

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Blended learning has arisen as a new and significant educational trend in the last few decades. English teaching methodology, educational technology, computer-assisted language learning (CALL), and distance education are linked with research on Blended Learning as an educational field (Picciano, et al, 2013, p. 7). According to Bock, et al cited by AlKhaleel (2019, p. 1) blended learning courses have become very popular nowadays in every sphere of academia. They related to those courses in which a substantial amount of seat time, that is, time disbursed in the classroom, is replaced with online activities that include learners in meeting course objectives. Blended learning courses have been classified between 30% and 79% of the learning materials are online activities and 29% are face-to-face courses (Allen, et al., 2007, p. 5).

In higher education students, using the internet or computer-based techniques to apply Blended Learning as a prospect is permitted for the improvement of face-to-face interface between teachers and learners (Morris, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, Blended learning needs to apply to higher education students because they have faced the digital era. For this purpose, teachers provide Blended Learning to English for Foreign Language (EFL) learners, and it is expected by using Blended Learning can develop EFL students' language proficiency level.

The researcher observed that most EFL learners have been difficult to develop their English language at the university level due to the use of conventional teaching methods frequently in the digital era. Nowadays, the EFL learners face blended learning due to any pandemic that is scattered in the world, the researcher finds the grumble from the learner of using this

method. They said online learning is not an effective and efficient method than face-to-face due to half of them just listing the attendance then leaving the online classroom.

In the ELT process, there are EFL teachers and EFL learners in which EFL teachers are hoped using an effective method for EFL learners and can help develop the EFL learners' language proficiency level. Allah said in surah An-Nahl verse 125:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ
أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ



Meaning: Invite (mankind, O Muhammad saw.) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Revelation and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a better way. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.

Based on the verse above, it is implied that EFL teachers should position themselves as people who have an important role in the teaching process. Therefore, election the best method for EFL learners is suggested as Allah said.

Some research on the e-learning process which has been conducted in English as a Second Language (ESL) as well as in EFL contexts mostly explore the motivation, review, response, and approach toward e-learning process in teaching (Mohammed & Muesser 2019, Waheeb S. & Khlood K., 2019, Harpiani & Nyayu 2019, Meng & Fengchi 2019). While some researchers made use of CALL technology in teaching. The result showed that the learners improved their proficiency in a language skill (usually

speaking and reading) because they could practice it both in the CALL mode and face-to-face mode (Bañados, 2006, p. 544).

Moreover, in the Indonesian context, not many studies related to BL in EFL in terms of collecting data from different institutions have been found so far.

This study offers two important insights into the EFL lecturer program. Firstly, an investigation of the blended learning method through EFL learners would bring a better insight on the implementation of the BL method in Studying English in teaching context not only at State Islamic University but also in EFL practice in other Universities. This will also allow future EFL lecturers to apply this BL method in the teaching process as a motivation model learning today and utilize technology as a strategy to increase EFL learners' proficiency level who they are millennial era students in education. Secondly, this study will contribute to the literature from the same topic about insight on the importance of increasing the EFL learners' ability by using this BL method in the learning process.

The previous study of this research is a research by Herman Dwi Surjono, Ali Muhtadi, and Dian Wahyuningsih in 2019, entitled "*The Implementation of Blended Learning in Multimedia Courses for Undergraduate Students in Indonesia.*" The findings showed that students learning in blended mode achieved better scores than their counterparts. They also participated in discussion sessions more actively. This study also revealed that in Multimedia courses student achievement has a positive correlation with student activities. Students perceived that the implementation of this blended learning was good. The similarity between his study and the researcher's study is that we are researching the implementation of blended learning in undergraduate students. So, this is important for the researcher to follow up this study on an exploration about it to find out the importance of the use of Blended Learning by EFL teachers for EFL learners. This study is

somewhat different from my proposed research. While the researchers used the experiment design, the researcher used a qualitative design. This present study also researches the aspects of the EFL teachers that should be improved during the teaching process.

