

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the research. It comprises the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Covid-19 virus in 2020 has opened wider opportunities for online learning to mushroom in the educational arena. It has shifted the traditional meeting into virtual (Hidayati, Ramalia & Abdullah 2021) since UNESCO recommends online learning supporting social distancing to implement (United Nation, 2020). In this respect, many teachers utilized two types of online learning; asynchronous and synchronous (Ghazal, Samsudin & Aldowah., 2015). Asynchronous online learning is learning where students do not need to come to the classroom, but they learn individually or in groups about the material that teachers have given for their students on Learning Management System (LMS) and they are not communicating in real-time (Blaine, 2019). Meanwhile, synchronous online learning is completely real-time learning; in which students and teachers can communicate and do all activities such as lecturing, asking some questions and answering directly without coming to the classroom (Martin, Parker & Deale, 2012).

In the teaching and learning process, the selection of media is crucial, including for the synchronous online teaching and learning process because it can make communication and interaction between students and teachers during the teaching and learning process more effective (Ramdhani & Muhammadiyah, 2015). There are several media that can be used to support teaching and learning processes in this current situation, one of them is Skype. Skype is an Internet-based communication program that allows users to make audio and video conferences. Skype also provides a computer-to-landline calling service for both domestic and international calls (Eaton, 2010). Therefore, Skype is suitable for

distance learning in this pandemic situation because Skype can overcome the distance.

Skype has been utilized as an online teaching and learning platform in the English Education Department of a university in West Java, Indonesia. In the research proposal class, Skype is used as a communication medium between lecturer and students during the teaching and learning process. With various features available on Skype such as screen sharing, video calls and chatting, the lecturer delivered materials, discussed with students, listened to students' presentations, and provided direct feedback on students' assignments through real-time online learning. In short, teachers and students can continue the teaching and learning process using the application even though they do not meet face to face in a classroom due to the pandemic situation that required us to stay at home.

Based on the phenomenon above, the researcher is interested to investigate Indonesian EFL students' perceptions about the use of skype as a media for synchronous online learning during pandemic covid-19 using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Earlier studies had applied the TAM model with different applications for example: BlackBoard (Landry, Griffeth & Hartman, 2006), Wikis (Liu, 2010) and Zoom (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021). However, the TAM framework has not been used for the Skype application and the previous studies using quantitative study. Therefore, this study investigated students' perceptions on synchronous online learning using Skype during a pandemic with adapting the theory of TAM, especially in terms of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use with qualitative study.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The question addressed in this study is, what are Indonesian EFL students' perceptions on the synchronous online learning using Skype during COVID-19 pandemic?

1.3 Operational Definitions

- Perception : A process within individuals to organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. This perception is related to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).
- Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) : A theory framework to understand users' adoption and the use of technology with two main factors: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.
- Indonesian EFL Students : Indonesian undergraduate students that study in the English Education Department.
- Synchronous Online Learning : One type of online learning in which teachers and students do all activities such as lectures, group work, questions and answers in real time with the same media.
- Skype : A communication software that can be used as a media for synchronous online learning.

1.4 Aim of the Research

This study aims to investigate Indonesian EFL students' perception on synchronous online learning using Skype during Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5 Significance of the Research

1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study reveals a sort of perception of learners when they are learning through synchronous online learning using Skype in Covid-19 pandemic situations.

1.5.2 Empirical Contribution

This study will expand the scope of the use of skype for synchronous online learning.

1.5.3 Practical Contribution

This research can be used as a consideration for practitioners and stakeholders in choosing suitable media for distance learning.