

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background, problem identification, research limitation, research question, and research objective, as well as research significance.

1.1. Research Background

Education has a very important role for everyone especially in improving the quality of reliable human resources. In other words, education has the purpose of intelligence and developing the self-potential that every individual has. However, education in its application in the field, of course, meets a problem or challenge. One of the challenges in education currently is the widespread Covid-19 which is also impacting the education system in almost all countries in the world. The case of Covid-19 was firstly discovered in Wuhan, China then in a short time it spread around the world. Covid-19 reported had spread to 188 countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared this virus a pandemic, which means an outbreak or epidemic of a disease that spreads all over the world (Kelly, 2010). This virus spreads very fast and even it could cause many deaths of people who are infected by Covid-19.

Indonesia is one of the countries exposed to Covid-19. The case of Covid-19 in Indonesia was announced for the first time by the Indonesian government in March 2020. To reduce the spread of Covid-19, the Indonesian government instructs to do social distancing and obeying health protocols like using a mask, washing hands, and keeping healthy. Covid-19 changed the education system from

traditional or face-to-face interaction become fully online learning. It is because, during the Covid-19 emergency, schools are closed while the school year is still running. To deal with that problem, the government sets a policy of studying from home. This policy is attached in the circular letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*) No. 3 2020, regarding online learning and working from home to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in the education unit.

In conducting online learning, a media or platform is needed to support the learning practice. The use of online learning platforms in the teaching and learning process has some advantages such as being easy to access, economical, efficient, increasing independence and creativity, consistent, interactive, and collaborative (Hadisi & Muna, 2015). In this era, online learning platforms that are used to facilitate learning in the Covid-19 situation like Edmodo, Zoom, Schoology, and WhatsApp (Afnibar & Fajhriani, 2020; Kodriyah, 2015; Sicat, 2015; Zulfikar, 2021). Besides, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*) also collaborates with various platforms that can support online learning during Covid-19 (Kemendikbud, 2020). 12 platforms can be accessed by students and teachers to facilitate learning during Covid-19, namely *Sekolahmu*, *Meja Kita*, *Icando*, *Zenius*, *Google for education*, *Kelas Pintar*, *Microsoft office 365*, *Cisco Webex*, *Ruang guru*, *Rumah belajar*, *Indonesiastax*, dan *Quipper school*. Those platforms are expected to provide new learning experiences and make teaching and learning activities easier for teachers and students.

Adjusting the new policy regarding online learning from home is certainly not easy, particularly for students. Especially for subjects that are difficult and require a more detailed explanation from the teacher. One of the compulsory subject

matters in junior high schools recommended by the Indonesian government is English. English is one of the important materials to be mastered by the students as stated in the curriculum 2013 (*Kurikulum 2013*) that expected the students to be able to use English both in oral and written communication politely. Therefore, the process of learning English which is carried out online poses a challenge for students of course. Since online learning is implemented to support the learning during the Covid-19 situation, it is necessary to investigate the use of online learning during this Covid-19. To know whether online learning is effective and has been run well or not, students' perceptions can be used to measure the effectiveness of online learning in Covid-19.

Previous studies have been conducted related to the topic such as a study conducted by Rakhmanina, Martina, Halolo, Syafryadin, & Noermanzah (2020), found out that the student's perception of the use of online learning is good because they consider online learning is flexible, interesting and the use of online media like WhatsApp is very helpful for them as a media to facilitate online learning during Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, Puspaningtyas & Dewi (2020) found that although the use of online learning during Covid-19 got good support from various parties, the students still experienced some obstacles in carrying online learning like they do not master the learning application that used in learning practice, the difficulty of signal, the students still have a problem in understanding the learning, and they also difficult to communicate with their teacher during online learning.

In addition, Harmilawati & Khaerunnisa 2020, found that unsupported facilities (laptops, gadgets, or laptops), limited time to interact with lecturers, and limitations of the internet network caused the students to have a negative perception

of the use of e-learning during the Covi-19 pandemic. Then, Allo (2020) found that the students had a negative perception of online learning because of the burdensome internet quota, difficulty to communicate with lecturers, and poor internet access. So looking at the students' perceptions during online learning in the previous studies, showed that the students' perceptions especially in learning English as a foreign language vary. If this study is studied deeper, it can open up opportunities to see in real terms the actual situation of students while studying from home which is rarely known especially for the schools in rural areas.

