

## Students' Reluctance on Attending the Webinar Tutorial (Tuweb) of Speaking Course: A Case Study at Universitas Terbuka

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### **Abstract:**

*It can be difficult to motivate students to attend classes while using a digital platform for instruction. Students at Universitas Terbuka who have registered for the Speaking course's online tutorial program are required to attend every session of the webinar tutorial (Tuweb) synchronously. However, the tutors' evaluations revealed that the student's attendance in these real-time classes was not optimum. This study aims to investigate the problem by looking at the reasons why students find it difficult to enroll in the Speaking course synchronously. A qualitative case study using type 2 design where the researcher compared each online class to another. Participants in this study are tutors from sixteen Tuweb courses. The author divided the class into two sections based on the attendance rates, with the highest and lowest divisions being used for comparison. Based on the analysis of data, it is found that there were at least two kinds of problems in Tuweb which the author labeled as generalized external constraint and personalized internal constraint. The researcher also found that two reasons can affect the students' reluctance level in Tuweb class, the first is the personal approach and the second one is the non-personal approach.*

**Keywords:** *students' reluctance, webinar tutorial, speaking*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The presence of students in the classroom is considered important. Many studies revealed that students who attend classes regularly are more likely to achieve higher grades than those students who have poor attendance. Lukkarinena et al. (2016) said that class attendance is, indeed, related to performance. The same condition also applies to online learning as stated by Parkes and Reading (2015) who mentioned that the "online learning

process cannot reach its full potential until students practice what they learn". Although it is important, students often neglect and exclude their presence in the activity. As a result, some students cannot follow the necessary learning path that the instructor and curriculum designer have made.

There are several reasons why students are reluctant to join online learning. According to Morrin (2020), during the offline classroom, the teacher has a sense of student difficulty which is latent during the online classroom, and it makes teachers not know what students are facing. The condition puts students in an isolated position which make them unable to discuss or interact with their colleague and it is not good for their learning process. Tullis and Goldstone (2020) argue that peer discussion may promote students' metacognitive processes of detecting and correcting errors in their mental models. They added that students create more new knowledge and better diagnostic tests of answers together than alone.

The disability of online learning to create an equal learning experience like what happens in offline learning, in terms of interaction, is the issue that makes students less effectively involved in digital classrooms. The argument resonated with a finding from Rahmat (2022) that the weaknesses of online learning based on the participants' views are lack of interaction and lack of communication. This means that the nature of online learning might be the reason why students are reluctant to join the typical learning process.

In a digital learning environment, the feature for interaction has been added to the application since educators realized that it is a necessary condition for learning. Trouche, Sander, and Mercier (2014) argue that interactions in a group prompt argumentation and discussion of reasoning. However, students and teachers are not well equipped when it comes to the use of the apparatus, and I assume it leads to another reason why online learning can create reluctance not only for students but also the teachers is due to the digital competence of users. The claims are concluded from the work of Astini (2020), Arifa, (2020), and Horo et al., (2020) that less effective online learning is partly due to the difficulties or obstacles faced by students and lecturers which are related to their lack of knowledge or adaptability to technological advancement and the new method of teaching.

A further factor that makes students reluctant to join online learning can be referred to as personal constraints such as an obligation that needs to be fulfilled, for instance, working is the cause that decreases students' tendency to join online learning. A finding from a qualitative study by Perry, Boman, Care, Edwards, and Park (2008) of dropouts among online graduate students reported that personal reasons and program reasons were the most commonly stated reasons for withdrawal. The argument is endorsed by other scholars like Rizkallah & Seitz (2017) who claim that factors can include changes in financial support, career path selection, or personal issues that can influence students' retention toward online learning.

The last factor of students' reluctance to attend e-learning is due to internet problems. Based on Yuzulia (2021) "67.9% of the students felt that online learning in this pandemic situation is not effective. Most of the students stated that the main problem is the unstable connection...". It is important to note that in Indonesia where this study was conducted, the

internet is not equally spread and easily accessible in this vast geographical region that Indonesia has". Therefore, this classical issue has always haunted the university that conducted the e-learning process.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher conclude that previous studies have encountered four instrumental reasons why students are reluctant to come to the classroom, the nature of online learning, user competence, personal issue, and internet connection. However, during my observation at Universitas Terbuka, I found that those issues exist, yet it is not the only salient factors. In a tutorial webinar in Universitas Terbuka, since the platform provides a possible sufficient interaction, the issue of the nature of online learning can be surpassed.

