked a difficult question and couldn’t answer it.” (R29Q11)

The respondents also revealed that online lectures are boring because they do not meet and interact directly with the lecturers or other students, so they are less enthusiastic. Boredom also arises if, for example, the subject matter is uninteresting and has no

personal value [31]. In addition, most respondents feel nervous and confused when they have to speak German during lectures. Some respondents said that he often did other things when he was at home, so he couldn't focus or sometimes felt sleepy.

- (14) "Sometimes I doubted the structure and grammar of the German I used. That made me nervous." (R21Q15)

Many respondents also felt annoyed because of the interference with the internet connection in their homes, especially when it rained. It's a feeling that "builds up" in immediate reaction to what's happening and threatens to spiral out of control [35].

- (15) "I was annoyed by weather changes; for example, when it rained, the internet connection in my house became unstable." (R10Q18)

Another emotion arises when respondents feel afraid to face exams either in the middle or at the end of the semester.

- (16) "I was afraid that I would have forgotten what I had learned or that the questions that would arise would be more difficult than I had thought and what I had prepared. I was also afraid that I wouldn't have gotten good grades." (R5Q19)

According to Bauman, fear has become a normal condition of modern society [36]. In Indonesian, the word *takut* (fear) has several meanings, according to the Great Indonesian Dictionary, including 1) appalled at what is considered a disaster and 2) unrest; worry if... [33].

5 Conclusion

Respondents felt various positive and negative emotions while attending online courses at the German Department of Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia. The most positive emotions mentioned by the respondents are satisfaction, self-confidence, and joy. Meanwhile, the negative emotions that often surfaced are fear, anger, nervousness, and panic. The positive emotions of the respondents were: satisfaction with the grade, fun working together in the group, and self-confidence when solving the lecturer's tasks. Meanwhile, negative emotions were experienced: nervousness and confusion when asked by the lecturer to answer questions, annoyance because the internet connection was unstable, and fear of exams.

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