CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introduction of the research, which contains the background of the research, the scope of the research, research questions, the aims of the research, the significance of the research, definition of terms, and organization of the research.

1.1 Background

The 2019–2020 coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has affected educational systems worldwide, causing schools, universities, and colleges to be closed temporarily. In over 100 countries, primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions are temporarily closed as an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19 through non-pharmaceutical interventions. By closing schools, it is shown by mathematical modeling that the transmission of an outbreak may be delayed. However, it also depends on the contacts children make outside of school (UNESCO, 2020).In Indonesia, several policies regarding the COVID-19 outbreak were issued and provided by the government. People were prohibited from gathering and doing activities outside the home. This is because this virus can be transmitted through physical contact (Van Doremalen, et al., 2020).

To overcome the school closure, online learning is conducted in Indonesia. Online learning is a product of globalization that incorporates technological developments. With online learning, the learning process can be conducted anytime and anywhere.

Unfortunately, due to this pandemic, not all online learning is planned well. This pandemic forces the teachers to immediately adapt and employ online learning in teaching their students. This is not a big problem if all teachers in Indonesia are competent in conducting online learning and all students in

Indonesia are ready to face this change of pace. However, there is still an education gap in Indonesia, especially in rural areas (Aditomo & Felicia, 2018). On the contrary with students in urban areas, those in rural areas often have difficulties in accessing distance education. Those aspects considered as challenges found in emergency online learning include difficulties in accessing the internet, gadgets, and electricity. Teachers' competencies also play an important role in this problem. Teachers with high competencies in technology and online learning will be more likely to succeed in organizing online learning than those with low competencies in technology and online learning.

Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) and Utami (2020) investigated teaching activities, challenges, and strategies of emergency online learning of English during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. They found that various applications and platforms were employed to carry out online learning, such as YouTube to deliver the teaching materials and Whatsapp groups to hold discussions. However, some challenges came from students, teachers, and students' parents and the online learning did not run well due to a lack of preparation and planning.

However, none of the aforementioned research takes into account the gap between urban areas and rural areas, which still becomes a problem in Indonesia. The gap includes school resources such as budgets, facilities, and teachers, school participation, and the population that is illiterate in the area (Winardi, 2017). The research also does not consider the sudden change in the way of teaching and learning, which is currently experienced by students and teachers. Due to the pandemic, students and teachers are forced to change their way of teaching and learning from face-to-face learning to online learning, which can be detrimental, especially if the teachers and students are not prepared to do online learning (Wang et al., 2020).

Therefore, based on the aforementioned problems, research focusing on the application of online learning in urban and rural areas is needed. This research compares the online learning conducted in those contrasting areas by taking into account the education gap and also the sudden implementation of online learning. In this research, how online learning is conducted in urban and rural areas along with students' and teachers' perceptions is investigated.

1.2 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on investigating EFL online learning conducted by schools in the urban and rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this research also focuses on investigating challenges encountered by EFL teachers in conducting online learning and EFL students' perceptions regarding the application of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Research Questions

This research attempts to answer these questions:

1. How do EFL teachers in the urban and rural areas conduct online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. What aspects are perceived as challenges by EFL teachers in the implementation of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and how do they cope with those challenges?

3. How do EFL students in the urban and rural areas perceive the teaching-learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.4 Aims of the Research

The research aims at finding out how teachers in urban and rural areas conduct online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it investigates aspects considered as challenges and solutions by EFL teachers in conducting online learning and students' perceptions regarding the application of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is also be investigated.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research attempts to offer some theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the enrichment of the literature review about online learning in urban and rural areas by taking into account the education gap and its sudden implementation. Practically, the research is expected to give information about how online learning is conducted during the pandemic or any emergency in both urban and rural areas. This research is also expected to give information about challenges encountered by EFL teachers in conducting online learning and EFL students' perceptions regarding online learning conducted during the pandemic.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

- Online learning is the use of internet technologies to distribute learning materials so that students can access anything (Rosenberg, 2001).

- Perception is a process to accomplish awareness or comprehension of sensory information (Qiong, 2017).

- Connectivism is the integration of principles explored by chaos, network, and complexity and self-organization theories (Siemens, 2005)

- An urban area is an area with a population density of more than 5,000 persons per square kilometer; where 25 percent or less of the households work in the agricultural sector; and in which there are eight or more urban

facilities (primary school, junior high schools, senior high schools, banks, cinemas, factories, hospitals, markets with buildings, maternity hospitals, post offices, primary health care centre, public electricity, restaurants, roads that can accomodate three and four wheeled motorized vehicles, shopping centres, and telephones) (Mulyana, 2014).

- A rural area is an area whose people's lives are organized around agricultural activities (Weeks, 2010).

1.7 Thesis Organization

This thesis proposal is organized into three chapters. The chapters are divided into subchapters that elaborate on the given issues.

The first chapter is the introduction. This chapter introduces the present research. It includes the background of the research, scope of the research, research questions, aims of the research, significance of the research, definition of terms, and thesis organization.

The second chapter is the literature review. This chapter provides the literature related to the COVID-19 pandemic, globalization, online learning, lesson plan, urban area, and rural area.

The third chapter is the research methodology. This chapter is related to the methodological aspects of this research. It consists of research design, site and participants, data collection technique, and data analysis.

The fourth chapter is the findings and discussion. This chapter presents the data found in both interviews and questionnaires and then relates them to available theories. It consists of findings and discussion.

The fifth chapter is the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter consists of two sections: conclusions and recommendations. In the conclusion

section, all the discussions in chapters I to IV are summarized and elaborated. Then, recommendations for teachers, educational institutions, and further research are presented

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the background of this research, the scope of this research, the research questions, the aims and significance of the research, the clarification of terms, and the organization of this research. This research was written due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to school closures and therefore forcing students and teachers to conduct and emergency online learning, with the hope of giving more knowledge to teachers to help them conduct emergency online learning better.