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Facilitating Social Presence in the Synchronous and Asynchronous English Language Class in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

Researchers have been interested in the topic of social presence in the areas of communication, online learning, and media. Due to the research's limitations in Indonesia, more research should be done on social presence in online learning in higher education. In contrast to earlier studies, the current study attempted to represent the students' perspective regarding the occurrence of social presence in the synchronous and asynchronous classroom settings and the strategies used by teachers in synchronous and asynchronous English language instruction at an English Education Department of a private university in Indonesia. The study used a mix-method design using a survey of 89 students concerned with the occurrence of social presence and semi-structured interviews to twelve lecturers related to strategies to create a social presence. The Community of Inquiry Framework developed by Arbaugh et al. (2008) was used. The findings revealed that regarding social presence, most components (seven components) were categorized as high, while the two components were moderate, indicating the occurrence of the social presence elements in the learning process. Lecturers' strategies to enhance the social presence include affective, cohesive, interactive, informative, imperative, and creative strategies.
Keyword: social presence; online learning; asynchronous learning; synchronous learning; community of inquiry

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Introduction

The issue of social presence has become an interest among researchers and practitioners in education. The themes are the interest of researchers in the field of media (Daft & Lengel, 1986), communication (Collins & Murphy, 1997) and online learning (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007); (Lowenthal, Snelson, & Perkins, 2018). These researchers have established the importance of social presence. With the limitation of the research within the Indonesian context, the theme of social presence in the context of online English teaching in higher education is worthy of further study as it has become the fundamental component to ensure the success of online teaching and learning process.

The studies of social presence in online learning have been explored by several researchers. One such researcher is Cobb (2009) and Stankovska et al., (2021), who have investigated the social presence scale and social presence satisfaction from the students' perspective. The social presence scale measures the degree to which students feel connected to their peers and instructors in an online course. According to Cobb's (2009) and Stankovska's et al. (2021), findings, students who experienced a high level of social presence reported feeling more comfortable interacting and relating to others in the online environment. Additionally, these students reported higher levels of satisfaction with their overall learning experience. This suggests that creating a sense of community and fostering social connections in online courses can have a positive impact on student engagement and satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of considering social presence in the design and implementation of online learning environments to promote student success.

A study on social presence in text-based online learning environments is an important contribution to the field of online education. Miao et al., (2022) investigated how students perceive social presence in text-based environments and identified key components of a generative study theory into social presence. They found that students' understanding of social presence in text-based environments is influenced by a variety of factors, including the quality of online interactions, the level of collaboration among learners, and the role of the instructor in fostering social connections. Additionally, Miao et al., (2022) highlighted the importance of learner autonomy in building social presence in online courses, as students who take a more

active role in their learning tend to have higher levels of social presence. The findings suggest that designing and facilitating text-based online learning environments which promote collaboration and active learning can enhance students' sense of social presence and improve their learning outcomes. Furthermore, these findings provide insights into the key components of a generative study theory into social presence, which can inform the design and implementation of effective online education programs. The subsequent study was done by Greenhow and Galvin (2020) which aimed to review the literature on social presence and various types of interactions in online learning environments viewed from the perspective of a class project. The findings recommended the teachers to explore effective strategies to design and facilitate active social presence and meaningful interactions in online learning.

The most comprehensive study on the social presence in the online learning environment might be done by Garrison et al. (2007). The most recent study on this issue, however, was done by Guo et al. (2021). In their study, social presence is one of two other presences namely teaching and cognitive presence which are coined as the Community of Inquiry (COI). The studies used the COI concepts of the community of inquiry framework proposed by Garrison et al. (2007). While this study offered some practical steps in teaching students in the online environment, the data derived from the computer conference call transcripts, not from the voices from the research participants. Furthermore, literature on this issue in the context of Indonesian higher education has been scarce. In contrast to prior research endeavors, the present study endeavors to elucidate the perspectives of students regarding the execution of online learning. This inquiry delves into students' perceptions of social presence within the context of synchronous and asynchronous English language instruction within the English Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The research questions are formulated as follows: (1) What is the occurrence of social presence in the synchronous and asynchronous classroom settings? (2) What strategies do lecturers employ to foster social presence in the online learning environment? The students' beliefs in the occurrence of social presence, and the teachers' strategies in facilitating social presence in synchronous and asynchronous English language teaching in Indonesia is of utmost importance to inform best practices in online learning and help institutions provide quality education to their students. The study's findings can be used to

inform the design and implementation of effective online education programs that promote student engagement and satisfaction, leading to better learning outcomes.