The second study is Kobchai Siripondee, Paitoon Pimdee, and Somkiat Tuntiwongwanich in 2020 entitled “*A blended learning model with IoT-based technology: effectively used when the COVID-19 pandemic?*.” that concluded that in this COVID-19 pandemic, a model of BL with IoT-based maybe the best New Normal solution for all educational stakeholders. While Traditional F2F is forced to change by social distancing to prevent COVID-19. Many IoT-based “things” could be added in class to create and improve a smart. So, the researcher will follow up this study by using qualitative research. However, the researchers applied the qualitative content analysis method, the researcher applied the qualitative descriptive method to investigate the BL in EFL as a motivation model in the ELT process.

Blended learning has been the focus of many research studies (Adas & Bakir, 2013; Akbarov, Gönen, & Aydoğan, 2018; Alias & Pandian, 2012; Ghazizadeh & Fatemipour, 2017; Grgurovic, 2011; Liu, 2013; Manan, Alias, & Pandian, 2012; Shih, 2010; Yoon & Lee, 2010; Zhang & Zhu, 2018) that investigated the use and the effectiveness of blended learning in the ESL/EFL context. For instance, learners’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities can be developed when using blended learning instead of traditional face-to-face or fully online approaches.

The study that the researcher conducts took place at the State Islamic University of Antasari Banjarmasin. The sites are chosen because the English Education Department in these sites uses Blended Learning as a method in the learning process. This institution is enough for finding out the findings and results of this research for the sake of the universal significance of the study.

Consequently, to fill the gap of literature, this proposed study attempts to investigate Blended Learning as a method in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class, focusing on how the implementation of blended learning in studying English during a covid-19 pandemic is.

B. Research Question

This study intends to achieve the following objective:

1. How is the implementation of blended learning in studying English during covid-19 pandemic?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of blended learning in studying English during covid-19 pandemic?

C. Objective of Study

To achieve the objective of the study, this research addresses the following question:

1. To investigate the implementation of blended learning in studying English during covid-19 pandemic.
2. To find out the advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of blended learning in studying English during covid-19 pandemic

D. Significance of Study

1. For the EFL lecturers, they can get the insight of blended learning method through EFL learners in studying English as a motivation model learning today. Besides that, EFL lecturers utilize technology as a strategy to develop EFL learners' proficiency level who they are students millennial era in education.
2. For the EFL learners, they can get an insight on the importance of increasing their English ability by using this BL method in the learning process.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding in this study, the writer gives definitions of some key terms that are important to understand as the following:

1. Implementation

Implementation is the realization of an application, or execution of a plan, idea, model, design, specification, standard, algorithm, or policy. The researcher defines implementation in this research as a realization of the model method in teaching English for EFL learners. In this research, implementation is represented as a practice of a method particularly using Blended Learning in the teaching and learning process.

2. Blended Learning

It is a kind of learning which includes both formal learning in the classroom and informal learning outside the classroom which usually occurs online. Blended learning is defined as a method where a variety of online resources is provided to learners by the teacher in addition to face-to-face contact. An innovative learning model that is able to combine traditional learning activities with online learning is called the blended learning model. In this research, Blended Learning is interpreted as two types of teaching methods are combined in one semester to anticipate the situation during any pandemic today. So for one semester, learning in Indonesia applies the blended learning model, namely in February-March with face-to-face learning, and April-May with online learning.

3. English Foreign Language

A foreign language is a language originally from another country than the speaker. English is taught to people whose main language is not English and who live in a country where English is not the official or main language.

4. Covid-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus or *severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)* is a virus that attacks the respiratory system and can cause mild disorders of the respiratory system, severe lung infections, and even death. This virus can attack anyone, such as the elderly (older people), adults, children, and infants, including pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. Coronavirus was first discovered in the city of Wuhan, China at the end of December 2019 and became a Covid-19 pandemic when the virus transmission in the world. This has made several countries implement policies to impose lockdowns in order to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.