CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents research background, problem identification, research limitation, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research significances.

1.1. Research Background

With today's role of English as a global language, it cannot be denied that English language learning has become very important in many countries (Jayanti & Norahmi, 2014), including Indonesia. English in Indonesia serves as the most important foreign language among others in the basic curriculum. According to Komaria (1998), Law No. 2 of 1989, which about the National Education System (*UU No. 2 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*) makes English the "first foreign language" and becomes a compulsory subject that began to be taught at the secondary level of education. Besides, English is one subject that will be examined in the national examination for junior and senior high school students (Hermansyah & Aridah, 2020). Accordingly, as one of the important subjects, English as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) must be well taught at school to provide students with higher learning opportunities. As stated by Lodhi, Sahar, Qayyum, Iqbal, and Shareef (2019), the academic success of language students is not only determined by their intelligence level but also the learning environment provided to them.

Recently, the opportunity of teaching and learning EFL at school is disturbed by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The presence of the pandemic prevents the teaching and learning process, which usually done in direct meeting (Simamora, 2020). Due to the rapid spread of the virus, The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia (Kemendikbud), through Circular Letter No. 4, has regulated all educational institutions to stop the conventional teaching-learning process temporarily. All lessons are being taught from home by using online learning to maintain the health of students, teachers, and educational staff as well as to break the chain of spread of COVID-19 (Kemendikbud, 2020). As a result, the learning system drastically changes by which all teaching and learning activities are carried out online, including English classes (Rifiyanti, 2020). The implementation of learning from home through online learning is considered the safest process since the government did not want the spread of the COVID-19 virus to become more massive in schools or educational institutions (Susilowati, 2020). Furthermore, online learning is a learning method that has an important role in maintaining the continuity of teaching and learning activities during the school closure period (Al-Balas, Al-Balas, Jaber, Obeidat, Al-Balas, Aborajooh, Al-Taher & Al-Balas, 2020).

Online learning becomes an effective solution to activate classrooms even though schools are closed (Herliandry, Nurhasanah, Suban & Kuswanto, 2020). It is internet-based learning in which teachers and students are not required to attend face-to-face classrooms (Alam, 2020). As such, online learning makes it possible for teachers to create a learning space without in-

person meetings or physical interaction. In terms of learning activities, online learning can be done synchronously (provides learning in real-time or live as video conferencing) or asynchronously (learning does not occur in real-time, e.g., e-mail and online discussion forums) (Simamora, 2020). Here, synchronous online learning can duplicate the conventional classroom environment (Keegan, Schwenke, Fritsch, Kenny, Kismihók, Bíró & Nix, 2005). Meanwhile, asynchronous online learning enables students and teachers that cannot be online at the same time to access the content at a time that suits their needs (Hrastinski, 2008). Another factor that makes online learning considered the most appropriate method is that it can be applied for almost all subjects, including language learning (Mardiah, 2020).

When it comes to implementing online learning, teacher is one factor that can help and determine its success. According to Jacobs (2013), how much and how well students learn in an online learning environment depends on the quality of instruction designed by the teacher. If online learning is well designed and implemented by teachers, it will promote students' learning outcomes (Srichanyachon, 2014). In line with that, Seok (2008, p. 725), said that "e-Teachers are online learning instructional designers, facilitators of interaction, and subject matter experts." It implies that teachers are the most important factor in online education because they are the controller in the process of learning. In accordance with the implementation of online learning, Kemendikbud (2020), through Circular Letter of Secretary-General No. 15, which about guidelines for implementing learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, mentions that teachers have a role as facilitators of online

learning, which ensure the learning process running effectively. Accordingly, teachers are expected to conduct an effective online learning environment so that learning objectives can be achieved successfully.

Although online learning has many benefits, its implementation also affords challenges for teacher (Bailey & Lee, 2020). According to Subedi, Nayaju, Subedi, Shah, and Shah (2020), challenge is defined as something which act as a hindrance to the process of online learning. It can be said that challenge may lead to failure in online learning. Regarding the challenges in online learning, Khatoony and Nezhdmehr (2020) mentioned that lack of proper materials, lack of student attention and motivation in online learning, and lack of funding and support become the major challenges faced by the teachers in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsequently, Rasmitadila, Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, Syaodih, Nurtanto, and Tambunan (2020) identified four aspects of teachers' online learning challenges during the pandemic, namely, technical problems, conditioning students in online learning, lack of students' participation during online learning, and lack of experience in carrying out online learning. In addition, it is also stated that students' economic background, poor internet connection, lack of time, supplementary materials, and heterogeneous students' capability as the challenges in the implementation of online learning in the time of pandemic (Suputra, Nitiasih & Paramarta, 2020).

