

Post-pandemic social cohesiveness in English language learning: Actors' capacity transformation

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Abstract

This study explores forms of social cohesiveness, the factors that encourage the realization of social cohesiveness, and the impact of social cohesiveness on actors involved in learning English after the Covid-19 pandemic. As the primary research data, the research employs the qualitative descriptive research method based on interviews with ten students from rural areas in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. For secondary data, the authors employed theoretical studies and previous research results from books, articles, and other scientific publications. The findings of this study suggest that there has been a positive interaction where teachers and students strengthen each other in the English learning process after the Covid-19 pandemic. This interaction is seen to foster social cohesiveness, which can be a teaching innovation for achieving learning targets. Social cohesiveness becomes a part of the process of transforming the capacity of each actor and is a form of social resilience in learning English after the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings implicate the developing humanistic innovations of English language teaching in a rural setting and recognize the peculiar limitations of the setting.

Keywords: English language learning; post-pandemic; social cohesiveness

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Post-pandemic changes and challenges have become the order and impacted many universities. From state universities to private universities, the impact of worldwide restrictions is felt with consequent limitations to human activity (Lamsal, 2022; Mu'minah et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2021; Zhu & Liu, 2020). For universities with existing online learning tools and platforms, it may not be difficult anymore to match learning management with social resilience. However, it will be a big challenge for universities that are still in the process of developing learning tools and platforms. This condition will be more complicated by the possibility of the inability of learning actors who are not fully conversant with the tools of technology. The learning actors here are the students and teachers whose technology knowledge readiness plays a vital role in the success of the learning experience.

Several studies show that formal learning in the post-pandemic era can still take place in schools or campuses, but with complex challenges (Rodriguez et al., 2021; Tumanishvili, 2021). The learning process is still in the form of online lectures with the application of health protocols, the prevention of group activities, and the sanitization of buildings and transportation facilities (Tumanishvili, 2021). Some campus programs even set up online learning platforms and tools. For example, the learning experience in Indonesia shows that lecturers must use a variety of online platforms to facilitate online learning (Ahmadi & Syahrani, 2022; Damayanti, 2020; Mazulfah et al., 2022). Lecturers feel that online learning is quite effective even though it is not as effective as direct learning. This, in essence, implies that technology cannot replace face-to-face learning because face-to-face learning enhances lecturer-student interaction in education (Putra, 2021; Rachmah, 2020; Silvhiany, 2022). Several online learning challenges have also been identified in several categories. These include mental preparation to implement technology-based learning, students' cognitive weakness, limited facilities, and school readiness to use ICT in several learning studies, especially in English (Faridah, 2022).

Challenges from the impact of globalization and the pandemic era appear to have closed up the gap between language and society. This closed gap has accommodated the discipline of language and the different forms of communication in society, and goes to show that cohesiveness in language learning is not only defined as a strength in a community or group but serves as reinforcement for cohesion in the educational system (Bianco, 2016; Rasyid et al., 2021). This is a practical demonstration of cohesion in the educational process whether in large groups (all educational society) or small groups (between teacher and student) because the differences or limitations existing within the group can be merged to underscore a cohesive value. Cohesiveness complements

or aids the achievement of group goals (Croissant & Walkenhorst, 2019). To further support this assertion, is the notion that cohesiveness exists because of group performance. The goals of the group will be noticed while group members realize unity even in their diversity.

This example of cohesiveness is closely related to social relations. The point is that the individual human being is part of a combination of structure and position in social life (Wormer, 2017). Social cohesiveness supports social solidarity as part of an important issue in social life. Social cohesiveness is a crucial factor in human communication because it involves elements of the social mind, learning, and transformational communication, and depicts the forging of unity in the midst of the diversity that comes to play during the interaction (Bianco, 2016). Social cohesiveness can be found from the study of social resilience in small social groups to larger communities or national societies (Croissant & Walkenhorst, 2019; Fonseca et al., 2019; Rodríguez et al., 2021; Zamecnik et al., 2022).

Resilience which is defined as an effortful process to overcome adversities and threats (Tülüce, 2018) is a successful adaptation to navigate challenges that arise from physical, mental, and emotional maturity, as well as from its accompanying attitudinal changes (American Psychological Association, n.d.). Moreover, resilience is related to aspects of human psychology which include coping mechanisms or social activities in controlling stress (Chaturvedi, 2022). Humans, the main object of resilience, require a social interaction that incorporates interactivity. Some of these interaction practices become social resilience both in small and large groups (Bozdağ & Ergün, 2021; Gibberd, 2017; Hartwig et al., 2020; Tülüce, 2018). For example, study groups are a study of social resilience in a small community between teachers, students, and learning support materials.