Literature Review

Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous instruction is a popular approach to online learning that offers several advantages over traditional synchronous instruction. According to Ohio State Online (2020), asynchronous instruction takes place in real time, but it does not require students and teachers to be present at the same time. This flexibility is one of the main advantages of asynchronous instruction, as it allows students to learn at their own pace, giving them more control over their learning experience (Öztürk, 2021). Additionally, asynchronous instruction offers greater accessibility to learners who may have other obligations such as work, family, or other responsibilities (Alhazbi & Hasan, 2021). Asynchronous learning is particularly beneficial for students who require more time to process and understand complex course material, as it allows them to review and revisit content as often as necessary (Devi, et al., 2022). Another benefit of asynchronous instruction is that it encourages active and independent learning, as students are responsible for managing their own time and progress (Maphalala, et al., 2021). As a result, students develop essential time-management and self-discipline skills that can be beneficial beyond the online learning environment. Overall, asynchronous instruction provides a flexible and accessible approach to online learning that can promote student engagement, independence, and success.

Asynchronous learning has become a popular approach to education. This approach allows students to experience learning independently, without being restricted by time or space. Furthermore, asynchronous learning is not a new concept. Early distance education models, such as correspondence schools, laid the foundation for asynchronous learning. As Keegan (1996) notes, correspondence schools were among the earliest forms of distance education, where students would receive study materials by mail and work through them at their own pace. As technology has evolved, so has the approach to asynchronous learning, with digital platforms and tools enabling even greater flexibility and interactivity.

Asynchronous voice conferencing is a useful tool for instructional purposes, but it is not always the most practical or effective approach. According to Nichols et al., (2021) text-based

conferencing is more commonly used in post-secondary education. This assertion is supported by several other studies, including Nichols, et al. (2021), Martiniello et al., (2020), and Schram (2021). One reason for the popularity of text-based conferencing is its ease of use and accessibility. Many students are already familiar with text-based communication platforms such as email, instant messaging, and social media, making it an intuitive and accessible format. Text-based conferencing also allows for greater flexibility in terms of time and location, as students can participate from anywhere, at any time, without being restricted by time zones or scheduling conflicts. Additionally, text-based conferencing is a more inclusive format, as it provides equal access to all participants, regardless of language or communication barriers. Another advantage of text-based conferencing is that it allows for greater reflection and thoughtful responses, as participants have more time to compose their thoughts and consider their responses.

Synchronous Learning

Synchronous instruction is a popular approach to online learning, particularly in situations where real-time interaction between teachers and students is necessary. This approach involves both teachers and students participating in the learning experience at the same time (Khan, et al., 2022). One of the main benefits of synchronous instruction is the ability to engage in real-time discussion and collaboration. This can be particularly valuable in courses that require group work or discussion, as it allows for immediate feedback and fosters a sense of community among learners. Synchronous instruction can also be helpful for students who require more guidance or support from their instructors, as it allows for direct communication and personalized attention (Antonio, 2022). However, there are also some drawbacks to synchronous instruction, such as scheduling conflicts and the potential for technical issues (Nasir, 2020). To participate in synchronous instruction, students must be available at a specific time and have access to reliable internet and audiovisual equipment (Detyna, et al., 2023). Additionally, technical issues such as poor audio or video quality can detract from the learning experience and hinder effective communication (Ezra, et al., 2021).

The adoption of closed-circuit television on university campuses in the 1940s paved the way for synchronous applications of instructional technology. Video conferencing and interactive television had connected remote classes by the 1980s, allowing students to ask questions and discuss subjects (Massner, 2021). Synchronous communication and collaboration

tools, such as audioconferencing, synchronous text chat, white boards and videoconferencing are becoming more prevalent in online education.

