

Chapter I

Introduction

This study aims to discuss several points that will be explained in this chapter. The background of the research explains why researcher is interested in the perceptions of Agriculture Department students towards E-learning in English courses. This chapter will also provide the research questions that will guide the analysis. Furthermore, the research objectives will specify the exact goals or objectives that will be investigated. The significance of the analysis will also demonstrate the research's benefits for certain people. Finally, a chapter organization will be presented, which will include a description of each chapter.

Background of the Research

Technology like the Internet makes it simpler for people to engage without being restricted by time or space anymore. E-learning is one of the activities that utilize technology such as the use of the internet. When e-learning the activities, such as teaching and learning can be done anytime and anywhere. According to Darmayanti, Setiani, and Oetojo (2007) through e-learning, the learning process can take place anywhere, for example teachers and students, lecturers and students, tutors and tutees (tutorial participants) no longer need to meet face to face in the lecture hall.

E-learning has been widely used in several universities in Indonesia. Darmayanti stated in Indonesia, there are several single mode (face-to-face) tertiary institutions that implement distance learning, including the Bogor

Agricultural Institute (IPB), Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB), Gadjah Mada University (UGM), Petra Catholic University Surabaya, University of Surabaya, Bina Nusantara University (BINUS) Jakarta, Indonesian University of Education (UPI) in Bandung, State University of Malang, and University of Brawidjaja (UNIBRAW) Malang which are now also using e-Learning (as cited in Darmayanti, Setiani, & Oetojo, 2007).

E-learning is becoming increasingly used during a pandemic due to government policies that require learning activities to be carried out remotely. According to Radha, Mahalakshmi, Kumar, and Saravanakumar (2020) the outbreak of this dangerous virus across the globe has forced educational institutions to shut down to control the spread of this virus. In stopping the spread, the government stopped activities at schools, and this had an impact on many students in Indonesia. Aji (2020) stated that Millions of students, including those in Indonesia, have been affected by the temporary closure of all educational institutions to prevent the spread of a Covid-19 pandemic around the world.

There is a change in the education system in Indonesia due to preventing the spread of the virus. Many teachers must find alternative ways to do learning and the easiest thing is through e-learning. E-learning is a method used to convey information for education or training using telecommunications technology (Goyal, 2012). E-learning is learning instructions through digital media such as laptops or smartphones that aim to support learning. According to Clark and Mayer (2016), e-learning is defined as training delivered on a digital device (such as a desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone) with the goal of

supporting learning. E-learning can also be interpreted as a method that combines communication and technology. According to Panduranga and Aishi (2018), e-learning is a platform for teaching and learning activities using a combination of information and telecommunications technology.

From the several definitions above, Goyal's quote is the most appropriate definition because the information conveyed describes e-learning in general. After knowing the definitions from several researchers above, it can be concluded that e-learning is an information and communication platform for teaching and learning activities using technology.

E-learning is easy to comprehend and implement (Radha, Mahalakshmi, Kumar, & Saravanakumar, 2020). Instructions for educational institutions such as universities have been given to conduct distance learning. Research has instructed that all colleges should stop teaching on campus and switch to synchronous online learning systems for distance learning (Alsoud & Harasis, 2021). Distance learning can be facilitated by e-learning such as by using an interactive learning platform that can be used anywhere by connecting it to the internet. E-learning systems, such as learning management systems (LMS), provide a learning platform that allows for interactive learning at any time and from any location as long as users have access to the Internet (Aini, Putra, Budiarto, & Rahardja, 2020). E-learning provides positive results for student learning. Many students feel that e-learning is more practical and flexible because learning can be done anywhere and anytime. According to Radha, Mahalakshmi, Kumar, and Saravanakumar (2020) during the lockdown, e-learning has shown to be the most

effective in all areas, particularly in education. Although e-learning is easy to access, it can also cause problems. They must address technical concerns and maintain the well-designed system for optimum benefits (Hoq, 2020).

E-learning is also used in English teaching, including in academic English. Academic English is a part of English like the skills learned in learning English such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Anstrom, DiCerbo, Butler, Katz, Millet, and Rivera (2010), academic English can be seen as a component of overall English language competency, which also involves language use in more social contexts within and outside of the classroom. Reading abstracts, taking notes on the main points of lectures, and producing critiques, summaries, annotated bibliographies, reports, case studies, research projects, and expository articles are all examples of academic English assignments (Scarcella, 2003). Full use of e-learning in the classroom has both positive and negative impacts and one of the negative impacts is limited activities in class such as reduced practical activities during learning. According to Arkorful and Baidoo (2014), students may get good achievements in academics but less in practice. This is due to distance learning that makes it difficult to carry out practical activities directly.

E-learning has been done a lot and one of them is a student majoring in agriculture at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta. They use e-learning as a learning method in English class. The use of Microsoft Teams as a platform for face-to-face (synchronous learning) and My Klass as a place to do asynchronous learning are places to facilitate students in online learning. E learning has helped

students a lot in the learning process. However, it certainly will not work 100%, such as there are still teachers who have not been able to fully meet the needs of students during learning or there are students who still feel that e-learning does not have a good impact. Although the facilities provided are adequate, there are times when integration is not optimal for some parties. There are still many challenges that should be faced because of the e-learning system. Also, based on my initial interview with students, there are still many students who think that difficulties and dissatisfaction when participating in learning still often occur. Furthermore, it puts our adaptability and flexibility to the test in the face of a significant crisis like COVID 19.

