CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the research background, problem identification, research scope, research question, research objective, and research significance.

Background of the Study

The outbreak of COVID-19 at the end of 2019 has led the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare the virus as a worldwide or global pandemic at the beginning of 2020. It is because the virus has rapidly spread in several countries, including Indonesia, causing a global pandemic. This situation has affected various fields, including education. Due to this pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued Circular Letters 2 and 3 of 2020, in which to explain new policies, specifically learning from home by using online learning. It aims to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the educational environment (Kemendikbud, 2020).

In order to adjust to the current situation, teachers and students are forced to learn from home (Hyseni, Zamira & Hoxha, 2020). This sudden shift did not go well as teachers and students were expected to adjust as soon as possible. On the teachers' side, teaching through online learning is difficult because they

cannot easily explain materials. While on the students' side, learning becomes more difficult as they are expected to be more independent in their learning process. The Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim recommended that teachers use various e-learning platforms such as Rumah Belajar, Quipper School, Ruang Guru, Google Classroom, or Zoom to facilitate the teaching and learning process in online learning. According to Koc (2016), incorporating technology-based learning into the teaching and learning process in this century can be beneficial.

Online learning is widely used as a media to support education, especially in today's learning. Online learning can be implemented in synchronous learning or asynchronous learning (Davidson et al., 2018). Synchronous learning occurs when the teacher and students interact at the same time, whereas asynchronous learning occurs when the teacher and students interact at different times (Vai & Sosulski, 2011). Asynchronous online learning provides flexible learning in which students and teachers can access the class at any time. The development of information and communication technology has invented various communication media. In this case, teachers need to choose appropriate media to support online learning. One of the appropriate media that can be used is Google Classroom.

According to Iftakhar (2016), Google Classroom is one of the effective platforms for improving teachers' workflow. It has a lot of great features that make it an excellent tool to be used by both teachers and students. It is easy to use because the design of Google Classroom purposefully simplifies the

instructional interface. In addition, Mafa (2018) mentioned that Google Classroom is a free web-based learning application or tool that allows teachers and students to collaborate. Teachers can provide materials on the subject being taught in Google Classroom. The teachers can post some teaching materials, assign tasks to students and upload the students' grades so that they can see the results of the course immediately (Alim et al., 2019). It means that using Google Classroom helps teachers save time, organize classes, and improve communication with students.

In terms of learning English as a foreign language, the use of an asynchronous learning communication platform like Google Classroom can encourage students' participation, collaboration, and confidence. Satar & Akcan (2018) found that students' participation increased significantly in asynchronous learning. The English teacher also is required to construct innovative learning by Google Classroom as a media in teaching English. Suadi (2021) mentioned that in a teaching session, this media gives a feeling of a traditional classroom setting when the teachers and students have a discussion. The choice to use Google Classroom as a learning media is based on several advantages provided by the platform itself.

Sukmawati and Nensia (2019) suggest that Google Classroom offers lots of interesting features. There are many facilities provided by Google Classroom that will ease teachers and students to carry out learning activities. Setiadi (2020) also states that Google Classroom can help teachers to provide learning materials, assignments, announcements or information more easily. Teachers

also can create online class or group class for each class. It will be easier for students to gain access to it as a result of this. Teachers also can just post the material, assignment, and students' grades on the platform, then students can submit their work on the platform according to the specified deadlines that are monitored by teachers. Therefore, the teacher can easily grade their work and give suggestion or comment directly.

A study by Iftakhar (2016) also suggests that Google Classroom provides advantages for the teachers as the facilitators as it is easy to use and flexible for any devices and efficient in the time since file distribution, grading, formative assessment, and feedback are simplified and streamlined. From the perspective of the students, Iftakhar (2016) also suggests that Google Classroom can facilitate collaborative learning which allows students to work together and be more creative. Further, several studies regarding students' perception of the use of Google Classroom in the online learning process also found that Google Classroom is considered beneficial for the students as it helps them in understanding and receiving materials more independently.

According to Muslimah (2018), students have positive perception of Google Classroom because it can save them time and effort while doing or submitting assignments. Studies by Alim et al., (2019) and Astuti and Indriani (2020) report that Google Classroom creates interaction between the teacher and the students, which eventually improves students' ability to communicate and collaborate. Moreover, Alim et al., (2019) also suggest that students considered the platform to be beneficial since it allows them to quickly get or download the teachers'

learning materials. In line with it, studies by Setiadi (2020), Saputri (2020), and Oktaria and Rohmayadevi (2021) also found that Google Classroom is perceived as the easiest platform to use because students can access material, assignments, and important announcements or information more quickly. Furthermore, Hussaini, et al., (2020) found that Google Classroom helps students in the management of their studies as students can easily track their progress through the platform, which encourages students to be active learners.

With regards to students' cognitive skills, Sholikh et al., (2019) suggest that students who are taught through cooperative blended learning that is assisted by Google Classroom show higher critical thinking skills compared to those taught only through direct instruction. Similarly, a study by Erlangga et al., (2021) also indicates that assisted learning with Google Classroom is better and more effective as it can improve students' critical thinking. The increase in critical thinking skill can happen as Heggart and Yoo (2018) explain that Google Classroom increase students' participation, collaboration, and learning as well as classroom dynamics through the learning engagement. Wahyuni (2018) further supports the findings by suggesting that students' critical thinking is improved not only through a series of English skills teaching activities but also through the integration of literary texts and effective question answering conducted through Google Classroom.

