CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

The transformation from the traditional education system to digital technology has existed globally due to digital education (Jie & Sunze, 2021). Web 2.0 technologies and network connectivity have reinforced the massive practice of dynamic teaching in mobile learning environments, supporting Mobile Assisted Language Learning (henceforth, MALL). Moreover, MALL has been used as a basis to explore the learning experience of second language learners not only in formal classroom situations but also in the extramural digital (henceforth, ED) context. ED context refers to informal learning activities done outside the classroom that does not need the teacher's instruction. (Lee, 2019c). The affordance of technology, such as smartphones and computers which stands for digital devices, and digital games, video tutorials, web apps, social media, and fan fiction which stand as digital resources (Lee, 2019a), supported the implementation of MALL in the ED context. In addition, research suggests that digital technologies and Web 2.0 bring a wide opportunity for learning a second language beyond the classroom (Reinders & Benson, 2017); (as cited in (Lee, 2019c); (Rahmawati et al., 2019), constituting informal digital learning of English (henceforth, IDLE).

Informal digital learning of English represents a new form of language learning that can be done in an informal setting (Rahmawati et al., 2019). IDLE has

two different contexts which are extracurricular and extramural (Lee, 2019c). IDLE of an extracurricular context refers to semi-self-directed digital learning of English done outside the school environment in which those still relate to formal language programs. An example of IDLE in the extracurricular context is when students complete their homework independently through self-instruction by searching on YouTube or Wikipedia until they can finish their homework. Meanwhile, IDLE in an extramural context is defined as self-directed and unstructured digital learning of English done in an out-of-class environment that is free from every stuff in a formal language program. An example of the use of IDLE in an extramural context is when students socialize independently with other native users through Facebook.

Informal digital learning of English as a new subfield in MALL and language learning has a similarity with another term which is Online Informal Learning of English (henceforth, OILE) (Soyoof et al., 2021). Toffoli and Sockett (2015) delineated the OILE as language development done through all online activities which start from watching a movie, networking, listening to music, and doing web browsing. However, OILE is limited to informal English learning using online platforms (Toffoli & Sockett, 2015). Meanwhile, IDLE could be implemented by using digital platforms (Lee, 2019b). IDLE, therefore, is more general than OILE. For this reason, this study focused on IDLE since it stands as the umbrella of those all terms of informal learning.

Some existing situations regarding the implementation of IDLE were investigated by several researchers (see (Lee, 2019b; Lee & Lee, 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2019; Sockett & Toffoli, 2012; Toffoli & Sockett, 2015). For instance in Sockett and Toffoli's (2012) study, students used Facebook to chat in English. In

another example finding, students watched television and film in for of video content. Although several studies already mentioned the use of IDLE, however, the study about the use of IDLE done by male and female students in both contexts remains unclear.

Related to the use of technology in the gender context, Dolch (2020) investigated the difference between male and female students in learning technology. Dolch's study showed that male students have higher curiosity about learning new technology, while female students are more anxious about making mistakes in using technology than males. It is supported by another finding that found males get a higher percentage in owning digital devices where 57% of male-owned a desktop PC, while females only 32%. Moreover, it turns out that males get a higher percentage in terms of online hours than females where 3.78 hours for females and 4.84 hours for males. Not only the difference in owning a digital device and higher online hours, but males also have more unlimited time for study than females. Thus, from the aforementioned differences between males and females in learning technology, it is important to investigate the possibility of significant differences between males and females in using technology for learning, specifically in terms of using various kinds of IDLE for learning English.

Apart from the gender difference in learning technology, Lasekan (2018) reported that there was a disparity between male and female students in learning the language. He reported that female students were more confident than their male counterparts. Moreover, Mahmud and Nur (2018) emphasized gender differences suggesting students are diverse and unique in terms of learning strategy. They found male students were more into memory, metacognitive, and social strategy while

female students were more into cognitive, comprehension, and affective strategy. Those previous studies emphasized gender differences exist in learning language context. Thus, the research suggested that knowing gender differences in learning becomes an important aspect of English language teaching in Indonesia, especially in the study's setting (Mahmud & Nur, 2018). Likewise, it could be a basis for exploring the use of IDLE between male and female students.