Synchronous communication tools are an increasingly popular feature of online learning, allowing several users to communicate in real-time via text messages (Rigo & Mikuš, 2021). These tools can take many forms, including chat rooms, instant messaging, and discussion forums. In many cases, they are used as an optional component of a course, allowing students to engage in real-time discussion and collaboration as needed. One of the main benefits of synchronous communication tools is their ability to facilitate active learning and student engagement (Rossi, et al., 2021). By allowing students to interact with each other and their instructors in real-time, these tools can help foster a sense of community and collaboration among learners. Additionally, they can be particularly valuable in courses that require group work or discussion, as they allow for immediate feedback and the sharing of ideas (Moorhouse, et al., 2021).

Synchronous chat, based on a study of educators, was reportedly effective for holding virtual office hours, brainstorming, community building, team decision-making and dealing with technological challenges (Massner, 2021). As Strom (2021) pointed out, difficulty regulating larger-scale conversations, getting students online at the same time, lack of thinking time for students, and intimidation of poor typists were all identified as limits of synchronous discussion. While the implementation of synchronous discussion is more difficult to apply than that of asynchronous ones, they have the advantage of delivering a greater sense of presence and producing spontaneity (Sulha, et al., 2021).

Social Presence

Social presence, as described by Garrison (2013) and Guo et al., (2021), is the ability of members in a community of inquiry to project themselves as genuine individuals, socially and emotionally, through the medium of communication being used. Jiang and Ngien (2020) defined social presence as a person's knowledge of another person in an interaction and the subsequent appreciation of that person's interpersonal relationship. In brief, when participants are online, social presence refers to whether they believe they are engaging with actual people. As online students are forced to complete more collaborative work, social presence, which involves emotive expression, open communication, and group cohesion, becomes more crucial. Social presence

tends to improve interaction and engagement in online learning and is correlated with good learning outcomes and learner satisfaction (Nasir, 2020).

This study used the concept of the social presence as proposed by Garrison (2013) in their framework of Community of Inquiry (CoI). As education involves inquiry, Villanueva, et al. (2022) believe that the CoI is possibly the most promising tool for encouraging the confluence of critical and creative cognitive processing known as higher-order thinking. The hallmark of higher education is frequently link to the incorporation of critical thinking. As a result, it is believed that a community of inquiry is the most accepted notion for capturing the goal of higher education. Through the engagement of a community of inquiry, it is believed that practitioners may create the conditions for critical thinking, logical judgments, and understanding (Vaughan, et al., 2013). Both a sense of community and a dedication to the inquiry process are required.

Rourke, et al. (1999), Polhemus et al. (2001), and Swan (2002) have identified three categories of social presence model comprising affective, cohesive, and interactive components. These three categories are used as the basis for this study. Each category consists of code and activities to facilitate the social presence in each category's codes as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Three Categories of Social Presence

Category	Code	Activities to facilitate social presence
Affective	emotion	using conventional and unconventional expressions of emotion
	humor or sarcasm	Using irony, cajoling, teasing, understatement and or sarcasm.
	Paralanguage	Using features text outside formal syntax used to convey emotion including emoticons, exclamation, punctuation, and capitalization.
	Self-discourse	Using details of life outside the class.
Cohesive	Additional resources	using additional readings, web address or URL and other resources to assist other participants.
	greeting or salutation	using the communication techniques to support the social functions such as greetings and closures.
	Group references	addressing the groups using the pronoun we, us or our
	Social sharing	sharing information relating to students' home life
	Vocatives	using names to address students
Interactive		
	Acknowledgement	Referring directly or quotes to other posts
	Compliments or agreement	giving compliment to others or agreeing with the contents of others' message
	disagreement	Disagreeing others respectfully
	Inquiry	Asking questions

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Method

The research aimed to explore the occurrence of social presence in the synchronous and asynchronous classroom setting and to ascertain the strategies used by the lecturers to foster social presence in the online learning environment. The mixed method combining quantitative and qualitative approach was employed. The quantitative approach was used to achieve the first aim while the qualitative one was employed to meet the second research objective.

