

Chapter One

Introduction

The researcher examines several points that are discussed in this chapter. In the first part, there is a research background that explains general information related to the topic of this research. They are general explanations, research contexts and problems at the research site, research reviews, previous research gaps, the importance of this study, and the aims of this study. The next section discusses the identification of problems that are the source for conducting research. Then the next section explains how broad this research can be. Next, there are research questions that support the research to be carried out. This is followed by an explanation of the purpose of this research. The last section is the research organization which informs how all the chapters are organized.

Background of the Research

The transition from traditional, offline learning to the online learning has been a profound and accelerating phenomenon, particularly in recent times. This transition has been driven by advances in information and communication technology that have enabled wider and faster internet access. Additionally, the global pandemic of COVID-19 has accelerated this process, compelling numerous educational institutions to transition to distance learning as a response to the physical restrictions imposed. Online learning has been a pervasive practice for a considerable period of time, serving as an integral component of educational technology (Agung & Surtikanti, 2020)

Online learning can be divided into two main types: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous and asynchronous online learning represent two main approaches in distance education, with significant differences in the way learning is delivered and accessed.

Synchronous learning is a form of distance education (online education) that occurs in real-time through the use of platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet (Rigo & Mikus, 2021). This means that teacher and student meet through the video-conference tool according to the schedule and have live interaction like in regular classroom meeting. In contrast, asynchronous learning occurs through the use of community forums or online platforms without the requirement for real-time interaction (Fadhilah et al, 2021). The integration of these two methodologies can facilitate the delivery of a comprehensive and diverse learning experience for learners with varying learning styles and temporal preferences.

Nowadays, the majority of universities in Indonesia have introduced online learning. One of them is the English Education Department at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta, where (English as a Foreign Language) EFL students are now engaged in online learning. Many research found that students encounter challenges when undertaking synchronous and asynchronous online learning. According to Rahman et al. (2022) found that in synchronous learning, students may encounter difficulties in maintaining concentration and focus during scheduled online sessions, particularly when external distractions are present. Conversely, in asynchronous learning, students must possess high levels of self-discipline to effectively manage their time and self-motivate themselves in learning the material without direct supervision from the teacher (Öztürk ,2021). Another research also said that Students faced problems such as trouble signals, lacking internet data, poor knowledge of educational technology, and inflexible instructional materials (Abdul & Maharida, 2022). Therefore, it is essential to have a well-defined strategy to effectively address these challenges.

Prior research has been conducted by several researchers on the subject of strategies for learning in synchronous and asynchronous online modes. For instance, Ismiatun and Suhartoyo

(2022) research examines the utilization of social strategies in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The research indicates that in asynchronous learning, students tend to prioritize collaboration and discussion as a means of assessing their task completion.

Additionally, the researcher posits that the strategy of leveraging technology to enhance interaction and communication and requesting clarification is a significant factor in synchronous learning, where technology influences the utilization of social strategies in online class participation. Ds et al., (2020) showed that five strategies called Discover, Learning, Practice, Collaborate, and Asses was well-received by most students.

This research was conducted for several reasons. First, students can determine and choose strategies to maximize synchronous and asynchronous online learning.. Second, how can students optimize the facilities provided by universities regarding with the availability of online learning tools. Third, by understanding effective learning strategies for EFL students in synchronous and asynchronous online modes, educators can improve students' learning outcomes. This research is not only pertinent to the field of EFL education, but also has a broader impact on enhancing the quality of learning in the digital age. Therefore, research on the exploring EFL students' strategies to maximize learning in synchronous and asynchronous online modes is crucial to facilitate improvements in student learning and the development of more effective teaching methodologies.

Identification of the Problem

The English Language Education Department (ELED) at the Islamic private university in Yogyakarta has implemented a blended teaching and learning process. Through this blended learning system, the lecturers can have minimum 60% of the meetings for offline learning process in class. The remaining 40% (maximum) can be conducted online. Online learning is

employed as an alternative to face-to-face meetings in the classrooms. Although students have gotten used to online learning during the pandemic, most students still struggle to find effective online learning processes. Therefore, an understanding of student learning strategies may still be useful for both students and educators. This was attributed to the necessity for students to adapt their learning approach to align with the teaching style of their lecturer, given that each lecturer employs a distinct methodology (Santoso et al, 2024).