Apart from the previous studies, the supporting situation in conducting research about IDLE in gender also appears at the English Language Department, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Singaraja, Bali. Therefore, there is the availability to research the aforementioned topic. That availability was supported by the preliminary interview with some students in this department that found most students of both genders were already exposed to the use of technology for learning English outside the classroom. Thus, it could be a consideration for conducting research related to IDLE in gender.

1.2 Problem Identification

A growing number of researchers have devoted much research to searching the implementation of IDLE (see Jensen, 2017; Lee, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Lee & Dressman, 2018; Rahmawati et al., 2019; Soyoof et al., 2021). One example of that research is depicted in Lee's (2019a) study. Through a qualitative study, he found that one of the participants who had overseas experience said that he used LINE (one of the most popular messaging apps) to communicate with his foreign friends (Lee, 2019a). In another research Lee (2019b), conducting a mixed-method study

found that one of the female students spent 70% out of 100% of her time on IDLE that implementing reading English text on a smartphone, watching American dramas on YouTube, working as a volunteer translator in TED talks, interacting with foreign friends on Facebook, and involved in Korean TESOL in Facebook (Lee, 2019b). However, those two studies about IDLE only focused on the use of IDLE that involved the participant in general so the study about the use of IDLE in gender remains unclear.

Moreover, the above examples have shown that IDLE could be done by both genders, but none talked about how males and females implemented IDLE. Recently, Ramírez-Correa et al.'s (2015) study has shed light on the effect of different gender on the adoption of technology in a formal setting for tertiary students. This study found females have a higher score in terms of the use and behavioral intention of e-learning platforms than males. Nevertheless, it discovered a few important differences between males and females in terms of adopting the platform of e-learning. Another attempt has been made to investigate the effect of gender on the result of a diagnostic self-assessment of the digital competence of undergraduate students. Casillas et al. (2017), through an ex-post-facto study, found that male students get higher scores in the use and knowledge of technology while female students get higher scores in their attitude towards technology. Even though those studies did not highlight the use of IDLE, they indicated that males and females have differences in adopting technology for learning. Therefore, males and females may constitute some differences in implementing IDLE. However, this notion should be investigated in detail.

Despite numerous implementations of IDLE from the previous study, IDLE in gender is still lacking concern. The lack of exploration of the types of IDLE used by males and females was obvious. Some previous studies have explored the types of IDLE used by students, such as socializing independently with native users through Facebook (Lee, 2019c, 2019a) or communicating with overseas students by using LINE and KaKao Talk (Lee, 2019a). However, those studies did not investigate in much detail the different types of IDLE implemented by male and female students. Moreover, questions have been raised related to how students of different gender use IDLE in facilitating their learning in an informal context. Therefore, in this digital technology era, types of IDLE and how it is used to facilitate learning have become important to be investigated for enhancing the literature on learning in the ED context, especially related to gender. The major objectives of this present study are therefore to investigate the significant difference between IDLE that are usually undertaken by male and female students in English language education and to investigate how male and female students in English language education implement IDLE to facilitate their language learning. Therefore, for the sake of this research, this study took place at the English Language Education Department, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha.

1.3 The Limitation of the study

Based on the above problem identifications. This research will focus on investigating the significant difference between IDLE used by male and female students and how male and female students use IDLE to support their English learning.

1.4 Research Questions

This research sought to address the following questions:

1. Were there any significant differences in IDLE activities undertaken by EFL male and female students of English language education?
2. How did male and female students of English language education do informal digital learning of English to facilitate their language learning?

1.5 Research Aims

Based on the research question that has been developed above, the aims of this research were:

