

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Indonesia, English was considered as an important subject since Indonesian government included English in the schools' curriculum. Nowadays, English could be learnt easily due to the rapid development of technology and internet. Therefore, the English learning did not have to be done in classroom environments with desks, chairs and blackboards anymore since it could be done millions of miles away through online learning. It made the students took advantage of self-paced learning environments in which they had fully control over their pace of learning, information flow, selection of learning activities, and time management, yet if they had a big responsibility in their independent learning. Since improving Indonesian education was one of the priorities of the Indonesian government, technology was also used to provide a meaningful teaching and learning process. As a tool in supporting the teaching and learning process, online learning provided an innovative lesson which could be enjoyed by the students. However, even if online learning could support the students to learn independently, yet it could not replace the conventional way of teaching and learning process since students did not gain the same amount of knowledge due to their lack of material understanding (Sihaloho, 2020; W. Zhang et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, the entire world was in a global pandemic since the late 2019 which was caused by the corona virus outbreak. Even if the vaccine had been found, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that vaccine itself would not stop the pandemic. Some people around the world had been vaccinated, but still the vaccine was not 100% effective and could not fully prevent the transmission. It was affecting the whole industries including educational industry. As an effort to prevent virus transmission, all of the countries including Indonesia issued several policies regarding this pandemic. At first, *work from home* policy was done to require all people to do anything at home as much as possible. However, due to the invention

of the vaccine, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia issued form letter No. 4 in 2021 about face-to-face learning implementation, which was signed on 13th September 2021. One of the instructions was to do the teaching and learning conventionally by applying health protocol and/or implementing online learning. This form letter was issued in order to prioritize students, teachers, and all of the school stakeholders' health so that the transmission would not expand.

Based on the government instruction, the learning activities nowadays were done both face-to-face and online. Actually doing online learning was not a new thing for some schools. Some schools had been applied online learning as a teaching and learning support before the pandemic. Based on the study by Shahnaz & Gandana (2021), some teachers and students who normally lived in the city had no problem in applying online learning since the internet access was mostly good and most of the people already had their own *smartphone*. However, for those who lived in the country side might have some problem in implementing this kind of way of teaching and learning since the internet access was poor and most of them did not have *smartphone*. A study by Febrianto et al., (2020) found out that some students preferred conventional learning. Social, economic and cultural factors were important indicators that online learning had not been able to be effectively carried out in a number of regions in Indonesia. Schools in rural area were not ready yet to welcome the latest learning methods and they were still comfortable using conventional methods. Luckily, since the spread of corona virus was decreasing, the teaching and learning process were now done both face-to-face and online.

Based on the preliminary study at one of the schools in Buleleng, SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula did the online learning asynchronously, but it was in accordance to the schedules of the subject. Students had to present in a group chat at the time given of the subject's schedule. WhatsApp was used as the main application to communicate between students and teachers, yet sometimes a meeting using Zoom or Google Meet was done. The learning materials and assignments were also given through it or Google Classroom. For the test or quiz, the teachers mostly used Google Form to

make it easy for the teacher to assess it. Unfortunately, it was not fair for some of the students who could not do the online learning since they did not have the facility to do it. Therefore, in order to do learning process evenly, those students who did not have the facility were told to come to school to be given the same material as in the online learning. Since the face-to-face learning implementation was restricted, students had to learn independently mostly at home through online learning. For almost two years of online learning implementation, students' experiences could be used as a national evaluation to know the readiness of Indonesia education in implementing online learning.

Regardless of these hard times, teachers and students had been utilizing some online learning platforms for education. It offered some ways to share learning materials using internet through emails, documents, presentations or webinars in the form of PPT, PDF or Word document by uploading them on their own Webpages or WhatsApp group in maximizing learning materials during this pandemic. However, according to the study by Aung & Khaing (2016), it was found that some challenges were faced by the developing countries in implementing online learning such as poor internet connectivity, inadequate knowledge on the use of ICT and weakness of content development if we compared to the developed countries which were more prepared. These challenges were now faced by the teachers and students in Indonesia if it was seen from the preliminary study and based on other researches. However in 2020 until 2021 most of the schools all around the world were still forced using online learning although the government currently was slowly shifting online learning back to fully face-to-face learning.

In almost two years, the implementation of online learning implementation had some problems. It was quite hard to teach or learn all of the language aspects of English through online learning if there was no proper facility like internet access, *smartphone*, or laptop which not all of Indonesian students had. Not only technical obstacles such as the availability of learning facilities, but the social and cultural conditions of Indonesian society also had not been able to follow this new system

quickly (Febrianto et al., 2020). Based on the survey by KPAI on 13th-20th April 2020, with a total of 1,700 respondents consisting of the combination of students ranging from kindergarten to high school in 20 provinces and 54 districts/cities in Indonesia, it showed that 52.8% of students asked the government for a free internet. The regulation of online learning was incriminating some students since the learning material could be in the form of pictures, audio, or video, and they had to use their own internet data in following the class which was quite burdensome for their financial. Therefore, the Indonesia Minister of Education and Culture had been cooperated with some providers to provide some free internet data which could be used by all of the students and teachers in Indonesia, yet if all of them register themselves.