Learning resilience can be seen from the interaction between learning actors and other supporting elements. Learning actors are a part of the biotic elements while other supporting elements such as curricula and teaching materials represent abiotic elements of learning (Kementarian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2017). According to Hall and Kidman, as cited in Phan (2020), the interaction between the learner and the teacher is bound by a learning support element, known as the content used. This interaction is in the form of an inverted pyramid with the axis of the teacher on the left, being the student, and on the right side is the learning content. Between students and teachers, there is a learning activity with the output in the form of a report of assessments. Between the teacher and the learning content, there is a teacher's role in conveying knowledge.

Also, between students and learning content, there is an understanding of learning covering domains of learning. Educational transformation after the pandemic has indeed been felt, and it is possible to change the pattern of interaction, not just through three elements, but also through technology that

binds all three (Putra, 2021; Wicaksono, 2020). Technology serves to enrich the learning experience because technology is a tool to achieve learning goals (Wicaksono, 2020). Learning control remains the lecturer's responsibility as they control learning endurance. Students have high expectations from lecturers because lecturers have the potential to bring balanced and sustainable social conditions of learning to develop students' potential (Jorge, 2020).

Teachers perform the crucial role of mapping students' English skills and limitations in learning English. This initial data becomes the material for planning and evaluating English learning (Abrori, 2017). This is critical, especially in the condition of students from rural areas who have been discovered to have many limitations. Learning English through a virtual learning series is strenuous to implement (Das et al., 2021; Octaberlina et al., 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2021). The solutions offered by teachers to students will be more varied and complex because the difficulties faced by students may differ between urban and rural areas. In some aspects, English receptive skills, listening and reading, may be maximized, but not with expressive skills like speaking and writing. Much effort is required to apply skills that involve dialogue or conversation in the learning series. Therefore, the ability of teachers to inspire confidence and motivate students is of tremendous importance (Kusuma, 2015; Riyanti, 2019; Xu, 2012). The perspective of the English teacher should be in laying a foundation to encourage learning, induce motivation, underline achievement, and factor in ability by taking into account the diverse functions and competencies of students (Xu, 2012).

This study explores how the learning actors deal with difficulties from the perspective of social resilience. It focuses on English teaching because this course is considered a burden for students who live in rural areas. Previous research has shown that English is considered to have its challenges because it is difficult to get support from learners, their parents, their environment, as well as from the quality of teachers (Harlina & Yusuf, 2020). This support significantly affects the motivation and readiness of local learners for English learning (Pham, 2021). In addition, this study also aims to show the relevance of social cohesiveness to the transformation capacity of learning actors, in this case, lecturers who teach English, in addressing the difficulties of students who come from various rural areas in West Kalimantan.

METHOD

The study of social cohesiveness in English learning in the post-pandemic period used qualitative research methods with empirical approaches through interviews and documentation. Ten students who had completed the odd semester (September-January) academic year 2020/2021 of general or special English courses at State Universities in West Kalimantan were interviewed by the researchers. The number of respondents was taken through the purposive

sampling technique. The study employed this technique with consideration of phenomenology study and consisted of rationalization, transparency, and tolerance of ambiguities of the issue. These students came from rural areas in West Kalimantan and had just completed online learning at their respective residences. Post-pandemic categorization in learning was calculated for the next year of the Covid-19 pandemic, which existed in Indonesia, since the enactment of Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 on March 31, 2020, by the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo (“Kebijakan PSBB Harus Mendapat ‘Restu’ Pemerintah Pusat,” 2020). The respondents were interviewed online in 2021 using an online form (Google form) with detailed information about the respondents as described in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Identity

