CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, 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.

5.1 Conclusion

The results of the analysis indicate that in the implementation of emergency online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in urban and rural areas, there were more similarities than differences. This might happen because those teachers belong to the same generation, which is generation Y or millennial. Gen Y (born between 1982 and 1999) are defined as digital natives whose signature products are tablets and smartphones (Linnes & Metcalf, 2017). In addition, Gen Y is a generation that loves to connect through video chats, the internet, e-mail, and text messages, and cannot seem to get enough of social media in their daily lives.

Despite growing up as 'digital natives', this is not translating into high levels of digital literacy. UNICEF (2021) states that only 19 per cent of Indonesia's workforce in 2020 applied digital skills and 6 per cent had advanced digital skills. Even within the education sector, the most commonly applied digital skill was the ability to communicate online. To address this issue, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemdikbud) had also launched a program to improve teachers' digital literacy, so the digital literacy of teachers in rural areas could also improve.

The differences found between the implementation of emergency online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in the urban and rural areas can be found in whether or not the teachers promote diversity in their teaching. The teacher in the urban area said that she promoted diversity in online learning by,

for example, involving pictures or figures of people of color. In addition, she introduced different accents of English, not only Caucasian accents, to her students. In contrast, the teacher in the rural area did not even discuss diversity in her class. This difference might be caused by the characteristics of people in urban and rural areas. Urban areas are characterized by their heterogeneity, while on the other hand rural areas are characterized by their homogeneity (Jamaludin, 2015). It means that urban areas usually have people of several ethnicities, races, and/or nationalities, while rural areas usually have people of one ethnicity, race, and/or nationality. Therefore, the teacher in the rural area did not see diversity as her priority.

Regarding the factors considered challenging by teachers in implementing emergency online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were five aspects considered challenging by EFL teachers. Those aspects were related to class size, time limitations, students' financial condition, lack of parental support, and poor internet connection. However, the teacher in the urban area faced fewer challenges than those faced by the teacher in the rural area. The teacher in the urban area faced two challenges, while the teacher in the rural areas faced four challenges, with only one challenge in common.

The teacher who taught in the urban area faced challenges related to assignments and time limitations. The teacher who taught in the rural area, on the other hand, found difficulties regarding time limitations, students' financial condition, lack of parental support, and poor internet connection. This showed that there were more challenges in conducting distance learning in the rural area than in the urban area.

Despite so many challenges, measures to overcome them had been taken by both teachers, both schools, and the Indonesian government. However, the challenge regarding poor internet connection needs to also be addressed by the government. The government needs to do more in terms of internet penetration because there were still 12,548 villages that did not have internet connection

(Laksana, 2021). By having adequate internet connection in their homes, students would not need to travel and look for places with good internet connection to be able to participate in online classrooms. Therefore, students could focus solely on their study.

Regarding students' perception, most of the students in urban and rural areas found that the internet connection in their areas was good, and they rarely had any issue with internet connection. Even students from the most isolated area in this research, Keerom, stated that the internet connection in their areas was good. Furthermore, students in both urban and rural areas stated that they preferred to use WhatsApp as the main platform in conducting online learning because it was easy to use and consume less data than other platforms.

However, there was one major difference between urban and rural areas in this research, which was the use of gadgets. About 93.1% students from rural areas used mobile phones as a sole tool for accessing online learning, while the percentage was 55.8% for students in urban areas. Problems might arise because mobile phones are not as powerful as computers. The limited memory of mobile phones had put students in difficulty because students were required to download so many learning materials, lecture audio, videos, and handouts.

5.2 Implications

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.

By referring to this research, teachers are expected to be able to administer online learning according to the connectivism guidelines and to find out how connectivism guidelines can improve students' English skills. Teachers are also expected to be able to detect problems that may arise in online EFL learning early and take measures to overcome those challenges. In addition, teachers are also expected to take into account students' perception in conducting online learning, for example in choosing learning platforms, giving assignment, and presenting materials.

Furthermore, the government is expected to facilitate teachers and students to improve the quality of online learning. This can be achieved by, for example, expanding the internet penetration rate, giving more training to teachers on online teaching, and helping students who do not have gadgets to participate in online learning.

5.3 Recommendations

After finding the results of this research, some suggestions could be taken into account by teachers, the government, and future researchers.

For teachers, it is suggested to implement connectivism in learning in this era of technology. It is because connectivism offers a promising point of view to conceptualize learning in this digital age using its various qualities ranging from face-to-face to online learning (Mpungose, 2020). In addition, connective learning is not only learning and connecting some "network" or knowledge information but also showing that learners have an ability to acquire newer and broader knowledge (Szada-Borzyszkowska & Jaszczyszyn, 2014). Teachers are also suggested to take into account students' perception in conducting online learning, such as in choosing learning platforms. In this research, it was found that most of the students prefer WhatsApp to any other platforms because of its ease of use.

For the government, it is important to take into account challenges regarding poor internet connection. The government needs to do more in terms of internet penetration because there were still 12,548 villages that did not have internet connection (Laksana, 2021). By having adequate internet connection in their homes, students would not need to travel and look for places with good internet connection to be able to participate in online classrooms. Therefore, they could focus solely on their study.

For future researchers, it is hoped that the future research can reach more areas, especially in Eastern Indonesia. This research could only cover 23 cities in Java, Sumatra, Lesser Sunda Islands, and Western New Guinea areas. Due to time limitation and the difficulties in contacting students in those areas, data from students in Kalimantan and Sulawesi islands were still unable to be collected. In addition, it is better if future researchers can get data from all 34 provinces in Indonesia.

In addition, this research only interviewed two teachers, one each from an urban area and a rural area. Future research is expected to interview more teachers, preferably those who come from different generations. For example, one Gen Y urban school teacher, one Gen Y rural school teacher, one Gen X urban school teacher, and one Gen X rural school teacher. Furthermore, in this research, students were not interviewed in this research. It is expected that students are also interviewed to obtain more understanding about aspects that are researched.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the summary of this research from Chapter I to Chapter IV. It has also presented the suggestion regarding emergency online learning for teachers, the government, and future researchers.