Schools located in rural areas tend to face challenges in the teaching and learning process both teacher and student, especially in English (Shahnaz & Gandana, 2021). Moreover, in distance learning students in rural areas which are far from the city certainly have an inequality of abilities and facilities with the students who are in urban areas or the city center (Mumary, 2017). The students in the rural area tend to face problems during online learning like lack of internet access, data package, lack of facilities, difficulty understanding lessons, difficulty in using the online media, difficulty interacting with the teacher, difficult in finding the learning source, and the number of tasks that given by the teacher (Almaiah, Al-khasawneh, & Althunibat, 2020; Nasution & Ahmad, 2020; Yanti, 2021). One of the areas in Buleleng Regency that can be said as a rural area is Sepang Village. The rural area itself has the meaning of an area far from the city and the majority of community activities in agriculture. Sepang village is located at an altitude of 550 meters above sea level with the majority of the people working in agriculture (BPS Kabupaten Buleleng, 2020).

In Sepang village, there is only one secondary school namely SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu. SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu is located in Sepang village, Busungbiu sub-district, Buleleng regency, Bali province. This school is one of the schools in Buleleng regency that uses online learning media in the learning process. The students at SMPN 3 Busungbiu, especially the 7th-grade students who are new to carrying out online learning tend to face problems during Covid-19. Based on the pre-observation with the English teacher, the researcher found out that the main problem in this school during the online learning was the availability of internet connection and data package. Besides, probably most of the students at this school help their parents at home. As what has been told by the English teacher, one of her students take his parents to market while the learning was conducted. While studying at home, the students were also disturbed by uncondutive situations that made them become less focus during learning. So looking at those characteristics, the researcher is interested to conduct a study at this school because the researcher would like to know how they manage their time to study at school.

So, the researcher wants to know the EFL students' perception of online learning based on their habits in rural areas during Covid-19. This study was different from the previous studies of the time and the school that was chosen as the setting. This study chose SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu as the setting of the study. This school was chosen based on two factors. First, the use of online learning at this school is seen as new for the students in learning during Covid-19. Second, the students at SMPN 3 Busungbiu have different characteristics from other schools. Moreover, the 7th-grade students were chosen because they were considered newcomers from a primary school experiencing online learning for the first time so

their perception was also considered new. As a result of this Covid-19, teachers and students have to adjust to a new education system using an online learning platform. Although online learning has been used for a long time, it may be still challenging for some students especially students in rural areas. It was interesting to investigate the students' perception of online learning during Covid-19 and it is different from the previous studies.

1.2. Problem Identification

Due to Covid-19, learning changes from traditional or face-to-face interaction becomes online based-learning. This situation force EFL students to be able to adapt to a new learning system that is connected to the internet network. Unfortunately, the students may not get used to this situation. They tend to get stressed and less motivated in learning especially English. This might cause some problems for the students in the learning process. It would implement online learning become less effective. So, it is important to know students' perceptions of online learning during Covid-19 to make a better learning environment. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the students' perception of online learning during Covid-19 at SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu.

1.3. Research Limitation

In this study, one aspect becomes the limitation of the study. That aspect is discussing students' perception of online learning during the Covid-19 in SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu.

1.4. Research Question

Based on the background of this study, the research question is: How are EFL students' perceptions of online learning during Covid-19 in SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu?

1.5. Research Objectives

Relating to the research problem, the objective proposed in this study is to investigate the EFL students' perception of online learning during Covid-19 in SMP Negeri 3 Busungbiu.

1.6. Research Significances

1.6.1. Theoretically

This study is expected to be beneficial to enriching online learning theories, especially about perception in the implementation of online learning during Covid-19.

1.6.2. Practically

a. For the Students

The students are expected to give feedback about the implementation of a new learning system during Covid-19. Therefore, it can be useful for evaluating the current online learning system.

b. For the Teachers

The result of this study can help the teachers in implementing online learning to facilitate the teaching and learning process especially in teaching English. So that they can design material that is appropriate to the student's needs and also improve the learning activities and students' performance.

c. For School Stakeholder

The result of students' perceptions was expected can be used as feedback for the school stakeholder in conducting an online learning system, especially in the Covid-19 situation. Therefore, the school stakeholder can prepare an effective teaching and learning method which suit their students' learning objectives.

d. For Other Researcher

This study is expected to be beneficial for other researchers as a reference for conducting the other topic related to this study.