In Universitas Terbuka, the learning process is done mostly by using online tutorials where students are given flexible time for students who have personal issues such as jobs or work to do, to involve in the discussion. However, for students who enrolled in the Speaking class, it is conducted in hybrid mode. It means that it has a synchronous and asynchronous scheme. Therefore, for synchronous learning, they need to attend the webinar tutorial (Tuweb) every week and it might be an issue that is essential to make students feel difficulty attending the class, yet it is not something new. The synchronous Tuweb only happens once a week therefore it is assumably not significantly making students feel reluctant to come to the class.

After all, learning requires commitment in this case it can be a time commitment and students presumably have recognized the condition. Meanwhile, for asynchronous, the discussion is highly monitored and responded to by the assigned tutor, and the final grade for the Speaking course is taken from practice, assignment, final exam, and of course participation/attendance. Due to that double learning process, the nature of eLearning which makes students reluctant since it does not provide sufficient interaction might not occur in Tuweb. However, because Universitas Terbuka has students from every part of Indonesia an internet connection sometimes is a luxurious thing to get. I assume the internet still be a general problem, yet I argue another latent problem also exists and has not been revealed before.

Furthermore, each of the tutors who held each online class has been trained well to use the apps. Therefore, digital competence is not also an issue for the class. Although it sounds promising, students' absences are still high in some of the Tuweb classes. Since the nature of the learning and competence issue is no longer relevant to explain the phenomenon, I assume there is something to do with another factor beyond both mentioned reasons. To solve the puzzle, I conducted research using a case study and I drew a research question on why students from speaking classes are reluctant to join the tutorial webinar in Universitas Terbuka.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Webinar Tutorial**

Webinar tutorial (Tuweb) is a face-to-face tutorial delivered via Microsoft Teams, where the instructor and students are separated during the learning process and the tutorial is delivered synchronously or at the same time. Microsoft Teams serves as the official Tuweb platform in UT where all UT students have access to this portal. The duration of this synchronous meeting is two hours.

In the Speaking course, tutors are expected to welcome students through a WhatsApp group where they can join from the first until the last session. Tutors have to encourage them to participate actively in discussions and follow Tuweb, then collect Tuweb assignments on time. In addition, tutors must periodically examine and give feedback on students' completed tutorial assignments as well as respond to queries or comments submitted by students with responses, clarifications, or answers (Saputra, 2021).

### **Speaking**

Speaking is regarded as one of the most crucial abilities that language learners must develop to effectively communicate their ideas. When a learner has mastered speaking, they can effectively exchange knowledge with other people. According to Mega and Sugiarto (2020), speaking is people's way of transmitting and sharing thoughts verbally to others.

It is required for students to possess appropriate English-speaking skills. Speaking abilities can be applied in a variety of situations, including group discussions, competition speeches, presenting work in front of the class, and more. The pupils must be able to perform successfully to demonstrate their command of the language abilities during the instructional process. Based on Astutik (2015), there are several aspects that we must pay attention to. In general, the most important aspects that must be considered when speaking English are grammar, fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Students at UT have the choice to use learning services for their Speaking courses. Students who signed up for this service will have access to e-learning. Speaking classes can be taken on Tuton asynchronously. Students are required to study the introductory readings that the tutor provides, participate in the discussion forum, and turn in their assignments. The tutor will provide feedback in the form of evaluation and scoring after each session. Students must also show up for Tuweb, which has been scheduled by the tutor. The tutor creates the materials for presentation and discussion with the students on Tuweb. Additionally, students have the chance to speak with the tutor directly to ask questions and receive answers.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A case study is defined as an in-depth study of a single unit (a relatively bounded phenomenon) where the scholar aims to elucidate features of a larger class of similar phenomena. The selected method is the most relevant for tackling the issue in this research since the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon that occurs only in a single unit which

is Universitas Terbuka. The advantage of using a case study is the ability of the method to simplify the process of understanding the phenomenon where we can be able to limit our research to a particular sampling to understand a greater population with the same outcome. In this research, although we only observe Tuweb speaking class, the insight can be used for the same phenomenon that happens in other Tuweb classes.