Since October 2021, the government of Indonesia has gradually loosened the restriction on the learning process that is due to the pandemic, allowing students to attend school in a face-to-face method. With the decrease of new

cases, from the beginning of 2022, students are allowed to attend limited face-to-face learning at school based on several conditions. This regulation reduces the use of online learning, which also affects the use of Google Classroom in facilitating online learning. However, Google Classroom can still be considered relevant and beneficial in the current situation since studies by Sholikh et al., (2019) and Erlangga et al., (2021) suggest that students who are taught through cooperative blended learning that is assisted by Google Classroom show higher critical thinking skills compared to those taught only through direct instruction. Therefore, it is necessary to further investigate students' perceptions regarding the use of Google Classroom in the learning process by examining students' experience in using it during the full remote learning period.

An investigation of the students' perception becomes necessary since it can be used as a consideration for schools on whether to keep using Google Classroom to facilitate face-to-face learning or not to use it at all. This consideration is important as Google Classroom provides features that can maximize the learning process and management, such as creating and managing classes, assignments, and grades, adding and accessing materials, and tracking classwork and submiting assignments (Iftakhar, 2016; Mafa, 2018; Alim et al., 2019). The benefits of these features can be proven by studies that reported how Google Classroom is perceived positively by the students as it provides access to learning materials and announcement, improve student-teacher interaction and students collaboration, and help students to manage their learning (Muslimah, 2018; Alim et al., 2019; Astuti & Indriani, 2020; Setiadi, 2020);

Saputri, 2020; Oktaria & Rohmayadevi, 2021; Hussaini, et al., 2020). Further, it can also improve students' critical thinking and engagement as stated by Sholikh et al., (2019), Erlangga et al., (2021), Heggart and Yoo (2018), and Wahyuni (2018). Therefore, the use of Google Classroom can be seen as relevant and beneficial in the limited face-to-face learning context as of now.

Besides that, students' perception is important to be investigated as students' perception of the learning process, technique, strategies, or media has a significant influence on their learning motivation, which eventually affects their learning achievement (Jumroh et al., 2019; Wahyuni, 2021). Therefore, considering the importance of students' perception and the benefits of Google Classroom, a study that investigates students' perception towards the use of Google Classroom is still considered important to be conducted. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' perception on Google Classroom assisted learning in English learning in the context of limited face-to-face instructions during the pandemic of COVID-19. It is conducted by examining students' experience in using Google Classroom during the full remote, online learning by taking the 9th grade students of SMP N 1 Kubutambahan as the subjects.

In this case, SMP N 1 Kubutambahan has been chosen as the setting because the students used Goggle Classroom for the first-time during the pandemic begins. H and I classes have been chosen because there were classes that already used Google Classroom in Online Learning and several classes have never been carried out yet. This study provides novelty as it does not only investigate

students' perceptions but also provides implications on the use of Google Classroom in the context of limited face-to-face instructions.

Problem Identification

    With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools in Indonesia were forced to shift its teaching and learning process from the traditional face-to-face learning to fully remote, online learning. Google Classroom is one of the most popular platforms that is used to facilitate online learning. However, since the beginning of 2022, schools are allowed to conduct limited face-to-face instructions based on several conditions. This regulation reduces the use of online learning as well as Google Classroom as the platform. However, there is no data available yet about the students' perception pertaining to the use of Google Classroom, despite Google Classroom offers some benefits in the terms of classroom and learning management, effectiveness, and efficiency as well as students' cognitive skills, and the use of Google Classroom can still be considered relevant and beneficial for the current teaching and learning situation. As students' perception on the learning process is important to the success of the instruction, it becomes important to conduct a study that investigates students' perception on Google Classroom assisted learning in the context of limited face-to-face instructions by examining their experience in using the platform. Therefore, this study aims to investigate it in English learning by taking the 9th grade students of SMP N 1 Kubutambahan as the subjects of the study. The researcher identified the perception of the students on

Google Classroom, which will eventually be beneficial for the school to decide whether to use Google Classroom or not in facilitating the current and future teaching and learning process.

Research Scope

This study is limited to identifying and analyzing students' perceptions on the use of Google Classroom in English learning in the context of limited face-to-face instructions during the pandemic by examining the experience that the 9th grade students of SMP N 1 Kubutambahan when using it during the full remote online learning.

Research Question

Based on the background of the study, a research problem is formulated as follows:

1. What is the students' perception toward the use of Google Classroom in English online learning?

Research Objective

Based on the statements of the problems, the purposes of this research are:

1. To identify and analyze the students' perception toward the use of Google Classroom in English online learning.

Research Significance

The significance of this study are viewed from theoretically and practically, as followed below:

1.6.1   Theoretically

The result of this study is expected to answer various obstacles. The research is expected as a reference that will gave contribution for the knowledge's development and give enrichment to the topic that related to the students' perception toward the use Google Classroom assisted learning.

1.6.2   Practically

1. For School Stakeholders

The result of this study is expected to give the school stakeholders insights related to the use of Google Classroom as a learning management system in the learning process. With the current situation of the limited face-to-face learning, school stakeholders can decide on whether or not to keep using Google Classroom to facilitate the learning process based on the students' perception on its features and benefits.

2. For Students

The research is also expected to provide students who used Google Classroom assisted learning to reflect on the best learning method that can better facilitate their learning. Through the results of this study, students are expected to be more active, engaged, and motivated to learn despite the teaching and learning situation.

3. For Future Researchers

This study is expected to become a reference for future researchers who are interested in related topics. This research is also expected to give some information and literature for the other researchers that conduct a research about the use of Google Classroom in the teaching and learning process.