The quantitative aspect of the research focused on assessing students' satisfaction levels with the social presence component. For this, a survey was distributed online to 150 students and 98 students joined the survey. The survey aimed to figure out the occurrence of social presence aspect based on the CoI concept, a set of nine items was carefully selected from the original 34-item CoI framework to gauge the occurrence of social presence. Responses were scored using a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The Cronbach's Alpha for Social Presence, calculated using data from 287 students at four institutions, yielded an internal consistency of 0.91, as established by Arbaugh et al. (2008). This indicated an efficient measure of social presence. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistic, presenting the findings in percentage of the social presence occurrence.

The qualitative aspect of the research sought to explore the perspectives and experiences of English lecturers regarding the implementation of online learning and strategies to enhance social presence in both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Twelve lecturers teaching English at an English Education Department in Yogyakarta, who were responsible for online instruction, were selected as participants. The names of the participants were changed into pseudonyms (Andra, Bardi, Candra, Dinar, Elan, Farhan, Gian, Hani, Irene, Janu, Kellan, and Lani) to maintain their confidentiality.

The analysis of qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews involved a comprehensive and systematic process to extract meaningful insights from the rich narratives provided by the twelve participating English lecturers. This approach aimed to delve deep into their perspectives and experiences regarding online learning and the development of social presence in both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments employing data transcription, thematic coding and theoretical framework application related to CoI application,

focusing on social presence components. This served as a lens through which the qualitative data, organized through content analysis, was interpreted. The analysis aimed to explore how these social presence elements manifested in the lecturers' perspectives and experiences in designing strategies to enhance social presence in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Findings

The findings include online learning implementation, social presence in synchronous and asynchronous classes, and strategies for facilitating social presence. The detailed elaboration of each finding is presented here.

The occurrence of social presence in synchronous and asynchronous classroom settings

Table 2 shows the occurrence of nine components of 'social presence' in the online teaching and learning process. In general, the level of most components (seven components) is categorized as high, while the two components are moderate. It indicates that in the students' perception, lecturers have applied most of the elements of Social Presence successfully.

Table 2. The occurrence of 'social presence' in the online teaching and learning process

No	Components of social presence	score	level of social presence
1	The lecturers encouraged me to get to know my classmates so that I had a sense of belonging as part of the class.	3,55	Moderate
2	The lecturers encouraged me to get to know the uniqueness of each classmate well.	3,49	Moderate
3	Lecturers use MyKlass/BBB/Teams/ZOOM or other online media as communication media so that I can interact effectively.	3,87	High
4	The lecturers made me comfortable communicating through MyKlass/BBB/Teams/ZOOM or other online media.	3,74	High
5	Lecturers made me comfortable participating in discussions through MyKlass/BBB/Teams/ZOOM or other online media.	3,74	High
6	The lecturers made me feel comfortable communicating with other students online.	3,70	High
7	Lecturers make me comfortable to disagree with other students.	3,69	High
8	Lecturers encourage students to respect each other's opinions.	3,95	High
9	The lecturers encouraged me to collaborate with other students through online discussions.	3,94	High
	Average	**3,74**	**High**

The strategies lecturers employ to foster social presence in the online learning environment

Regarding strategies for facilitating social presence, there are four different strategies. These strategies include using affective, cohesive, imperative, informative, and creative strategies. Here are the detailed findings of each strategy.

Using Affective Strategies

Synchronously, the lecturers used emotional strategy, humor, and self-discourse to enhance social presence. To tie the emotional bond between herself and her students, Andra always used empathetic words such as "I am happy"and "I am concerned" when communicating with students. Farhan also used humor to create fun in the learning process.

In asynchronous learning, emotional strategy and paralanguage (nonverbal elements of communication) were used. For instance, using emotional strategy, Farhan posted encouraging and emotional words in LMS to motivate students. Paralanguage in the form of emoticon was also used by Dinar. Similarly, Janu incorporated paralanguage in a different form, "For video learning, at the beginning of the video I always show myself first to give encouragement and motivation. I use this to build closer communication with students. In the closing section, I also appear to close the presentation material."

