CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on the educational landscape. According to Kanojiya (2020) Covid-19 has had a big impact on the world's educational system. The Indonesian government shifted from conventional classroom instruction to online instruction. On March 24, 2020, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture issued a circular letter controlling it. During the emergency Covid-19 outbreak, the regulation mandated the conversion of all educational levels and subjects from face-to-face instruction to online instruction. The government had taken this policy as a preventive strategy for the Covid-19 outbreak. As a result, the learning process can continue as usual.

Online learning is considered a breakthrough or new paradigm during the Covid-19 pandemic because it happened abruptly. Furthermore, it is said that online learning education and classes are increasingly being included in the global educational system (Kanojiya, 2020). Moreover, the students who must adapt to changing learning methods from conventional methods to online methods are certainly not easy to accept and implement. In line with the statement, it is clarified that interruptions to the flow class's flow, challenges in getting students to come up with a clear understanding of their ideas, and students' motivation to participate in online learning are some of the key factors that reduce the effectiveness of online classrooms (Kanojiya, 2020). Additionally, pupils encounter some difficulties when learning online, such as passive involvement, a lack of parental supervision, insufficient support materials, and constrained internet connection (Yuzulia, 2021).

Other issues students face includes poor internet connections, a loss of interest in learning, difficulty concentration, and increased stress as a result of the demanding assignments teachers assign (Nashruddin et al.,

2020). Henceforth, the situation of online learning like this is difficult to get good internet access to online learning, and good facilities to carry out the teaching and learning process online.

Being able to manage online learning is challenging for EFL students due to some possible problems in the learning process. Some relevant studies discovered various problems with online learning. The study Efriana (2021) found some difficulties faced by students such as students' lack of engagement in class participation, limited supporting facilities, access to the internet, and the time parents have to spend accompanying their children while they are studying were all discovered. Meanwhile, another study found that students encountered several challenges when learning online, including a poor internet connection, decreased learning motivation, trouble focusing when learning online, and increased stress from the large number of assignments the teacher assigned (Yuzulia, 2021). In addition, findings obtained from the study Nartiningrum & Nugroho (2020) suggested that the main challenges experienced by EFL students enrolled in online courses are unstable networks, fewer direct contacts resulting in poorly understood content, and decreased dedication to study. Furthermore, the phenomenon of this research shows students' conditions in one a junior high school in Purwasari, Cilacap, Central Java that shows some problems related to active involvement in online English learning, such as rarely submitting the task, submitting the task but over deadline and always submitting the task too. Furthermore, with this phenomenon, the researcher investigates students' challenges in online English learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic, because it affects students' performance in submitting the assignments such as rarely submitting the task, submitting the task but over the deadline, and always submitting the task too.

This study intended to find out what challenges are faced by EFL students during online learning in junior high schools. Unfortunately, studies on online English learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic at the

Junior High School level are still limited. Previous studies have only focused on the Senior High School level (Yuzulia, 2021), and at the University level (Nartiningrum & Nugroho 2020). Research carried out by Nashruddin et al (2020) shows that some students reside in isolated, rural places without access to the internet. In addition, because of their location, which is fairly remote from signal coverage, their cellular network might occasionally be problematic. This is also a problem that occurs in many students who take online learning, so the implementation is less effective. Therefore, to fill in the gaps in previous research, researchers will conduct research at the Junior High School level, especially for schools located in rural areas in Purwasari, Cilacap, and Central Java where it is difficult to get access good online school facilities. This research is very important to do to find out what are the causes and challenges faced by students while online English learning. And this research will also be useful input, reference, and evaluation material for English teachers in dealing with and reducing the challenges students face in online English learning in the future.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

A research question that is addressed in this thesis is, "What are the students' challenges in online English learning during the pandemic at a junior high school?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding the terms set out in this research, here some definitions related to this research, as follow:

1.3.1. Students' Challenges	It refers to obstacles experienced by EFL students in the process of online English learning.

| **1.3.2. Online English Learning** | It is the online English learning process that is carried out using WhatsApp as a medium intended to facilitate junior high school students in learning English such as discussion, synchronous chat counseling, online self-assessment, etc. |

1.4 Aim of the Research

This present study aims at identifying the students' challenges in online English learning during the Covid-19 pandemic at a junior high school.

1.5 Significances of the Research

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

Results of the current research are expected to expand existing theories related to the challenges of English learning in an online learning platform during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5.2 Empirical Significance

Results of the research are expected to show authentic experiences of students' challenges in online English learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5.3 Practical Significance

Research results obtained are expected to be reference and evaluation material for teachers in dealing with the challenges faced by students in carrying out online English learning during the Covid-19 pandemic so that they can become even better.