Gerring (2004) also added that a case study is an intensive study of a single unit to understand a larger class of (similar) units in one time and place and it covers similar and constrained participants. It means that a case study is appropriate to be used to investigate a particular issue that exists within the case at a certain time and place. Since I only concentrated on answering a puzzling phenomenon the reluctance of students to attend the Tuweb class and I focus on Tuweb speaking class academic year 2022.2, it has met the requirement for using the case study method.

There are at least three types of case study, yet I applied case study type II where I will compare two subunit cases within one unit of analysis. The unit of analysis is the Tuweb speaking class while the subunit cases, according to Gerring (2004) “consist of all cases that lie at a lower level of analysis relative to the inference under investigation”. Since I used case study type II, I compared two different Tuweb classes which have different tutors at the same time and experience the same lesson, yet they have different results in terms of students' presence in the classroom. Having data on all of class attendance, I compare two classes, class A and B. Class A has a low level of attendance while class B has a high level of student attendance. Both classes are chosen due to the variation they have. Although they have used almost similar methods and media, they have different levels of attendance. By comparing classes, A and B, I assume it will trace the reason why they are different despite the fact they experience the same process and finally, it will lead to an answer on why students are reluctant to come to Tuweb class.

## **FINDINGS**

Based on my observation in Tuweb, tutors are the ones who have a responsibility to record the students' attendance and they are the navigators of learning activity. By means, they coordinate, monitor, and assess students during the teaching and learning process. Their role is significant since they are the representatives of the university to guide students in their learning endeavors. Therefore, gaining their perspective and observation on their class condition will help me answer the question. In terms of student attendance, the tutors used to monitor students' attendance on e-learning by ticking the table of attendance. After accessing the whole data on students' presence for the Tuweb speaking class, it is found that class PBIS4205.08 is the class with the highest percentage of student attendance while class PBIS4204.06 is the lowest. The overall data can be seen below.

Table 1. Percentage of Students' Attendance

Class ID	Number of student	Sessi on 1	Sessi on 2	Sessi on 3	Sessi on 4	Sessi on 5	Sessi on 6	Sessi on 7	Sessi on 8	Total	Average	Percentage
PBIS420 4.02	15	8	9	10	12	10	11	7	9	76	9,50	63,33333
PBIS420 4.03	15	5	5	6	6	7	6	5	5	45	5,63	37,5
PBIS420 4.05	14	3	4	6	4	6	5	5	4	37	4,63	33,03571
PBIS420 4.06	14	2	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	25	3,13	22,32143
PBIS420 4.07	14	3	8	7	7	5	7	7	4	48	6,00	42,85714
PBIS420 4.09	14	3	7	8	7	10	10	8	7	60	7,50	53,57143
PBIS420 5.08	13	8	10	13	11	11	11	11	10	85	10,63	81,73077
PBIS420 5.12	14	5	12	9	12	9	9	5	8	69	8,63	61,60714
PBIS420 5.14	14	6	9	8	6	10	9	10	8	66	8,25	58,92857
PBIS430 6.01	16	8	10	9	11	7	10	8	8	71	8,88	55,46875
PBIS430 6.05	15	4	10	11	9	12	10	11	11	78	9,75	65
PBIS430 6.06	15	7	7	8	9	8	7	7	5	58	7,25	48,33333
PBIS430 6.08	15	4	11	13	9	11	10	11	11	80	10,00	66,66667
PBIS430 6.10	14	5	6	8	7	5	6	7	6	50	6,25	44,64286
PBIS430 6.11	14	4	9	10	10	8	9	8	7	65	8,13	58,03571
PBIS430 6.12	14	8	8	8	5	11	9	10	8	67	8,38	59,82143

Since the tutor is the most instrumental actor in Tuweb class and having their perspective is compulsory to understand why students in A class are more reluctant than students in class B, I conducted an interview and compared the results. Based on my analysis, I found that there are at least two interesting findings that can be highlighted. First, there are two problems students face that affect their attendance. I labeled them as generalized external constraints and personalized internal constraints. The generalized external constraint is the external factor that hinders students from attending the classroom such as technical issues or internet connection problems and misinformation. As stated in the interview transcript below:

