CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Higher education adopts a variety of educational technologies to improve the quality of the learning process. Lee (2010) states "many universities and colleges, nowadays, have been opening more distance learning courses to meet the individual needs of current students as well as to provide learning opportunities to other learners who could not attend campus-based programs (as cited in Dang, 2020, p. 1). Distance learning or online learning can be viewed as an instruction that is received through the use of various technologies. According to Urdan and Weggen (2000), online learning is a subset of distance education and embraces a wide set of technology applications and learning processes including, computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaborations (as cited in Keengwe, J., & Kidd, T. T, 2010, p. 533).

To support online learning, the use of a Learning Management System (henceforth LMS) is needed so the learning process can run well. Sanga (2016) states that "LMS is a web-based application that supports teaching and learning by enabling instructors to create and organize content for learners" (as cited in Towne, T. N, 2018, p. 32). Furthermore, Kakasevski, Mihajlov, Arsenovski, and Chungurski (2008) stated that "Learning Management Systems allow students to communicate with their teachers and each other in learning communities, download course materials, take online quizzes and submit homework and classwork assignments' (p. 613).

The idea of examining EFL students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas LMS comes from my own experience in the Sociolinguistics course. I had noticed that Canvas was being used as an online learning platform because using Canvas in learning activities is very useful. The features contained in Canvas are easy to use and I can access the material provided by the lecturer easily. Not only that, the transparency of grades can increase my enthusiasm and motivation in learning. This is in line with Road (2014) who states, "Canvas is a cloud-based Learning Management System that can design courses in less time and have a greater impact on the students' learning experience. It allows students and instructors to engage each other in environments students are familiar with. Canvas can be used to deliver course materials and assessments, support instructor-students and students to student interaction and feedback, and grade work" (as cited in Wulandari, Sofi, 2019, p. 16). Besides, Cleveland (2015) also states that "Canvas provides a group feature. The teachers can set up pages for groups to allow enhanced collaboration for the group projects. In this space, students can share files, communicate via private discussion boards or charts, and collaborate effectively as a group via distance" (as cited in Wulandari, Sofi, 2019, p. 17)

In online learning, the students are expected to participate and interact well in the learning process. Although most of the students argue when online learning the interaction between students and teachers does not occur well, the learning content is not conveyed accurately and many students answered that it was difficult to concentrate in class for a long time (Fatoni et al., 2020, p. 572). Therefore, with the use of Canvas, the learning can be more interesting because Canvas LMS has many

features that can fully support the learning process. As supported by License (2021), "Canvas includes a variety of built-in course construction and management tools that can be customized to create unique and accessible teaching and learning experiences" (p. 6). This phenomenon makes researcher interested in examining students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas as an online learning platform in the Sociolinguistics courses.

Contextually in this research, there were several students majoring in English Education who were currently taking Sociolinguistics course in one of the universities in West Java, Indonesia. They used Canvas as an online learning platform. They stated that the use of Canvas in the Sociolinguistic course was very useful and helped them especially regarding the features of the canvas (personal communication, April 13, 2021). There were 14 features that made it easier for them to follow the instruction and the learning process.

Moreover, there have been some researchers doing the same research about students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas LMS such as Dang (2020) in the University of Gothenburg studied factors influencing students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas as an LMS. This research aims to find out students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas as an LMS and factors that might influence their understanding of the usefulness of Canvas. This study found that students tended to perceive the usefulness of Canvas concerning its course administration's functions namely course structures, assignments, grades and feedback, and flexibility and mobility of the platform, for instance, the ability to learn anytime and anywhere. Therefore, the students stated in the open-ended questionnaire that all of the courses

utilized Canvas to primarily manage the courses progress, which was consisted of some main tasks such as providing general information about the course (e.g.: modules, learning materials & other resources, schedule, assignments, announcements, learning outcomes' criteria), and giving feedback and grades of the assignments.

Furthermore, from the explanation above this paper explores students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas LMS. To conclude, this study addressed a gap with the previous study as explained above that the distinctive aspects of this study are the research method, focus of the study where this research focuses on students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas in the Sociolinguistic course, and participants of the research. This research could be very important for universities in evaluating the use of Canvas as an LMS and making students' voices heard.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, in this study, I addressed the following question, ''What are the students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas LMS?''

1.3. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides four definitions related to this study as follows;

1.3.1. Students' Perceptions

Perception is people's opinion toward a certain object that they thought is true. In this research,

perception refers to students' perception of the usefulness of Canvas LMS as an online learning platform in the Sociolinguistic course. The usefulness is divided into three aspects: the usefulness regarding the features of Canvas LMS, the usefulness in accessing course materials, and the usefulness in independent learning skill development.

1.3.2. Canvas as Learning Management System (LMS)

Learning Management System is a software-based platform that facilitates the management, delivery and measurement of an organization's corporate e-learning programs. The LMS that was used in this research is Canvas.

1.3.3. Canvas LMS

Canvas LMS is an open and reliable web-based software that allows institutions to manage digital learning, educators to create and present online learning materials and assess student learning, and students to

	engage in courses and receive feedback about skill development and learning achievement.
1.3.4. Sociolinguistic Course	Sociolinguistic is a course in the 6th semester of the English Education Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teachers' Training in one University in Indonesia. It is designed in 16 meetings to provide valuable insight for students interested in exploring the relationship between the social context of language learning and success in learning a second or foreign language.

1.4. Aim of the Research

This research aims to know the EFL students' perceptions of the usefulness of Canvas LMS.

1.5. Significances of the Research

1.5.1. Theoretical Use

This study expands the theory of EFL students' perceptions of the usefulness of the Canvas LMS.

1.5.2. Practical Use

This study contributes to the teachers and students about the use of Canvas so that it can be applied in the learning process.

1.5.3. Empirical Use

This study provides empirical insights about the use of Canvas in the learning process.