1. To know the significant difference between informal digital learning of English usually undertaken by male and female students of English language education.
2. To know how male and female students of English language education do informal digital learning of English to facilitate their language learning.
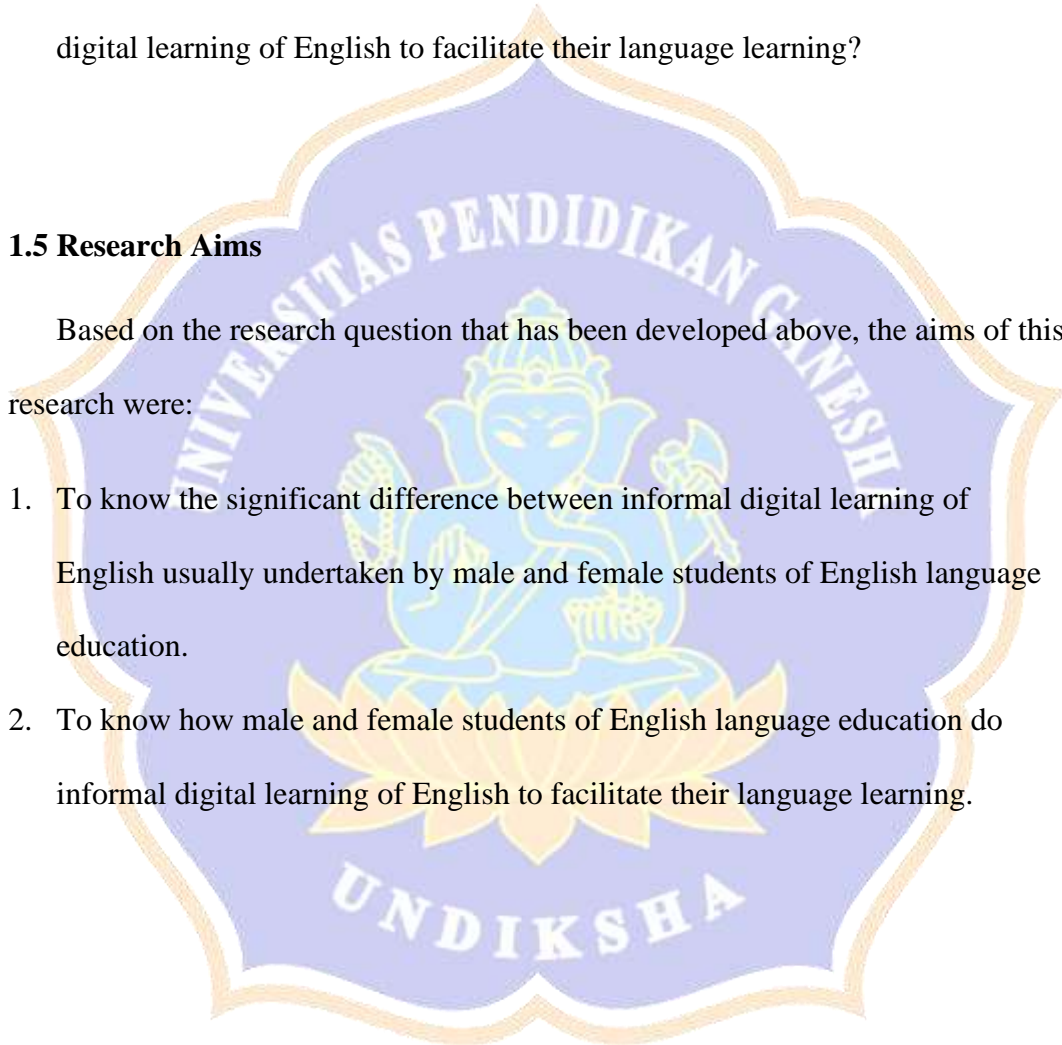
1.6 The Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

1.6.1.1 Teaching English Based on Gender Preference

The research's findings might be used as literature in teaching English where gender diversity still exists in the classroom. As proposed by the previous study, males and females have different styles of learning so do the IDLE activities done by gender. Further, males and females can be treated based on their preferences when doing IDLE.

1.6.1.2 Informal Learning Based on Gender Preference

Since a formal classroom is not enough to enhance students' English skills, the result of this research can give many choices for students and teachers in assigning outside classroom activities. The study might give new awareness to students and teachers about flexible learning that can be done based on their preferences. For instance, female students do not force to learn English from the game when they do not love the game, and so forth as discovered in this study.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

1.6.2.1 University Students

The findings should make an important contribution to the field of university students who are preservice teachers to know more about the significant difference between IDLE usually undertaken by male and female students and to know how male and female students do IDLE to facilitate their language learning. Therefore,

this study can be considered by preservice teachers to apply IDLE in their English classrooms. They also can consider the activity that can stimulate students to do the IDLE activity. Last, university students also can apply IDLE in their language learning process.

1.6.2.2 Teachers

This study provides new insight into the significant difference between IDLE and how to do IDLE to facilitate language learning. The teacher can consider applying IDLE in the learning activity beyond the classroom. The teacher also can guide and provide meaningful IDLE to be used by their students.