

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins the undergraduate thesis by presenting the study's history to provide comprehension of the research. It includes a description of the research problems, research context, research gap, research question, operational definitions, the research goals, and the importance of the study. All of these are supported by relevant literature.

1.1 Background of the Study

The blended learning system in Indonesia raises many problems, such as the heavy burden of the curriculum, unequal internet access, the student's motivation, and learning achievement inequality. As a result, the distance learning process needs to run optimally. Moreover, according to age, students are threatened with learning loss or loss of learning capacity. Therefore, in early 2021, the government solved the teaching-learning process through *PTMT (Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Terbatas)* while implementing health protocols. In addition, the government and many schools in Indonesia are implementing blended learning to solve the teaching-learning process during pandemics.

In the post-pandemic, the students of senior high schools in Tasikmalaya went to schools and studied there while implementing health protocol. The teacher still implements blended learning to motivate the students. The teacher in the class teaches English by using various media, such as PowerPoint Presentations, audio, and pictures, and many applications to support English learning, such as Quizziz to check the students' understanding, Google Classroom to collect the students' assignments, and the students' presences.

The integration of several instructional media is known as blended learning. The integration of various training "media" (technology, activities, and types of events) to develop an optimal training program for a specific audience is called blended learning (Bersin, 2004). This concept combines the media to build

excellent teaching and learning activities. So, each other can strengthen, complement, and support learning optimization due to this pandemic.

Blended learning combines online and face-to-face instruction to provide individualized education with reduced in-class time for students (Parsad et al., 2008). The teaching-learning process is conducted by combining face-to-face instruction and online media. This method aims to increase students' independent and active learning and reduce face-to-face time in class. It does not mean replacing face-to-face classroom learning but strengthening learning through educational technology. This study aims to investigate the students' views of this method. However, blended learning was used as the English course method in one of the senior high schools in Tasikmalaya.

For instance, this method is conducted in one senior high school in Tasikmalaya while complying with health protocols, such as wearing a mask, maintaining a distance, using a hand sanitizer, and checking body temperature before entering the school area. However, the students in that school rotated with 50% of the number of students.

The teaching-learning process in the class was only for several hours. Their study time should be 30 minutes per lesson hour, 15 minutes less than it should be. Thus, the presences, daily exams, tasks, and other assessments were collected through Google Classroom, WhatsApp, *SPI (Sekolah Pintar Indonesia)*, or Google Drive. Moreover, the materials are given to the students through Google Classroom and YouTube.

Blended learning is helpful for students who study English, especially those who study English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thus, besides receiving some materials from the teachers, the students can also take advantage of online applications usually used in English learning, such as WhatsApp, Google Classroom, *SPI*, YouTube, and others.

However, this study is under research, just a little study of who researched this context. Therefore, a case study will examine students' perceptions of blended learning experiences during the pandemic. Previous researchers have conducted a study of blended learning perceptions. Aji et al. (2020) investigated teachers' and

students' perceptions at the Parahikma Institute of Indonesia regarding using blended learning as media learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Rianto (2020) also studied Indonesian university students' perceptions, concerns, and suggestions for applying blended learning in their EFL courses. Furthermore, A study conducted by Simbolon in 2021 focused on exploring students' perceptions of their learning experience in a blended learning approach that incorporated social media applications like WhatsApp and Google Classroom. The main aim of the research was to identify the benefits and obstacles students face while using these learning instruments. Furthermore, Rerung (2018) studied students' perceptions of online and face-to-face learning in listening and speaking classrooms. Moreover, Anas, A. (2020) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions and satisfaction of learners towards blended learning environments. The study was conducted in the College of Arts & Sciences at Al-Namas, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia.

Several research shows that adopting digital tools for online learning can be challenging. First, obstacles preventing students from studying successfully include their lack of IT understanding, other technical difficulties, and an unstable network (Rerung, 2018; Rianto, 2020). Additionally, the students might need more motivation to study English. Therefore, one senior high school in Tasikmalaya implemented blended learning to solve many problems raised during the pandemic.

Thus far, there needs to be more attention to the perceptions of blended learning practices among students in senior high school during the pandemic era. Additionally, the previous studies only investigated the perception of blended learning on a university scale. However, in this research, the researcher examined the students' perceptions of English blended learning practices, focusing on students in one of the senior high schools, Tasikmalaya. Moreover, blended learning is a recent method introduced in Indonesia. Significantly, this method is under research. Therefore, the researcher determined the students' perceptions of blended English learning practices among students in senior high school.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

According to the background of the study, there is a problem following it. To clarify the issue that was analyzed, the problem statement is formulated as follows.

“What are the students’ perceptions of learning English in the blended learning practices?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

The meaning of essential terms is to avoid misunderstanding the reader about the terms used. Then, the research provides some of the purposes of the critical terms related to the topic as follows:

- Blended Learning** : One of the new study methods was applied in one senior high school in Tasikmalaya. This blended learning combines two or more media in the learning process, such as face-to-face and online. Moreover, in this case, they used different learning applications, such as quizzes, Google Classroom, Word Wall, and others.
- English Learning** : Studying English or a process of gaining English knowledge. English is one of the subjects that must be studied in high schools in Indonesia.
- Students’ Perceptions** : Students’ viewpoints, voices, or opinions about blended learning in English courses.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The researcher needs to answer the study mentioned above question. Therefore, the research explores students' perceptions of English blended learning practices.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The results of this study are expected to provide beneficial information for educators, especially English teachers, in implementing learning methods in English learning activities.

1.5.1 Theoretical Contributions : This study contributes to the existing theories on blended learning (Rerung, 2018; Aji et al., 2020; Simbolon, 2021; Rianto, 2020; Anas, A. 2020)

1.5.2 Empirical Contributions : This study examines existing research on the perception of blended learning. However, many researchers study this issue. Thus, this study aimed to investigate students' viewpoints on using blended learning in an English course.

1.5.3 Practical Contributions : The present study contributes to the ministry and educators increasing the satisfaction of learning English during the pandemic. Therefore, investigating the students' blended learning in learning English during this pandemic is essential. Furthermore, it can evaluate the techniques applied in the teaching and learning process.