No	Participant Code	Age	Gender	Origin	The Distance from Regional Origin to Provincial Capital
1	Participant 1	21	M	SP I Madani Mekarsari Village, Sungai Raya District, Kubu Raya Regency	35,9 km
2	Participant 2	19	F	Kubu Village, Kubu District, Kubu Raya Regency	51 km
3	Participant 3	19	F	Sungai Kerawang Regency, Batu Ampar District, Kubu Raya Regency	103 km
4	Participant 4	19	M	Parit Baru Village, Selakau District, Sambas Regency	170,6 km
5	Participant 5	19	F	Penjajap Village, Pemangkat District, Sambas Regency	184,4 km
6	Participant 6	19	F	Bonti Village, Bonti District, Sanggau Regency	198,6 km
7	Participant 7	20	F	Kuala Rosan Village, Meliau District, Sanggau Regency	204,7 km
8	Participant 8	19	F	Paribang Baru Village, Tempunak District, Sintang Regency	301 km
9	Participant 9	19	F	Nanga Serawai Village, Serawai District, Sintang Regency	355 km
10	Participant 10	19	F	Riam Danau Village, Jelai Hulu District, Ketapang Regency	437 km

(Source: Primary Data, 2021)

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the respondents who came from the farthest areas were in Riam Danau Village, Jelai Hulu District, Ketapang Regency. This was a distance of 437 km, which could be reached in approximately 9 hours and 29 minutes by land. Other respondents were from the

closest area to the provincial capital of West Kalimantan, namely SP I Madani Mekarsari Village, Sungai Raya District, Kubu Raya Regency, which is 35.9 km (1 hour 13 minutes) (Based on the estimated count from Google Map).

FINDINGS

The following, Figure 1, is the data on difficulties encountered by rural students in the English learning process in the post-pandemic situation.

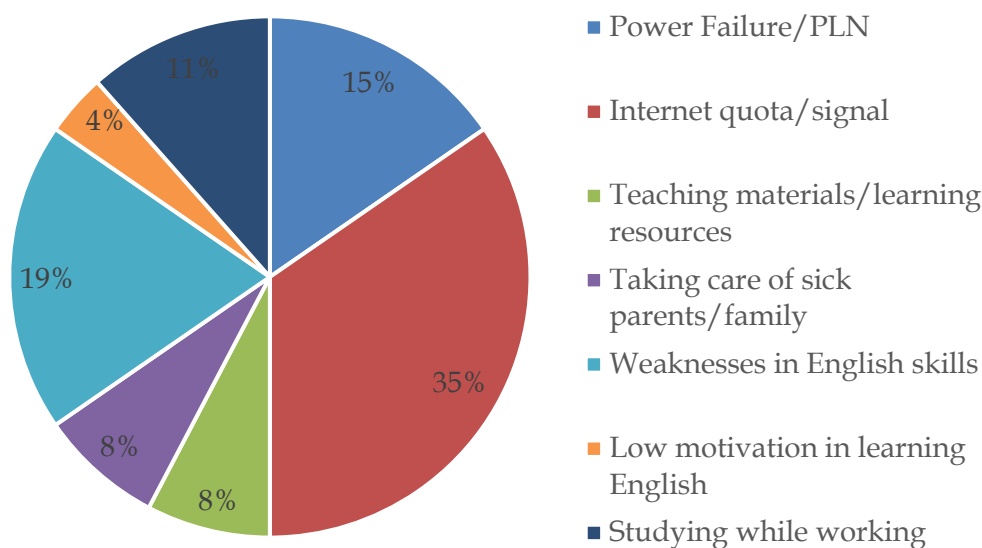


Figure 1. Difficulties Encountered in Post-Pandemic English Learning
(Source: Primary Data, 2021)

Based on Figure 1, the data showed that the most considerable difficulties faced by students from regions in West Kalimantan based on the three highest responses are firstly related to the limited internet quota/internet signal faced by nine students (35%). The second is followed by the problem of the weak English ability of the students themselves faced by five students (19%). The third is power failures, with as many as four students (15%).

From the interview pieces, the authors then analyzed data through a series of content analyses based on the issues, themes, and motives contained in the interview quotes. In this way, these pieces could be categorized through coding and by interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). The results of the interview about the English lecturer role regarding the students who encountered difficulties are exposed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Respondent Interview about the English Lecturer Role Regarding Students who Encountered Difficulties