*Table 2. Interview Transcript*

<i>Interviewee 1</i>	<i>One of my students said when I reach them through WhatsApp that every time she wants to join always fail and the website is dark.</i>
<i>Interviewee 2</i>	<i>The internet signal is also bad so they cannot join the Tuweb.</i>
<i>Interviewee 3</i>	<i>I think it is because this scheme is new for the students. I already sent the information through email but there is No. response.</i>

Another problem can be named a personalized internal constraint. It is an issue that hinders students from actively attending the Tuweb class. For instance, it can refer to their bounded responsibility or job that they cannot skip and lack of motivation. As can be seen from the transcript below:

*Table 3. Interview Transcript*

<i>Interviewee 1</i>	<i>Some of the students could not attend the tuweb because they have to teach, and they cannot leave it</i>
<i>Interviewee 2</i>	<i>The first one is their ignorance that this webinar tutorial is mandatory. Secondly, they have to work on weekend</i>
<i>Interviewee 3</i>	<i>Tutor cannot contact the students because their number is inactive. It also seems like the students are not really serious in joining tuweb.</i>
<i>Interviewee 4</i>	<i>My students attended the tuweb once, but after that they did not continue. I tried to contact them, but she said that she feel ashamed because she already left behind</i>

From both constraints that have been explained above there is nothing new regarding the reason why students are reluctant to join the online class in UT case it is called Tuweb. As has been mentioned by previous research or is a common issue that educators or online learning practitioners use to deal with a thing like job or lack of motivation is the personal

issue that students encounter when they want to join online learning and those usually can hinder students to come to the class. While the internet is a general constraint that students also need to deal with. However, a new finding that is different from previous research is the issue of the tutoring approach. Comparing a class with a high percentage of attendance (A) with a low percentage of attendance (B) reveals a unique pattern in that the class with a high level of attendance tends to have a personal approach toward students while the other class with a low level of attendance seems to have a less personal approach with the students. For instance, in class A the tutor is actively asking students why they cannot join the class as shown in this transcript:

<i>Interviewee 1</i>	<i>Personally, I always remind the students, in a group or privately.</i>
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Meanwhile, the tutor from B class is not personally contacted the students, it relies on a group of other students to reach out to the student who is not coming. As it is proven by the transcript below:

<i>Interviewee 2</i>	<i>I asked the students to inform their friends and join the Whatsapp Group.</i>
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The sum up can be seen on the table below:

<i>No</i>	<i>class</i>	<i>Approach</i>	<i>Attendance percentage</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>PBIS4205.08 (A)</i>	<b><i>personal</i></b>	<i>81,73077</i>	<i>Highest attendance</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>PBIS4204.06 (B)</i>	<b><i>Non personal</i></b>	<i>22,32143</i>	<i>Lowest attendance</i>

Since the nature of online learning is creating less interaction, I argue a choice to reach students either through a personal or nonpersonal approach like what happens in classes a and b can affect the level of student attendance toward the Tuweb class. However, due to the limit of the case that has been tested, the hypothesis needs to be tested into a wider spectrum to increase the level of external validity, yet the internal validity of this research is quite convincing since I used double data from students' attendance list and interview with the tutor. finally, it somehow can reveal one of the reasons why students from speaking classes are reluctant to attend webinar tutorials in Universitas Terbuka.



## CONCLUSION

There are several types of research have been conducted to find the reason why students are reluctant to attend the teaching-learning process since joining the classroom can affect students' learning outcomes. Due to the rise of online learning, the same trend is equally important, and it is found that there are at least three major reasons why students are reluctant to join the e-learning process. First, it can refer to the nature of e-learning where it can decrease the level of interaction that is necessarily important for students' acquisition. The second reason is the lack of competence to operate the feature in the e-learning tools and the last is student personal issues such as job and financial and many more. Based on the analysis, it is found that general external constraint and personal internal constraint is the problem that students commonly have but what I found interesting is a finding that either tutor used a personal or nonpersonal approach when they reached out the students showed a variation on the level of students' percentage on attending the Tuweb class.

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