Using cohesive strategies

Three strategies are included in this category, namely using cohesive tools to communicate with students, facilitating introduction and social interaction, and using interactive strategies when communicating with students.

Using Cohesive Tools to communicate with students.

Synchronously, lecturers applied some strategies to create cohesive communication in the learning process, including the use of greetings and salutations, group references, social sharing, and vocative strategies. Candra utilized group references by choosing informal words in addressing students, stating, "I think the choice of words we use will influence us in establishing close communication with students. For example, I often use the word "You guys" compared to the word "you," which seems formal." Hani considered the emotional bond between the lecturer and students as critical, so she applied a social sharing strategy by encouraging students to talk about their personal lives, such as hobbies, habits, hometown, and family. Candra used a vocative strategy by calling students names to value students personally.

In asynchronous learning, lecturers used similar strategies. Elan incorporated greetings and salutations. The vocative strategy was also used in asynchronous learning, as depicted in Gian's comment that to encourage each student to give feedback in the discussion forum, he called the students' names. On the other hand, Janu applied a social sharing strategy by relating the learning topic with the experiences in real life, stating:

In the discussion in my course, I sometimes relate to real experiences. For example, I asked students to write researchers or writers who were successful in their opinion. Then, they explain why they think that the person is successful.

Facilitating Introduction and Social Interaction

Facilitating introductions is the first strategy lecturers use to build a social presence synchronously or asynchronously. Synchronously, the lecturers encourage students to introduce themselves and talk about their hobbies and hometown. Lecturers explained that they positioned themselves as learning facilitators, so they should be able to use breakout rooms and design lessons encouraging student interaction, such as problem-solving approaches.

Candra pointed out the importance of the interaction. She asserted, "At the beginning of class, I always remind students that interaction in synchronous meetings is very important."

It is also interesting that the approach in teaching was important to facilitate interaction to promote social presence. Lani articulated it, "to facilitate interaction, I always use a problem-solving approach. For example, I create a scenario as a problem in designing a curriculum in Indonesia, and then students discuss solutions to the problem in small groups."

In asynchronous learning, self-introduction is done in writing using LMS. For instance, Janu explained that he asked her students to introduce themselves in the discussion forum regarding names, addresses, family members, and hobbies. More creatively, Dinar stated, "I asked students to post photos of themselves and their families on the LMS, and they described themselves and their families." In addition to photos for the introduction, the use of video and voice recording was recommended by Hani and Farhan.

Using interactive strategies when communicating to students

Under the category of interactive strategies, three specific strategies were used by lecturers in synchronous learning, namely giving compliments, allowing disagreement, and expressing inquiry. Complimenting expressions such as 'fantastic,' 'great,' and 'well done' were given by Lani when students did the tasks successfully.

In addition to the use of complimenting words, students were also encouraged to be confident in expressing disagreement in the discussion, as stated by Dinar:

> I often use discussion as a learning method. In discussions, students are certainly involved in debates where they often disagree with the views of other students. I have always stressed that in an academic context, disagreeing with other people's views is fine if they are done rationally and respectfully.

For Gian, confidence should also be cultivated in expressing inquiry. According to him, this could be done by giving opportunity for students to ask questions in synchronous learning.

The three specific strategies, including giving compliments, allowing disagreement, and expressing inquiry, were also used in asynchronous learning. Regarding giving compliments, for example, Gian acknowledged that he often wrote compliments and used a thumbs-up emoticon for any response from students in the discussion forum of LMS.

To enhance students' confidence in asynchronous learning, Candra motivated students to ask questions in the discussion forum. Meanwhile, to create a conducive atmosphere for expressing disagreement, Irene taught students how to disagree appropriately in writing their posts to the discussion forum:

> Written discussions in LMS have the same rules as oral discussions in synchronous meetings. For example, students must argue rationally. Disagreements with other people's views must be politely conveyed. So, I teach language functions to convey disagreement in a polite way like 'I'm afraid; I'm sorry but..., You may be right, but..., You might be true, but....