The researcher has identified several obstacles that students engaged in synchronous and asynchronous online learning encounter during the observation process. The primary obstacles to online learning are technical constraints, such as unreliable internet connections and a lack of digital skills. Additionally, the absence of social interaction may result in students feeling less motivated and engaged in online learning. Furthermore, there is a dearth of robust independent learning abilities, including time management, self-regulation, and self-motivation. So, students are often inattentive, lethargic, untimely and bored during online learning (Aroonsrimarakot et al, 2023).

The exploration of EFL students' strategies to maximize learning in synchronous and asynchronous online modes is a crucial issue that must be addressed in order to ensure that EFL students can achieve their full learning potential in both synchronous and asynchronous online environments. Consequently, this research is essential in order to develop effective strategies to overcome the obstacles that arise in both modes of learning. According to Ajani (2023) that overcoming the obstacles can facilitate EFL students' capacity to optimize their learning in synchronous and asynchronous online modes. Furthermore, it can also assist teachers in enhancing their online teaching, which will be applied to students.

Delimitation of the Research

The scope of research on asynchronous and synchronous online learning is quite wide. Therefore, in this study the researcher delimited this research by focusing on exploring students' strategies to maximize learning in asynchronous and synchronous online learning. This research was conducted at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta, especially in the English Language Education Department (ELED). The research participants are eighth-semester students from the class of 2020 who have been engaged in online learning since their enrollment in college. The results of the research findings present the various learning strategies used by students in the implementation of asynchronous and synchronous online learning in one of the private Islamic universities in Yogyakarta.

Research Question

The formulation of research questions helps to investigate and find answers to these questions. Based on the topic chosen and the background above, this study tries to investigate several questions about the asynchronous and synchronous strategies used by students:

1. What are students' strategies to maximize learning in synchronous online during meetings?
2. What are students' strategies to maximize learning in asynchronous online during meetings?

The Objective of the Research

Based on the research questions that have been prepared, the research has two objectives:

1. To explore the students' strategies to maximize learning in synchronous online during meetings
2. To explore the students' strategies to maximize learning in asynchronous online during meetings

The Significance of the Research

The researcher that has been carried out is expected to be able to solve the problem that occur and provide benefits and new knowledge for students, lecturers, and future researchers.

Students

This research provides students with valuable insights into effective strategies to maximize their learning in both synchronous and asynchronous online environments. Therefore, this research can help EFL students understand the most effective strategies to learn English in both synchronous and asynchronous online environments. In addition, this research can also facilitate the development of important skills, such as time management, self-regulation and self-motivation.

Lecturers

The findings of this study can help lecturers develop more effective online courses that can suit students' learning needs and preferences, both synchronously and asynchronously. Understanding the strategies used by students can assist lecturers in addressing issues that exist within the online learning environment. As a result, lecturers can use this data to determine the type of online learning that works best to facilitate student learning.

Future Researchers

The results of this study can be used by other researchers who are interested in exploring the same field of research. As this study provides a solid foundation for future research in the field of online learning strategies, especially in the context of EFL education. This study gives different views for other researchers and it can be the references for the next research.

Organization of the Research

This organizational section informs how all chapters are organized. This research paper is divided into five parts. The first chapter contains an introduction. After that, an explanation of

the research background, problem identification, research limitations, research questions, research objectives, research significance, and research organization was given.

Chapter two is a literature review. The literature review contains several theories and basic research concepts related to the topic of asynchronous and synchronous learning. Which explains about asynchronous and synchronous learning, the positive and negative impacts caused by asynchronous and synchronous learning, and the strategies used in asynchronous and synchronous learning.

Chapter three is the methodology. In this chapter, several points are explained. The first research method used is the qualitative method as a research approach, the second is the instrument used in the study, the third is the participant selected by the researcher, the fourth is the setting that has been arranged, the fifth is the data collection technique carried out. And the last is an explanation of how to analyze the data.

Chapter four presents the research findings and discusses them. The chapter also includes the research data and explains the theories used. This chapter provides the answers to the research questions.

Chapter five contains conclusions and recommendation. The conclusion explains the important points of the findings that have been described in the previous chapter.

Recommendation contains suggestions for several parties or for other research.