Research on e-learning has been done by several researchers. The first study from Mu'in and Amelia (2018) focused on ELED students' perception regarding independent assessment, learning outcomes and evaluation of online English learning. The study found that students gave good responses to independent assessment because the tasks, exercises, mid and final test submissions were easier constructed using e-learning, also for learning outcomes and evaluation, students received good responses because even though e-learning could not be integrated 100% but at least it is still effective as face to face in class and the management or the planning in the evaluation process is also on a good track development.

The second research from Maulaya and Saefurrohman (2021) has the aim of knowing the perception of the use of e-learning in the classroom. This study found that students gave perceptions about the good impact of e-learning on

reading classes such as time efficiency and can be accessed anywhere and anytime.

E-learning has been done by many previous researchers, as described above. According to previous research, it has focused more on the advantages or positive responses to e-learning, while this study will focus on the benefits and challenges of e-learning in English courses class. Furthermore, there are no researchers who have researched academic English in the agricultural Department, so this needs to be investigated to find out their perceptions of the benefits and the challenges of learning academic English through e-learning. This research was conducted because academic English is still being used or still being studied in the Agricultural Department and to study academic English and it requires more intensive guidance. Meanwhile, the current learning method has started to change after the pandemic. Learning through e-learning is a bit difficult, especially for teachers who teach. Students also need self-motivation to learn. Not to mention there are many things that can become obstacles such as lack of interaction, bad signals, or lack of motivation.

According to the researcher's observations, there are many lecturers who teach through e-learning well and integration is already good, and this has proven to be successful in several classes at the Agricultural Department but there are still lecturers who are not optimal in their integration in one class. Therefore, there are still many students who feel uncomfortable with the e-learning system, especially in English classes. This is influenced by various kinds of difficulties and therefore students must do several ways to survive with this e-learning system.

This study aims to determine student perceptions of the benefits and challenges of e-learning. This research is very important to do to find out information about the agricultural students' perspective when using e-learning in academic English classes.

Identification of the Problem

The teaching and learning process at the Agricultural Department, especially at the private Islamic university in Yogyakarta, from 2020 until now has used the online teaching system. During the pandemic, all learning changed into online, but although currently learning has started to be done offline, not all classes use the offline learning system, one of which is the academic English course which is still using the e-learning system. During the observation the researchers found several problems that were found in students during online learning. Due to the different teaching methods of teachers and the factor of the internet network that does not always work well, sometimes students feel satisfied with learning, and some are less satisfied with their learning.

E-learning was one of the platforms used by all Agricultural Department teachers to conduct online teaching during Pandemic Covid-19, although the learning has now gone offline, some classes continue to use it. During the observation, there were numerous issues that the researcher found such as students feel a little burdened when they have to practice using English directly in class because previously, they only recorded themselves using a camera, students felt discussions with the teacher were limited and sometimes students were dissatisfied with the material presented.

The researcher conducted initial interviews with several students. The researcher found one student which states that during learning, the teacher's less than optimal teaching method makes learning ineffective, besides that students also mention that the limitation of communication space makes students lazy to ask questions and lose interest. Another student stated that the lack of explanation for the material provided, such as providing material through videos only made it difficult for students to understand the material and the teacher's less interactive attitude made students passive. As already explained communication restrictions and less interactive teachers are some of the reasons for learning using e-learning to be less effective.

Therefore, the problems that need to be recognized because the use of online learning systems is quite challenging. The way of direct learning also needs to be done well. This research can help teachers to find out the problems faced by their students during e-learning. In addition, this research can also help students to determine how to deal with e-learning.

Delimitation of the Research

This study focuses on students' perceptions on the use of e-learning, especially on students' perceptions of how effective it is to face online learning in an academic English course and to find out about the challenges faced during e-learning. This research will take place at the Agricultural Department at an Islamic Private University in Yogyakarta. Participants in this study were active students who took online academic English courses. The findings of this study will present the perceptions of active students from the Agricultural Department

who take academic English courses at the Islamic Private University in Yogyakarta and not from other classes, not from other departments or universities.

Research Question

Based on the background above, this study formulates two research questions regarding the perception of students from the Agricultural Department towards e-learning as an online learning method in English classes:

1. What do students perceive on the benefits of e-learning for an academic English course?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the online learning challenges in the academic English course?

The Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To investigate students' perception on the benefits of e-learning for an academic English course.
2. To explore students' perceptions on the online learning challenges in the academic English course

The Significance of the research

The research is expected to provide benefits and knowledge for students, teachers, and future researchers.

Student. This research will be conducted to find out what is considered effective in dealing with e-learning. Students can use this research as a solution in dealing with problems that arise when learning is done online.

Teacher. E-learning is an alternative to online teaching. E-learning is also flexible to use but requires careful preparation before its integration. This research can help teachers in understanding the problems faced by students so that teachers can improve the preparation of learning materials that can help students in learning.

Future researchers. The results of this study can be used by other researchers who want to explore the same field of research. The results of this study can also be used as a reference from a different point of view for those who will conduct research in the same field of research.

Organization of the Research

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter describes the research background, research identification, research question, research objective and research significance.

Chapter two is a literature review. It provides a definition of e-learning, understanding the effectiveness of the e-learning, and perceived challenges during online learning. This chapter describes the theory related to the overview of e-learning during online learning.

Chapter three is the methodology. This chapter explains how the researcher will conduct the research. Methods, instruments, participants, settings,

and data collection techniques are all discussed in this chapter. The researcher also discusses how to examine data in this chapter.

Chapter four is findings and discussion. The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter.

Chapter five is conclusions and recommendations. This chapter contains generic responses to research questions as well as researcher recommendations. Teachers, students, and other researchers were given recommendations in this chapter.