Using Imperative Strategies

Two strategies are used in this category, namely designing class rules and regulations together and clarifying teachers' and students' roles in the learning process.

Designing Class Rules and Regulation together

In synchronous learning, lecturers said that the active participation of students is a condition for creating social presence, and the strategy used to encourage interactive classes is to make rules about the roles that students must play. There were two ways of creating the rules. Bardi stated that to create rules, the lecturers need to do it together with the students to encourage them to obey the rules. Similarly, Janu invited students to set up the rules of synchronous learning, including turning on the camera. Secondly, Elan and Lani quoted the rules from the best practice of synchronous class, and then the students were asked for approval

to apply the rules. The rules are uploaded to the LMS so that the rules can be understood easily and viewed repeatedly.

Lecturers also applied the same strategy in encouraging students to design class rules and regulations in the asynchronous class. Dinar asked her students to post comments on the discussed rules and regulations in the discussion forum. She explained:

> In posting opinions or comments in asynchronous discussion forums, I also invite students to set rules. For example, students must be polite in posting comments or opinions, and they also need to respect the opinions of others when discussing in discussion forums at LMS.

Farhan stressed that students should remember the class rules and regulations after they discuss them by posting them in the LMS. In involving students in designing the class rules and regulations, one participant pointed out the importance of interactivity.

Clarifying teachers' and students' role in learning process.

In synchronous learning, lecturers believed that informing learning activities and understanding teachers' and students' roles to facilitate the learning process was instrumental in creating a social presence. As an implication, a facilitator must design learning activities that activate the learning process. This notion was clearly stated by Kellan, "I position myself as a learning facilitator, and in online learning, this role holds true. I always explain the role of this facilitator to students, so that I am required always to design activities that make students active."

For the creation of students' active participation in synchronous learning, in the participants' opinion, students should raise their awareness of their participative roles, such as developing interaction with others. Bardi commented about possible obstacles students face in participating in the interaction process in learning. As a result, he assisted in operating technological apparatus for synchronous learning.

Irene also emphasized the notion of role clarification for students in asynchronous learning. To make students aware of their roles, she posted the expected roles of students and her role as a learning facilitator in online learning. In addition, Janu provided space for more interaction in the discussion forum in LMS for further inquiry regarding the problems students faced in optimizing their roles in interactive online classes. Bardi used a similar strategy, "I noted

students' difficulties in taking online classes. After that I create Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the answers and then I post them on the LMS so that they can seek answers to common questions about their difficulties."

Using Informative Strategies

Two strategies are included in this category, namely discussing differences between face-to-face and online learning with students and informing lesson plans and learning methods.

Discussing Differences between Face-to-Face and online Learning with Students.

According to participants, students' knowledge of the difference between online and face-to-face learning is very important to realize their role in online learning. Participants implicitly argue that online learning must be interactive, and students should be present socially so that dynamic and collaborative classes can be created. Candra stated that because the nature of the online and face-to-face meetings was different, this difference must be understood by students.

For two other participants, attendance in the synchronous meeting was important since more social presence would be possible, and interactivity might occur in the learning process. Elan pointed out, "To keep the synchronous class interactive and all students participating, attendance is one of the scoring criteria that contributes to the final grade." Irene expressed the same concern.

A similar strategy in terms of asking students to discuss the differences between online and face-to-face learning was implemented by lecturers using asynchronous learning mode. However, the strategy was done through the discussion forum in LMS. Kellan stated, "To ensure student participation in asynchronous meetings, I posted a rule in LMS that students must participate actively in the learning process."

In addition, video learning was used by Gian to help his students enhance their understanding of the learning materials. He explained that to increase students' understanding of the learning materials in his course, he required students to watch and study his presentation videos related to the chapters in the course.

Informing Lesson Plans and Learning Methods.