No.	Respondent Code	Solution forms provided by the English lecturer	Interpretation Elements
1	Participant 2	“The solution is that the lecturer tells us to save money because when we need it, we have spare money. For instance, in the matter of buying internet data. Another solution is that we must be able to manage our time and conditions, in case, if there is no internet connection at our place. For instance, we have to go to a place with a good connection to the internet, thus, we can follow up on the course and we do not miss it. In this matter, we have to be independent in learning.”	Learning setting and social sensitivity
2	Participant 3	“The English lecturer allows those of us, who have difficulty in terms of access to the internet connection, not to follow virtual face-to-face meetings via Zoom platform since not all students have a good internet connection.”	Learning setting and social sensitivity
3	Participant 1	“We are allowed to log in to virtual face-to-face meetings by joining altogether a close friend’s account. Moreover, we also get a dispensation for the assignment given.”	Learning setting and social sensitivity
4	Participant 10	“... (She) always teaches us patiently, gently, and understands our lack of fluency in English. She always thinks positively that we (my comrades and I), surely can be good at English, as long as we work harder. Therefore, she suggests we read more written English, listen to English songs, and, for sure, enrich our English vocabulary, if we want to be proficient in English.	Social sensitivity and learning management

No.	Respondent Code	Solution forms provided by the English lecturer	Interpretation Elements
5	Participant 6	"... (She) gives us particular time for the assignment, thus, we (my comrades and I) can nicely manage the time and not in a rush in finishing it. Moreover, at the beginning of the semester, the lecturer handed out a contract for the course. Besides, she also firstly asked about the regularly used application and easily accessed by her students."	Learning setting and learning management
6	Participant 9	"The lecturer gives plenty of time for accomplishing the assignments. Thus, the students may work on them ahead of time to avoid the internet connection barrier."	Learning setting and learning management
7	Participant 5	"... the lecturer provides input and tips. She conveys that learning English can be easier by transliterating surrounding things into English. It is a good way for us to remember the vocabulary since the things are around us."	Social sensitivity and learning management
8	Participant 7	"(She) always gives enough time for her students so that they can complete the assignment and send it on time."	Learning setting and learning management
9	Participant 4	"...(she) does not burden her students by omitting overload assignments and tied-up schedule of class meetings."	Learning setting, social sensitivity, and learning management
10	Participant 8	"We (my comrades and I) are allowed to join with a friend who owns a laptop, in case, there is a virtual meeting."	Learning setting

(Source: Primary Data, 2021)

Based on the data, the researchers interpreted teaching innovation in the three interactions. First, there is an interaction between lecturers and students in the form of group resilience. This interaction is evidenced by data collected by authors on how lecturers and students provide feedback to each other. When students have difficulties in learning, the lecturer provides solutions to the

problems that the students face. Lecturers provide opportunities for students to accept the solutions offered by the lecturers and may choose the most effective solution to solve their problems. Lecturers in this condition are not rigid and idealistic. Humanizing humans through agreements that do not burden students becomes concrete evidence of the existence and benchmarks of the success of group resilience. As one interview excerpt says: “The lecturer gives more time for working on assignments so that students can work on them ahead of time to avoid any network problem” (Participant 9, personal communication, February 15, 2021). The slack time for doing assignments is the best solution to overcoming internet problems for several students from several rural areas of West Kalimantan. This solution is mostly found in the results of student interviews on lecturer responses related to student problems, through the experiences of four participants.

Secondly, there is an opportunity for interaction between students in the form of peer resilience. The evidence of students working together can be seen through the meeting room facilities provided by teachers in online learning. In particular, some regulations allow students to join a meeting account if there are network problems. Peers, in this case, become a close part of maintaining the learning resilience of fortunate students with adequate facilities for students who have network limitations. This is as stated in the following interview excerpt: “We are allowed to log in to virtual face-to-face meetings by joining altogether a close friend’s account” (Participant 1, personal communication, February 15, 2021). Joining a meeting account in online learning was found in the results of student interviews on lecturer responses related to student problems, with as many as two participants.

