

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study was intended to explore EFL students' experiences of online collaboration for the research project. This chapter describes the background of the research, the scope of the study, the research questions, the research objectives, the significance of the research, and the definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background of Study

Technological development affects every aspect of human life Ratheeswari (2018). Technology drives the learning process to the next level. Technology changes how people communicate, collaborate, and exchange information or data easily, comfortably, and safely (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). The difference in location, distance, and time no longer impedes the learning activity (Cole, 2000). Technology allows students to do online collaborate for a research project can be realized.

In the last decade, many researchers have been interested to see the use of online collaboration. Long and Meglich (2013) investigate the use of virtual collaboration, the implications for today's college graduates, and the need to provide students with experiences in virtual collaboration. This study found that virtual collaboration skills are needed for today's college graduates. The benefits of working with peers in online collaboration are developing a learning community, enhancing discipline knowledge, learning as a social endeavour, and dispersing workload.

Jieun and Osman (2021) conducted a study to compare the experiences and perceptions of UAE and Korean students in campus-based universities of online collaborative learning (OCL). Students from both countries experienced the most group projects and presentations, but online collaborative development and group exams were rarely used. This study found the barriers to OCL; UAE students cited language, gender, and privacy as the top barriers, and Korean students cited student attitudes and language. Another study by Bailey and Judd (2018) evaluates the effects of Online Collaborative Writing (OCW). The results show that students in the OCW group have improved their L2 writing accuracy to a statistically significant level.

In the Indonesian context, collaborating online has become an online learning issue due to this pandemic era. Napitupulu, Ananda, Praticia, and Rahmadini (2020) researched the case of the implementation of online collaborative learning using qualitative research methods obtained from the Focus Group Discussion showing that students feel their efficacy, such as 1) Learning is much more enjoyable 2) not feeling tense and depressed 3) relax in the learning process but still focused 4) each student becomes more open to each other both with friends and with researchers 5) feels involved and appreciated because each collaborates and participates 6) becomes more motivated 7) able to create valuable plans and ideas. The design of international collaboration relating to distance learning institutions demands working on the co-development of learning resources, picking suitable technology, and quality control (Diki, 2013).

Most recent studies focus on the preparedness and experience of online collaboration (Naicker, Singh, & Genugten, 2021). Then another study explored the students' anxiety about online collaboration projects (Hilliard, 2017), and little attention was paid to EFL students' experiences of online collaboration for the research project. To fill the gaps, this study will investigate EFL students' experiences of online collaboration for the research project. In this research project, EFL students collaborate online due to distance learning. Students collaborate online to carry out the entire research process, such as determining research titles, methodology, and data presentation. The students cannot collaborate face-to-face as the student should because of the Pandemic situation. By understanding students' perceptions of online collaboration, teachers gain insights to plan better online collaborations (Xue, Merrill, Housefield & McNeil, 2021). The presence of this research in concern with it is expected to be a piece of valuable knowledge for both students and the teacher. The research can be a teacher's reference to create a better online learning environment for the students. Examining students' perceptions and experiences of online collaboration is essential because collaboration learning will be more successful when learners value it (Swan, Shen, & Hiltz, 2006).

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study investigates the EFL students' experiences of online collaboration for a research project, especially those in the sixth semester of the academic year of 2020/2021, majoring in the English Education Department program at one of the Higher Islamic Education Institutions in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. The data in this study is from ten EFL students who have taken the Research in English Language Teaching II (RELT II) course in the sixth semester and have joined a small-scale research project. Students faced many barriers regarding the students' online collaboration for a research project; this study provides comprehension to develop an online collaborative learning environment.

1.3 Research Question

Concerning the background of the study above, this study has one problem identified in the following: *What are the EFL Students' Experiences of Online Collaboration for Research Project?*

1.4 Objective of the Study

Dealing with the statements of the problem above, this study aims to investigate EFL students' experiences of online collaboration for a research project.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The finding of this study can be used as a reference to investigate students' experiences of online collaboration. Moreover, this study creates awareness among EFL teachers about students' points of view on online collaboration. As a result, Teachers can help students overcome obstacles in implementing online collaboration based on students' experience. Teachers can determine the best methods for students in online collaboration. Hence, it can positively impact student performance in the classroom.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This part is aimed to define some essential terms in this study as in the following:

EFL students refer to those who learn English in non-English speaking countries where English is not the dominant language. English as a foreign language (EFL) in this study refers to ten students from the English Education Department at one of the Higher Islamic Education Institutions in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia., who have taken the RELT II Course in the sixth semester in the academic year of 2020/2021 and have been involved in small-scale research projects.

Experiences is everything that happens in a person's life. Experiences in this study it is referred to ten EFL students who have experience in doing online collaboration (small-scale research project) for the RELT II course.

Online Collaboration refers to people who work together in a digital environment. Students need to construct and share knowledge via digital tools.

This study is referred to the Sixth-semester students of the English Education Department in the academic year of 2020/2021 who conducted the online collaboration (small-scale research project) for the RELT II course.

The conception and implementation of a *Research Project* is a complex activity. The online collaboration in this research is referred to a small-scale research project conducted by the sixth-semester students of the English Education Department in the Academic year of 2020/2021 for the RELT II course. Students work in groups of 4-5 members, and projects are carried out online due to distance learning.