Regarding the explanation above, the implementation of online learning seems to be affected by various challenges. Therefore, these challenges are crucial to be identified for the successful adoption of online learning. As

Shahmoradi, Changizi, Mehraeen, Bashiri, Jannat, and Hosseini (2017) stated, the successful implementation of online learning in managing and providing education cannot be reached without identifying its challenges. Arguably, identifying these challenges may lead to a better understanding of online learning in the teaching and learning process. In line with that, Rana, Rajiv, and Lal (2014) said that understanding the problems and challenges associated with online learning is fundamental to communities involved in online learning and will have an essential role in establishing future practice. It may provide directions for inexperienced teachers to follow, supporting higher opportunities for effective online learning design and implementation (Bailey & Lee, 2020). Thus, the teacher's challenges in implementing online learning were identified in this study.

Furthermore, in the place of study, the implementation of online learning showed a discrepancy from what being expected. Based on the preliminary research, it was found that the teachers faced many challenges which impeded its effective implementation. In light of COVID-19 pandemic, all teaching and learning processes in SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida, Klungkung regency, Bali, Indonesia, were conducted online, as well as for EFL classes. Consequently, the school required all teachers to teach through the online learning method. This kind of method had never been implemented in this school, but the teachers were forced to apply online learning to continue teaching-learning activities. According to the teachers, it happened in a sudden and in an unplanned situation, in which: (1) the teachers were not ready to conduct this kind of learning; (2) the teachers had limited experience and

preparation in implementing online learning since they usually conducted the learning process in a direct meeting; (3) the teachers, as well as the students, were not familiar in using online learning platforms or applications; (4) the teachers must adjust themselves to this change of learning method because it was the only option left for them. Therefore, this situation resulted in many challenges as it was their novel experience in carrying out fully online learning in their classes.

As aforementioned, EFL teachers in SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida encountered challenges in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic because it was their first time to conduct full online learning that replaces face-to-face classroom interaction. Moreover, based on the preliminary research, the teacher of X IBB who taught the class with a big portion of learning English (language major class) seemed to face a number of challenges, particularly in managing the online classroom. Besides, in teaching EFL during the pandemic, the teacher did not only give the students task and asked them to do it but also regularly interacted and communicated with the students being taught. The teacher did interaction and communication in Google Classroom and WhatsApp (in the group or private chat). The teacher also regularly conducted online discussion sessions for the students. According to Circular Letter of Secretary-General No. 15, teachers must create a proper communication mechanism with the students during the implementation of online learning to facilitate students' learning (Kemendikbud, 2020). Furthermore, since this EFL teacher actively interacted and communicated with

the students in the online environment, this teacher became the subject of the study.

Referring to the empirical studies regarding the importance of identifying the challenges in online learning and the preliminary research results, this present study investigated the challenges faced by EFL teacher in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class at SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida. How the teacher carried out the online learning in this class was also investigated in this study. The study was conducted based on the guidelines for implementing learning from home during the COVID-19 pandemic regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture or Kemendikbud (2020). This research became very important to be conducted since no study attempted to reveal the implementation and the challenges faced by the teacher in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the guidelines provided by Kemendikbud.

1.2. Problem Identification

Referring to the result of preliminary research, the teacher of X IBB class faced various challenges which impeded the process of online learning. In other words, a number of challenges affected the implementation of online learning in this class. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher was encouraged to change their teaching methods, which were from conventional (face-to-face) learning methods, into online learning methods. In conducting online learning in the class with a big portion of learning English (language major class), this teacher built a good communication mechanism with the students in the online

learning environment. Many challenges appeared because the teacher had to apply this kind of method in a sudden and an unprepared situation, especially in managing the online classroom. Consequently, the implementation of online learning did not run effectively due to this situation.

1.3. Research Limitation

This study was limited to the implementation of online learning and teacher's challenges in implementing online learning, particularly in managing the online classroom. This present study attempted to identify the implementation of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class and the challenges faced by EFL teacher. Here, the study was focused on the implementation of online learning and the teacher's challenges based on the guidelines provided by Kemendikbud (2020).

1.4. Statement of the Problems

Based on the research background above, this study examined two main problems that can be formulated as follows.

1. How is the implementation of online EFL learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class at SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida?

2. What are the challenges faced by EFL teacher in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class at SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida?

1.5. Research Objectives

In relation with the statement of the problems above, the research objectives of this study can be formulated as follows.

1. To observe the implementation of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class at SMA 1 Nusa Penida.

2. To identify the challenges faced by EFL teacher in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in X IBB class at SMA Negeri 1 Nusa Penida.

1.6. Research Significances

The result of this study is expected to give both theoretical and practical significance.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

The result of this study is expected to give information about the challenges faced by the teacher in implementing online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will also give contribution in the development of teaching and learning theory, especially in teaching English as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) through online learning environment amidst the pandemic situation.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

1. For Teachers

   The result of this study will be useful for teachers to guide them in designing and implementing effective online learning in their classes. It can also be teachers' consideration to be better execute online learning to teach students both as the replacement of conventional classroom or as the complement to the learning process, particularly in the pandemic situation. Besides, the information regarding the challenges in implementing online learning in this research can be used by the teachers as feedback to be more competent and creative in integrating online learning into the teaching-learning process.

2. For Other Researchers

   The result of this study is expected to become a reference for other researchers who want to conduct similar research related to the implementation of online learning and the challenges faced by teachers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.