Thirdly, there is an existence of social resilience within lecturers, students, and learning support elements to overcome learning problems in the form of learning resilience. This interaction is evidenced by several solutions that lecturers offered to address deficiencies in English skills and the difficulty of obtaining internet quotas during the post-pandemic period. Lecturers and students are the main actors of learning as biotic elements. In addition, teaching materials and learning resources, tools, methods, time, and place of learning, including supporting documents, are part of the abiotic elements. Both are fused in a triangle of interrelated and influenced interactions within the components. From this item emerged solutions related to more humanist policies in the form of interpretation elements, namely the selection of learning settings (time, place, and application according to the needs and abilities of students) for as many as eight participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9), as stated in the following script of the interviews: “The English lecturer allows those of us, who have difficulty in terms of access to the internet connection, not to follow virtual face-to-face meetings via Zoom platform since not all students have a good internet connection” (Participant 3, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

The other interpretation element is social sensitivity (patience, philanthropy, positivity, humanity, “solutive”, wise, and economical) as many as six participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10), as stated in the following script of the interviews: “We are allowed to log in to virtual face-to-face meetings by joining altogether a close friend’s account. Moreover, we also get a dispensation for the assignment given” (Participant 1, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

Closely followed is learning management (learning planning, implementation, and learning assessment) based on the answers of six participants (Participants 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10), as stated in the following script of the interviews: “The lecturer provides input and tips. She conveys that learning English can be easier by transliterating surrounding things into English. It is a good way for us to remember the vocabulary since the things are around us” (Participant 5, personal communication, February 15, 2021).

The results confirmed that teacher-student interaction not only positively influences learning effects but also has a positive impact on learning effects through the supporting elements in the learning interaction.

DISCUSSION

In this section, the authors discuss the research findings from two points of view which are; the form of social cohesiveness in post-pandemic English learning interactions and the relevance of social cohesiveness to the transformation of the actor's capacity for learning English after the pandemic. Social cohesiveness in post-pandemic English learning can be seen in the relationship between biotic elements (lecturers and students) and abiotic elements of learning (tools, media, administration, facilities, and infrastructure). Social cohesiveness is shown in three forms as follows:

The first is social responsiveness. In the process of learning English in the post-pandemic period, a sensitive attitude emerged between the parties involved, namely lecturers and students. Responsiveness appears in the form of responsive attitudes and behavior of lecturers to students in relation to the difficulties faced by students. Sensitivity is evidenced in the form of student feedback to lecturers or vice versa throughout the entire learning process. Responsiveness is also manifested in the affection of lecturers who are humanistic in responding to student difficulties (García-Moya et al., 2020). The factors that affect the form of sensitivity in learning English are internal and external. Internal factors are from within the lecturers and students themselves, more specifically in the nature and mood of the individual. Health can also be included in internal factors because health affects the nature and mood of an individual. The maturity of the lecturers reviewed in teaching performance can foster student enthusiasm to continue learning in online learning settings (Wahab

& Iskandar, 2020). This issue is also thought to affect the form of sensitivity in this social cohesiveness.

The second is motivation. This study defines motivation as learning support. Learning support can be in the form of learning policies or regulations, learning tools or materials, and study tips or tricks. Learning support can be classified into abiotic elements or learning content elements. Support can be in the form of affirmation and affection by looking at the difficulties faced. The factors that influence the motivation pattern in learning English are due to internal and external in nature. Internal factors are weak English skills and low student motivation to learn English (Fareed et al., 2016; Li & Dong, 2020). Meanwhile, external factors are related to technology (including the internet, applications, and electricity supply), economic, and family conditions. The limited circumstances of a person require motivation in the form of support and solutions (Makur et al., 2021; Ulfa & Mikdar, 2020). In the end, someone who manages to survive adversity suggests they might have received tremendous support.

The third is collaboration. The researcher defines collaboration as a form of cooperation to achieve goals. The goal here is the goal of achieving the learning target. Collaboration can be seen in the form of social resilience between lecturers, students, and supporting elements of learning English, especially the use of technology to overcome learning problems that shape learning resilience (Kukulaska-Hulme & Lee, 2019; Meurers & Dickinson, 2017; Mondahl & Razmerita, 2014). The social resilience of students in learning English cannot be realized without collaboration between social actors (lecturers and students). The factors that influence the form of collaboration are the need for time, place, and learning applications according to abilities. Another factor is the curriculum that must be completed in one course at a scheduled time. This curriculum propels lecturers to prepare for learning management (learning planning, implementation, and learning assessment). Without collaboration, what has been prepared in the curriculum cannot run smoothly (Kukulaska-Hulme & Lee, 2019).