Based on the preliminary interview to few junior high school students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula, there were a lot of students complaining about the online learning. Those complaints started from having no adequate technologies, using internet data massively, bored of no direct social interaction, and some other reasons which they miss in conventional way of learning. Since SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula is in rural area in Buleleng, there were some students who did not have the facilities in implementing online learning, therefore some students requested offline assignments which they took at school and they did it at home. The internet connection also became one of the problems since not all of the mobile operators worked well over there. Besides, some of the students' parents also complained about the implementation of online learning. Online learning made them busy took care of their children at home since they indirectly took the role as a teacher at home. Even if online learning was used as an alternative education system during the pandemic for now, we still need to handle the lack implementation of it in case in the future. By studying online learning problems, if Indonesia was forced to do online learning in the future, the challenges which had been faced before would not happen again.

Related to the importance of online learning during this pandemic, this study identified some challenges which were faced by students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula.

How they coped with those challenges was also identified in this study in order to provide more detail information. Then it could allow further analysis for the government in making public policy in providing the best solution related to these challenges in order that online learning could be more effective. If it was seen from the online learning implementation and the real condition in the field, most of the people said that conventional learning was better than the online learning. This study could also be the reflection of the implementation of online learning for some schools, since online learning was done for the first time in this school. It was also important because not all regions in Indonesia had adequate facility and access to online learning.

1.2 Problem Identification

In conducting the research, the problems happened around and the findings from other researchers were observed. Based on the pre-observation, the information of how the implementation of online learning in Indonesia was obtained. The condition in some regions made it difficult in executing the online learning. Although it was lack of preparation and just happened so fast, but still the teaching and learning process must keep going. In almost two years, some students certainly had their own experiences including some challenges that they faced during online learning. Referring to Muilenburg & Berge (2005), there were eight barrier factors which could be faced by the students specifically from administrative issues, social interaction, academic skills, technical skills, learner motivation, time and support for studies, cost and access to the Internet, and technical problems aspects. Therefore, it was important for us to know whether online learning had been going well or not. In addition from students' experiences, some challenges faced by the students in online learning and how they cope with those challenges had been investigated.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

Based on the background and the identification of the problem, it could be seen that Indonesia was not ready yet to implement online learning massively. However, during the pandemic happened from the beginning of the year, the

educational stakeholders were pushed to use online learning in order to prevent the transmission. After more than two years implementing online learning, how students dealt with it was still not yet known, therefore based on the consideration of time, money, and energy, this study took place in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula. It is located in rural area. Students in the 8th and 9th were involved. Since online learning was done for the first time there, this study tried to focus in finding out students' challenges and how they cope with the challenges in the implementation of online learning during this pandemic.

1.4 Formulations of the Problem

1. What are the challenges faced by the students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula in doing online learning in English lesson?
2. How do the students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula cope with the challenges in doing online learning in English lesson?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Related to the formulation of the problem of this study, the purposes aimed by the researcher in conducting this research were as follows:

1. Identify the challenges which were faced by the students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula in doing online learning in English lesson.
2. Identify how the students in SMP Negeri 4 Tejakula cope with the challenges in doing online learning in English lesson.

1.6 Significance of the Study

It was expected that by finding out students' experiences of online learning, there could be benefits for the English teaching and learning process in the future. The finding of this study was expected to enrich the information and knowledge about the implementation of online learning in English learning. One step to improve the quality of online learning was to know the challenges which were faced throughout the online learning process therefore the solution were made. Moreover, the knowledge would be useful to be an additional reference in conducting related research.

1.6.1 Practical Significance

1. The English Teacher

It is expected that the English teacher will help the students in facing the challenges to have successful learning.

2. The Students

It is expected that students can cope the challenges that they faced. Students are also expected to have positive experiences on online learning.

3. Other Researcher

It is expected that the future researchers will be able to get a certified data about the challenges of online learning and get the idea of how to cope with the challenges faced by the students in implementing online learning. Therefore, they can use it as the preliminary study in conducting future online learning related study.

1.6.2 Theoretical Significance

The material of this study can be used in research and educational process, in minimizing online learning challenges in the English teaching and learning process. Since this study includes how students cope with online learning challenges especially for those who were facing similar challenges, this study can be used by students in preparation for implementing online learning. This study also can be viewed as partly a complement to the study of relevance theory.