

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English has become an international language that has been widely used for communication worldwide as a means of communication between native and non-native speakers (Fatiha et al. 2014). In Indonesia, English is both a foreign language and a global language that must be learned in order to help different aspects of life, and one of those is education. The education system in Indonesia requires English for junior and senior high school students as a graduation test. This shows that learning English as a foreign language is very important, especially in the world of education.

In Indonesia teaching and learning activities are still carried out directly or face to face in the classroom. However, the world has been devastated with coronavirus or Covid 19 since the end of 2019. The virus was first found in Wuhan, Hubei, China. To date, 95,124 people around the world have been reported to the corona (CNN, 2020). As the result of the Covid 19 pandemic dissemination all around the world, all activities must be carried out from home. As of 11 March 2020, the President of the Republic of Indonesia implemented a strategy of briefly shutting the teaching and learning process in schools and universities, instructing them to study at home, and replacing them with online learning to break the virus chain.

Online learning is the best option for education in the middle of the pandemic of Covid 19. (Moore et al ,2011) stated that online learning is a learning activity that needs a connection, accessibility, completeness, and capability for different types

of learning interactions on the internet network. (Zhang et.al., 2004) shows that the use of the internet and multimedia technologies is able to change the way knowledge is transmitted and can be an alternative to classroom learning. Moreover, supporting equipment, such as smartphones, laptops or tablets that can be used to access information anywhere and at any time, are required to introduce online learning (Gikas & Grant, 2013).

However, not all cities or areas in Indonesia have appropriate internet connectivity and the limitations of online learning tools such as smartphones do not allow them to learn by online appropriately, so that a few Indonesian schools must combine online with offline learning as well as what is called blended learning. The blended learning model refers to an innovative learning paradigm that can mix traditional learning activities with online learning. Blended learning, according to Watson and Murin (2014), is a formal education program in which a student receives a portion of learning through online learning that controls the time, place, choice of material, and speed of learning in the hands of students, and part of the learning is guided learning outside home, and the learning modalities of these students are interconnected so that students get an overall education. Blended learning is a solution implemented by schools that cannot do online learning. In this situation, the school makes a schedule for students to come to school once a week to submit the tasks that have been assigned by online in one week of teaching and learning activities.

In conducting online learning or blended learning, Indonesian schools use an online platform that is easy to use by teachers and students. Some of the platforms used by Indonesian schools are WhatsApp Messenger, Google Classroom, Zoom, Google

Meet, and so on. One of the applications or platforms that are easy and familiar to use by students and teachers is the WhatsApp Messenger. According to Bouhnik and Deshen (2014), WhatsApp is a smartphone application used for instant messaging. The application of WhatsApp Messenger has the ability to be used as a learning tool. The presence of the WhatsApp Messenger program significantly assists learning in today's digital era. One of the aims for the rising use of the WhatsApp Messenger app is learning in schools and colleges. In schools and universities, use of the WhatsApp Messenger program has taken place. WhatsApp Messenger has a variety of features that can be used to interact with the help of internet providers, features included in WhatsApp are Gallery for adding Photo, Contacts, Camera for taking photos, Audio for Messaging Voice, etc. These various features certainly make it easier to learn to communicate through online media. Group WhatsApp Messenger is a group discussion service that can handle up to 256 users, a very large number that can be obtained in only one application. Its participants can share online conversations and knowledge through this virtual space.

With the availability of Wi-Fi and cellular data connections, students can communicate with teachers and other students in real time because it is significantly cheaper to communicate through social networking sites. WhatsApp has the ability to reach a big number of students in a short period of time. Students from the same class may quickly converse on specific issues using this application because it allows group members to join in the chat and make communication more effective (Trentin & Repetto, 2013). In other words, WhatsApp is highly beneficial in

communication and also allows the transmission of learning-related material so that students do not lose out on learning-related information.

However, even though the use of WhatsApp is quite familiar and easy to use, not all students in Indonesia are familiar with this learning method, so this is a new thing that students need to adapt. Students' perspective about this learning system using WhatsApp may also be different. Therefore, this study aims to explore how students' views on blended English learning are related to their education. The researcher is interested in investigating student perspective after learning by this learning system. By understanding the perception of students, the teacher can better to understand students. Then, the researcher conduct a study entitled Students' Perspective towards the Use of WhatsApp in Blended English Language Learning at SMPN 44 OKU.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates research question that was what are the students' perspective towards blended English language learning using WhatsApp?

1.3 Research Objective

In the line with the research problems above the purposes of this study is to investigate the students' perspective towards blended English language learning using WhatsApp.

1.4 Uses of the Study

1.4.1 Theoretically

The result of this study is to be expected to help and support previous theories related to the use of blended learning for learning English.

1.4.2 Practically

1. For Students

Blended learning can be used as a learning solution for learning English during the Covid 19 pandemic. Even though, the students cannot do online learning properly, the use of WhatsApp Messenger hopefully can help the students to learn English.

2. For Teacher

Blended learning may be used by teachers as an alternative way of teaching English without making the students struggling in learning English. Then, the teacher can understand the level of student understanding of the material presented by WhatsApp Group through the perception of students, whether or not there are problems.

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, the researcher limited the scope to analyzing students' perspective of English blended learning using the WhatsApp Group during the Covid 19 pandemic. The subjects of this study were students in eighth-grade at SMPN 44 OKU, particularly in English subject. In English subject the students learn about several materials such as vocabulary, descriptive text, and etc