

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In an increasingly sophisticated era, the use of technology is essential to help humans work easier. The utilization of technology in this fourth industrial revolution to achieve human needs has made the learning process more efficient (Wahyuningsih, 2021). In this context, the use of technology in the classroom is required to help the teaching-learning process, and the students use technology to finish their final project. Furthermore, the use of technology assists teachers in achieving the educational demands of their students (Ahmadi, 2018). Therefore, the use of technology in the learning process in this increasingly sophisticated era will be constructive and beneficial for teachers and students to make their work easier.

Furthermore, this phenomenon is evidenced in the English Education Department in semester 6, especially in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course design, in which one of the tasks given by the lecturer is project-based learning, where students should work together in a group. The lecturer assigned the students to make a course book as the final project of this course. In this case, the lecturer asked the students to complete the project in a group. In this regard, the students wrote collaboratively by using online platforms to ease them in producing high quality writing. Some students used Google Docs as a platform to exchange ideas with their friends, give feedback, and revise their writing. However, not all students can accept Google Docs as a tool that they can fully use in completing the group project because there is a feature from Google Docs that is a bit difficult to use, such as features for designing covers; therefore, they prefer to use another tool such as Canva in designing covers. Hence, this is interesting to investigate why the students use Google Docs as a means for collaborative writing in completing the group project for making ESP course books.

Moreover, some students used Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool in making ESP course books because this tool can be accessed from various operating systems. Google Docs is an online Word-processing tool and software for Windows, Mac Os, Apps, and iOS (Khalil, 2018). This tool can be shared among multiple users, and the students can write the assignment collaboratively. It enables several participants to share a document and revise the other's work in real-time or at leisure (Kitjaroonchai & Suppasetsee, 2021). Google Docs allows students to collaborate on writing activities while also allowing lecturers to act as editors and commentators on students' writing tasks in real-time (Aldossary, 2022). Moreover, this tool has some features that can help the users to write collaboratively, edit, and comment. Google Docs now offers updated functionality comparable to several other cloud-based word-processing programs, such as synchronized editing, updating, and automated saving (Alwahoub et al., 2020). Thus, Google Docs is a tool that has features that can be used as a collaborative writing tool that helps students complete their final project.

In addition, some previous studies reported that using Google Docs positively facilitated learners' writing processes, allowing group members to create and modify the exact text synchronously and encouraging rapid feedback and idea exchange (Akoto, 2021). Moreover, Google Docs was considered useful and engaging by the participants. They also suggested that Google Docs could be used to create a collaborative learning environment. Their use boosted student-teacher and student-student interactions, helped students improve their overall writing skills, and encouraged productive peer-to-peer dialogues (Aldossary, 2022). Further, collaborative writing in a non-English department using Google Docs has various advantages, including increasing students' enthusiasm for learning writing, utilizing a variety of social skills that aid communication in a technological environment among the group, lowering the tension caused by finishing assignments individually, and increasing students' confidence in mastering English to their future career plans (Rahayu, 2016). Hence, from these studies, there are several benefits to be

gained from using Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool, such as they can exchange their ideas, increase students' interest in learning writing, improve students' writing skills, and the effectiveness of using this tool.

On the other hand, another study demonstrated that when students write using Google Docs, they feel it helps them enhance their collaborative and communication skills (Hidayat, 2020). However, in the previous study carried out by Hidayat (2020), the use of Google Docs was intended for writing classes and neglecting collaborative aspects, thus he recommends conducting further research, which examines students' perspectives when they write collaboratively on a text using Google Docs. Furthermore, Syarifudin & Husnawadi (2022) showed that Google Docs was simple to use and helpful for students, encouraging their attitude, and readiness to use the technology. In addition, Syarifudin & Husnawadi (2022) recommend that future researchers use a case study design to determine the level of student technology acceptance. To fill these gaps, this study investigates students' perceptions of using Google Docs for collaborative writing in making ESP course book as the final project of ESP course design using a descriptive case study.

1.2 Research Question

The research question of this study is “What are the undergraduate students' perceptions on the use of Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool in ESP course design?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

- 1.3.1 Google Docs** : It is a free web-based Word processing used by students to write a final project of ESP course design, which is creating an ESP course book.
- 1.3.2 Collaborative Writing** : Collaborative writing is an activity carried out simultaneously by students to write an ESP course book. In this activity, they can write, edit, correct each other, develop, and share their ideas simultaneously to produce an ESP course book.
- 1.3.3 ESP Course Design** : ESP course design is one of the subjects, which aims to help students for designing the learning with a specific purpose based on the needs of the students. At the end of this course, there is a final project, which is creating an ESP course book.
- 1.3.4 Students' Perception** : Students' views or opinions about using Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool for making an ESP course book as a final project of ESP course design.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The current study intends to highlight undergraduate students' perceptions of Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool in ESP course design.

1.5 Significance of the Study

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Contribution** : This study can provide new insight regarding utilizing Google Docs as a collaborative writing tool in the EFL classroom in creating an ESP course book.
- 1.5.2 Practical Contribution** : This study can be utilized as a resource for teachers and students to choose and use an appropriate technology tool to help the teaching and learning process, especially in writing collaboratively.
- 1.5.3 Empirical Contribution** : This research is expected to be information for previous research, filling the gap between this research and previous ones, which provide information about students' perceptions of using Google Docs as a collaborative tool in writing an ESP course book.