In synchronous learning, the participants explained that for students could participate actively in the learning process, they should be made understand about matters related to their learning process. For example, Elan, Farhan, and Janu underlined the importance of discussing

lesson plans with students. Specifically, Janu said that if students were familiar with the lesson plan, they would understand the learning targets, learning activities, learning materials, and assessments. Hence, as pointed out by Janu, given the understanding of their learning expectation of the courses, students could optimize their participation in the learning process.

A deeper understanding of the learning expectation could be done by discussing the learning materials in groups before the class starts. Lani revealed this:

> For all meetings, I have conveyed what study materials they need to study, and I informed them in synchronous meeting that before they join a class, they must first discuss some of the questions in the study material with their group so that when the topic is discussed, they can participate in presentations or discussion in class.

Also, Andra stated that the use of student-centered learning was encouraged to promote social interaction among students.

Like in synchronous learning, the lecturers tried to add their students' understanding of the lesson plans by posting them in the LMS for asynchronous learning. Hani stated that by using this strategy, students could always check the activities and learning content of each meeting. Similarly, Candra posts the syllabus in the LMS to achieve the same aim:

> I uploaded the syllabus which contains learning activities, assignment and the rubrics for every meeting in the LMS, and at every meeting, I always open this syllabus and read it to students so that they always remember their learning targets.

A creative strategy was also initiated by Elan, namely making a presentation video explaining the lesson plan posted on YouTube. According to him, this allows students to check the learning target every time by watching it.

Using Creative Strategies

Maintaining Flexibility

Four participants referred to flexibility as a strategy to create a social presence in synchronous learning. The notion of flexibility was associated by participants with various representations, including various platforms, as expressed by Irene:

> I always maintain flexibility in online teaching. For example, in terms of activity, I use various tools such as Microsoft Teams, MyKlass (LMS), and Kahoot, and I let students choose which tool they prefer. Students are happy to use alternative tools to avoid boredom.

Other participants related the term flexibility with various online learning applications such as Jamboard and Padlet (Gian), various assignment models (Kellan), and a variety of discussion types (Candra). Specifically, Gian believed that communication among students could be intensified using applications naturally designed to promote interaction. As a result, the sensation of face-to-face communication could be felt by students.

In asynchronous learning, the term flexibility was understood by the lecturers as flexible learning in terms of time and place, types of learning materials, and mobile learning through cell phones. In terms of flexibility in time and place, Dinar stated:

> Naturally, asynchronous meetings are flexible, meaning that students can open and study learning materials anywhere and anytime. For any type of learning materials, students can flexibly access various formats such as articles, books, and videos that I upload in the LMS.

Regarding the flexibility of learning materials, Hani said that she recorded the videos and uploaded them to YouTube. However, for students who had difficulty with the internet connection, she also posted PowerPoint Presentations (PPT) in the LMS. Like Dinar, she also provided a discussion forum for students to express their opinions of the videos and PPTs they had learned. Other students should give responses to the post. Hani acknowledged that interaction should still exist in asynchronous learning so that students would not feel alienated by lecturers and their fellows.

For enhancing interaction in asynchronous learning, Lani said that mobile learning could facilitate interaction by providing interactive applications such as WA and discussion forums in LMS.

Discussions

The first aim of this study is to ascertain the occurrence of social presence in the synchronous and asynchronous class. Seven components, out of nine components, were regarded highly occurred and only two components were considered as moderately occurred. This suggested that teachers have succeeded in facilitating students with interaction and engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Based on finding two, namely lecturers' strategies to enhance the social presence, thematic findings were found namely: facilitating introduction and social interaction; making

rules and regulation together; discussing the differences between face to face and online learning; encouraging students to follow the rules and regulation; informing course learning outcomes of the course, learning materials, learning activities and assessment; maintaining flexibility; using affective strategies in the learning process; using cohesive strategies to communicate with students; and using interactive strategies when communicating to students.

The findings suggest that some strategies used by participants related to three categories of social presence, namely affective, cohesive, and interactive as proposed by Rourke et al. (1999) as well as Polhemus et al. (2001) and Swan (2002) which have been found to be implemented by lecturers both in synchronous and asynchronous learning. Regarding the ***affective strategy*** in synchronous, emotional engagement was built between lecturers and students by the lecturers' use of empathic words. The finding also confirmed the use of humor and encouraging students to explain their personal information including their hometown, food, and tourism attractions.

