

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the researcher will explain the introduction which contains the research background, reasons of topic selection, research questions, aims of the research, contributions of the research, and clarifications of relevant terms.

### 1.1. Research Background

Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has been contained, as well the government has established a new normal phase in this regard (Joyosemito & Nasir, 2021). The current normal phase is when the government allows others to take part in outdoor activities while following to strict health protocols. In order to prepare for the new normal, educational institutions must prepare more learning infrastructure than ever before. Based on the current infrastructure, it will be required to add facilities and infrastructure relating to existing health protocols, in addition to a shift learning system and online learning if required in education institutions (Rahayu & Haq, 2021). Accordingly, all schools from any educational levels, including vocational schools, should adhere to the regulations. Widodo (2016) explained that vocational high schools in this instance offer education that occurs before individuals or groups begin their working lives, and they prepare them for it.

In vocational high schools (SMK, henceforth), The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC, henceforth) sets that English as a foreign language (EFL) is one of the subjects that students need to learn (MoEC, 2018). The primary outcomes of English learning are to enable the students to be conversant with relevant English

language knowledge and able to demonstrate their spoken and written skills pertinent to their fields and expertise (MoEC, 2018). In a more detailed manner, EFL teaching and learning is to prepare the students to communicate successfully in the workplace to meet relevant demands and contexts.

Prior to the pandemic, EFL learning was originally carried out in face-to-face manners but was shifted to online learning. Online learning is instructional activities which utilize the information and communication technology (ICT), and which involves both physical and virtual classroom interactions (Ali & Maksum, 2020). Accordingly, vocational-school English teachers are required to be knowledgeable with such ICT-based applications as Google Classroom, Edmodo, and WhatsApp and capable of integrating them in their instruction (Harake, 2022; Rodliyah, 2018).

Indonesian scholars, including Alma (2020), Harris and Jones (2020) and Dianti (2021), claimed due to the COVID-19 school hours are limited. To cope with the issue previously mentioned, Indonesian EFL teachers have integrated blended learning in their instruction (Astari, 2021; Gayatri et al., 2023). Albiladi and Alshareef (2019) define blended learning as an enhanced educational approach that integrates traditional teaching methodologies with distance and online learning. In EFL teaching and learning, blended learning enhances learning anytime and anywhere while flexible learning platforms are demanding teaching and learning modules in 21<sup>st</sup> century education (Hazaymeh, 2021; Rahim, 2019).

Blended learning has also been applied in EFL instruction in public and private SMK. It requires various, yet pertinent strategies due to, in parts, students' diverse

levels of ability (Rianto, 2020). Therefore, English teachers should consider learning strategies that suit the needs of students appropriately (Asrori, 2013). Google Classroom is one of the tools that can help teachers provide English materials and instruction that are tailored to students' ability levels and integrate learning activities that are both challenging and fun (e.g., Kawinkoonlasate, 2019; Mukti et al., 2021).

Overall, the use of Google Classroom in teaching English in SMK can help teachers improve learning effectiveness and provide a better learning experience for students; hence, students are able to attain the envisaged learning outcomes (e.g., Efendi & Utami, 2019; Tiara, 2021). However, teachers need to consider the needs of students and ensure that technology is used effectively and efficiently in the learning process (Evans, 2021). Susanto et al. (2020) said that they must be able to master and understand the situation and environmental conditions of students to be used as an opportunity to manage learning in the classroom.

As the literature in the Indonesian EFL has indicated, SMK English teachers have applied blended learning and integrated ICT-based applications in their teaching and learning activities (Basri & Paramma, 2019). To assist this application and integration, they have used various tools, including Google Classroom. They perceive that Google Classroom helps them save their time, integrate and automate the use of other Google applications such as documents, slides, and spreadsheets. In addition, they consider that this app puts administrative processes, assessment administration and feedback provisions at ease (Iftakhar, 2016).

Earlier studies have investigated the integration of Google Classroom in teaching English in blended learning (e.g., Sukmawati & Nensia, 2019; Warman, 2021). They primarily focused on using Google Classroom and blended learning in teaching speaking. Other studies Albhnsawy and Aliweh (2016), Azhar and Iqbal (2018) and Gupta and Pathania (2021) examined the effectiveness of Google Classroom and blended learning in teaching.

### **1.2. Reasons for Topic Selection**

Thus far, a number of studies have looked into the use Google Classroom platform to teach English. Suhroh and Cahyono (2020) investigated Indonesian teachers' perspectives on the use of Google Classroom in blended learning. They involved 40 teachers from different fields of teaching in which 19 teachers were from EFL. This study found that almost all teachers applied blended learning in their teaching and showed a positive perception on the use of Google Classroom as a useful tools to help them develop teaching and learning processes to be more effective and interactive.

Novita et al. (2022) involved state vocational-high-school teachers in West Java to study the implementation of Google Classroom in their instruction. They found that the application of optimization using Google classroom in the Distance Learning process was carried out appropriately and in accordance with learning procedures in class.

Based on the studies reviewed above, the investigations regarding the use of Google Classroom to teach English in blended learning involved vocational high school students. Studies examining English teachers' reports regarding their strategies in

using Google Classroom in blended learning, however, seems to be limited. Hence, this study will be able to fill in one of the gaps in the current literature. In particular, this study will explore potential similarities and differences between public and private SMK in their strategies for using Google Classroom in their blended learning.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

This study aims to address the following questions:

1. What are teachers strategies in using Google Classroom to teach English in a teaching English using Google Classroom in blended learning?
2. What similarities and differences of strategies in using Google Classrooms to teach English in blended learning do private and public vocational high schools have in common?

### **1.4. Aims of the Research**

Referring to the problem formulations previously stated, this research aims to:

1. To identify public and private vocational high school teachers' strategies in teaching English using Google Classroom in blended learning.
2. To look into similarities and differences of strategies in using Google Classrooms to teach English in blended learning do private and public vocational high schools.

### **1.5. Contributions of the Research**

This study is envisaged to offer the following merits:

1. Theoretically, this research would give more insight related to the strategy selections for blended learning in classroom. It also presents the teachers

conditions, the method used by the teachers, and also the students perspectives dealing with the tasks selected by the teacher for selection theories.

2. This research would help the English teachers to select the appropriate strategies for blended learning that can be suited with the Indonesian Curriculum. Thus, this research would be a reference for English teachers in other schools who implement blended learning in their classroom.
3. For future research, this research would be useful by providing related information dealing with strategy selections. The finding of this research can be compared if future research studies about the strategy selection for blended learning in Vocation High School. As it can be expected that the strategies can be more complicated because the level of the students are different and the proficiency of the students are also different.

## **1.6. Clarifications of Relevant Terms**

### **1. Learning Strategies**

Kemp (1995) explains that learning strategy is a learning activity that must be done by teachers and students so that learning objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

### **2. Blended Learning**

Rovai and Jordan (2004) explain that the blended learning is basically a combination of the face-to-face learning and e-learning.

### **3. Google Classroom**

As noted by Pradana and Harimurti (2017), Google Classroom is a component of the Google for Education system and represents a ground-breaking innovation in

the way it empowers teachers and students to engage in active discussion while completing learning activities.

