

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

Technology plays an important role in human daily life, no exception in education. In education, technology is not only used for administration, but also for teaching and learning processes that is often called online learning. Nowadays, online learning has become a trend in educational uses of technology (Wei & Chou, 2020). Inevitably, the emergence of online learning has brought a sudden transition from the traditional classroom, a face-to-face learning activity between teacher and students, to the digital classroom, known as online learning (where technology plays an important part to support learning activities by using educational technology). Given this situation, it could be said that online learning is an alternative teaching-learning method in this modern era. It also has been applied in various levels of education. Moreover, as technology grows rapidly, online learning provides various learning activities. Learning activities in online learning include an online discussion forum for sharing discussions, individual assignments, group projects, attending exams in a virtual classroom and doing a presentation in a virtual classroom (Wei & Chou, 2020).

Culpan (1995) stated that the effectiveness of technology implementation depends on the positive attitudes of users towards it. In this case, the users of online learning are the teacher and students. Thus, the effectiveness of online learning depends on teachers and students. This research emphasizes on students' attitudes towards online learning in order to get in-depth insight. As Pasaribu and Dewi (2021) said that getting in-depth insight from students is important. However, the current situation of online learning is different. According to Adnan and Anwar (2020) online learning in this situation is more accurately called crisis learning. It is because of the outbreak of COVID-19.

The outbreak of the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, newly known as COVID-19, in December 2019, took the world by surprise. According to Cucinotta and Vanelli (2020), the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 pandemic on 11th March 2020. It fundamentally gives a big impact on any aspect of global human life, with no exception the educational aspect. This pandemic has changed the educational aspect around the world. In reaction to the COVID-19, many schools, colleges, and universities across the world closed their learning activities and decided to do a distance learning activity in order to avoid the risk of infection for the students and teachers (Unger & Meiran, 2020).

The first case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was confirmed by President Jokowi on 2nd March 2020. The cases are increasing every day and as of 26th February 2021, according to JHU CSSE, the total number of cases in Indonesia was 1.31 million with 35.518 deaths. The governments of provincial and district/cities in Indonesia made a decision to conduct social distancing in order to avoid spreading the virus. Given this situation, schools, colleges, and universities in Indonesia decided to close face-to-face classroom activities and moved to online learning. In this sudden transition, teachers and students may face challenges because they never have had adequate experiences with online learning. It is because online learning has not been part of most education in Indonesia (Setyowati Putri et al., 2020). Thus, online learning is still new for teachers and students in Indonesia. They are more well-situated in a face-to-face learning classroom rather than with online learning (Ku & Lohr, 2003).

The general education system in Indonesia is based on traditional classrooms. Later, it changed to online learning in March when the first case of coronavirus in Indonesia was confirmed. In this case, the learning process was not conducted in a face-to-face learning classroom where the students must attend the classes every day, but it was conducted online. As the learning process changed to online learning, one of the universities in Tasikmalaya also conducted online learning during COVID-19. The online

learning was conducted differently based on the regulations of each faculty and every subject has its own regulations of how they conduct online learning.

The English Education Department of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teacher' Training conducted online learning. This research highlighted the Sociolinguistics in ELT course. The online learning process in Sociolinguistics in ELT was using Canvas by Instructure as online learning platforms. The teaching and learning activities in Sociolinguistics in ELT course were done virtually using Canvas real time virtual meeting and so the group presentation. In addition, during a virtual classroom/lecturing, the teacher always used interactive materials which make the learning environment more interesting. The teacher also used the features available in Canvas such as polling questions in order to encourage students to actively engage during the online learning process. Then, the discussion forum, assignment submission, and midterm and final examination were also conducted in Canvas application. The discussion forum was provided in the Canvas application in a way that students could share their opinion and give a response to each other's opinion right after the class. It was obviously new for the students to do learning activities fully online.

In response to that, measuring students' attitudes towards online learning can offer an evaluation. In addition, according to Pasaribu and Dewi (2021), investigating students' learning experiences in this current situation is necessary. A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of online learning (Gonzalez & St.Louis, 2018). However, studies that focus on investigating the effectiveness of online learning in terms of students' attitudes during COVID-19 are rarely found especially in the Indonesian EFL context (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020). Therefore, the present research focuses on investigating students' attitudes towards online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Indonesian EFL context.

1.2. Formulation of The Problem

Through addressing the research question below, the researcher hopes to be able to contribute and provide an understanding through the analysis results about students' attitudes towards online learning during COVID-19. The research question for this study is: How are the Indonesian EFL students' attitudes in the sudden transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.3. Operational Definitions

- 1.3.1 Students' Attitudes** : Students' behavior towards online learning that influenced by students' beliefs. Students' beliefs also influence students' experiences and actions towards their surrounding situation. The concept of attitudes is classified into three interconnected components including the cognitive aspect, affective aspect, and behavioral aspect.
- 1.3.2 Online Learning** : The type of learning activity that uses a web-based learning platform, namely Canvas by Instructure. Most of the learning activities are conducted using Canvas, such as virtual classroom, assignment submission, group presentation, discussion forum, midterm and final examination.
- 1.3.3 COVID-19** : COVID-19 or Coronavirus disease is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- 1.3.4 Indonesian EFL** : Indonesia EFL is the Indonesian students who learn English as a foreign language.

1.4. Aim of The Research

The aim of this research is to investigate the attitudes of Indonesian EFL students towards their online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5. Significances of The Research

The research is expected to generate beneficial results in three major purposes as follows:

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Uses** : This research will expand the contribution of students' attitudes towards online learning during COVID-19.
- 1.5.2 Practical Uses** : The results of this research will provide readers about the students' attitudes towards online learning to give an overview of educational institutions in designing an effective instructional model of online learning in the near future.
- 1.5.3 Empirical Uses** : This research will provide empirical insight into how the attitudes of students towards online learning are.