Some teaching practices categorized in the affective domain were present asynchronously including the use of emoticon to support the encouraging and emotional atmosphere and the provision of motivational opening in recording the video to be learnt by students. Hence the sub-categories of emotion and paralanguage element have been used by the participants. However, more various strategies of enhancing social presence were used synchronously rather than asynchronously.

Regarding ***cohesive strategy***, the sub-categories including greeting and salutation, group references, social sharing and vocative were present based on the participants' responses in the interview. In the asynchronous meeting, only vocative and greeting or salutations were present. These findings suggest that in the cohesive category, lecturers found more various strategies in the synchronous meeting than in the asynchronous one.

Concerning ***the interactive strategy***, synchronously, lecturers used compliments to enhance social presence by giving compliments to students. Additionally, lecturers also applied learning methods which allow students to disagree with other students appropriately. Students are also encouraged to ask questions in the interaction process. Hence, three sub-categories of social presence including giving compliments, facilitating disagreement and expressing inquiry were implemented by lecturers to enhance the social presence in their teaching. The same sub-

categories were also present related to enhancing social presence in an asynchronous mode, namely facilitating disagreement, and expressing inquiry.

New Categories: informative, imperative, and creative strategies

In addition to affective, cohesive, and interactive strategies for strategies in enhancing social presence as proposed by Rourke et al. (1999), Polhemus et al. (2001), and Swan (2002), other types of categories were revealed in the study including informative, imperative, and creative categories.

Figure 1. Strategies to enhance social presence

Regarding the informative category, to enhance the social presence, lecturers give information to students related to the lesson plans, assignments, and assessment, learning methods and learning materials both in synchronous and asynchronous meeting. In receiving the information, however, students were not passive recipient of information. Instead, they were given opportunity to have purposeful discussion on the learning lesson plans and learning materials. This is consistent with the findings of Guo et al., (2021) who found a link between community and group cohesion and better outcomes. Here it is suggested that social presence in a community of inquiry must lead to close, meaningful connections. It is necessary to have a thorough understanding of how social presence changes or develops within a focused online community.

With respect to imperative category, asynchronously the lecturers develop social presence by involving students to set the rules together. Students are also encouraged to discuss the classroom rules and regulation so that they felt a part of the community. This idea is supported by Villanueva et al., (2022), who identified three stages of a sense of belonging to a community, with participants feeling a part of the community being one of the key stages.

Concerned with creative category, keys to maintain flexibility in online learning, as acknowledged by participants, is creativity in using learning tools and online learning application to promote interaction. As Garrison and Arbaugh (2007) pointed out, three elements of social presence include open communication, groups cohesion and teaching presence. These, in fact, required teachers to creatively capitalize on technological apparatus and to create activities that promote those three aspects.

Conclusion and Implication

The biggest challenge in online learning is the lack of interaction. Social presence is imperative in maintaining the social interaction in the online learning environment. The importance of social presence which includes emotional expression, open communication, and group cohesion increases when online students are required to perform more collaborative work. Research indicates that social presence is associated with positive learning outcomes and learner satisfaction and tends to enhance interaction and engagement in online learning.

In an English Education Department of a state university of Yogyakarta, online learning was employed through both asynchronous and synchronous modes. Regarding the implementation of the online learning, while some findings corroborate the previous studies, some others disagree with existing studies. The startling finding is that while face to face learning model is still favored by students, they prefer to have online discussion through learning management system. A learning activity which contains less interaction, namely quiz, become students' most preferred activity. However, regarding the occurrence of social presence, students' perception suggests that there is high occurrence of the elements of social presence in the online teaching. Concerned with the strategies in facilitating the social presence, in addition to the strategies like the existing literature (affective, cohesive, interactive), new strategies are found, namely imperative, informative, and creative strategies, thus extending the previous studies. It is

expected that this research will raise the teachers' awareness of the importance of social presence in enhancing students' engagement to support success in learning.

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