The next discussion deals with the relevance of social cohesiveness to the transformation of the actor's capacity for learning English after the pandemic. The authors argue that the existence of social cohesiveness as evidenced in the forms of learning English changes the virtual learning order into needs-based humanist virtual learning. Need-based humanistic virtual learning makes humans the main object in the assessment through a series of learning processes (Jorge, 2020; Putra, 2021; Wicaksono, 2020). The focus of the research is once again the process with the hope that the learning outcomes also meet the learning targets. Humanistic virtual learning based on student needs shows several principles-namely: 1) There is an improvement in communication between lecturers and students under limited conditions. This communication improvement cannot be separated from the decrease in egocentricity and the idealization of lecturers from high expectations into shared expectations

according to the need priorities in the emotional and spiritual list of lecturers and students. There is much pressure due to the pandemic on aspects of human life so much that it gives rise to understanding in communication and it is evident the teachers here play a substantial role in adapting to all conditions (Giovannella et al., 2020).

The intensity of communication continues because the media encourages and allows for staying connected. A high level of connection between learning actors shows more positive emotions than those with low connectivity (Baltà-Salvador et al., 2021). 2). Competition among students to get the best rank is no longer a priority in fulfilling learning outcomes. The interests of individuals in competitions among students are eroded through new standardized learning. In this case, what is important is that all assignments are submitted on time, with flexibility in the time allowance from the lecturer, keeping in mind the limitations of the network. Moreover, honesty is included in the student's assessment, and from this perception, the selection of assessment methods can be described appropriately for learning English according to the student's needs (Koris & Pál, 2021). (3) The values of social sensitivity in the form of being patient, gentle, humanist, and economical can be attributed as internal factors of the success of learning. The involvement of intellectual actors (lecturers) who are in control of learning can optimize emotions in the teaching and learning process. Social responsiveness from both lecturers and students is part of the affective component of learning, which is one of the internal factors that determine the success of learning (Cristóvão et al., 2017).

From the above three perspectives, the authors emphasize that the insight of humanism in post-pandemic English learning in rural students in West Kalimantan has been unconsciously formed in a series of learning interactions. The concept of humanizing humans in post-pandemic conditions can erode the idealization of lecturers to become humanist lecturers. Lecturers believe in humanizing students by trusting them, providing development opportunities, directing not threatening, and appreciating every learning process they go through (García-Moya et al., 2020; Gui-dong, 2018). This condition is due to the restrictions and uncertainties that usually accompany emergency situations. This also strengthens the research findings that the provision of a user-friendly platform is important to serve as a liaison between teachers and peers (Qureshi et al., 2022). In this case, the authors emphasize the concept of social resilience in human-based learning as part of the inclusion of sense and meaning in online learning. Social resilience in a learning group grows in interactions that encourage the principle of seeing and empowering every human being as an individual with potential (Hartwig et al., 2020). What is needed is what the lecturer provides and is still along the path of the English learning curriculum itself.

CONCLUSION

This study explored post Covid-19 pandemic forms, factors, and impact on actors involved in learning English. It recognizes the impact of social cohesiveness as an aftermath of the pandemic. The learning actors were the students and teachers whose technology knowledge readiness played a vital role in the success of the learning. The study employed the qualitative descriptive research approach as the primary research data, with interviews with ten students from rural areas in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. For secondary data, the authors relied on theoretical studies and previous research results from books, articles, and other scientific publications. This research did not focus on learning outcomes but looked into how to deal with challenges from the perspective of social resilience.

Findings reveal a transformation of the capacity of learning actors in the concept of virtual humanist learning. This concept arises as a result of various factors that support the post-pandemic English learning process, especially for students who come from rural areas in West Kalimantan. Despite their environmental and other limitations, students from particular regions in West Kalimantan received feedback from their lecturers on how to overcome the problems they faced in the series of English learning processes. Social resilience in a teaching and learning group becomes real because the lecturer's capacity as a humanist actor becomes meaningful to support learning achievement. This is evidenced by the existence of group resilience, peer resistance, and learning resilience from the combined interaction of biotic and abiotic elements of learning.

Since this research does not focus on learning outcomes but on how to deal with difficulties from the perspective of social resilience. In the future, continued research with considerable sample data can be carried out to find the effect of social cohesiveness on student learning outcomes. To sum up, this study recommends the findings as part of the socialization of humanist learning for lecturers and students, irrespective of recognized limitations. Human empowerment and the respective roles in learning are a substantial part of supporting education development. Like any technology that is developed and used, lecturers must still include elements of social responsiveness, motivation, and collaboration. Learning with technology cannot replace the human position as the main actor in education.

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