

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is intended to investigate the benefits and challenges of online collaborative projects for EFL students using narrative review methodology. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research questions, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the research and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Collaborative technology development has impacted higher education, notably online learning, over the past few decades (Donelan & Kear, 2018). Students are accustomed to connecting online for personal reasons, and educators can now access various tools to help with online group communication. Due to this trend, online communication tools are included in official and casual learning at higher education institutions (Kear, Donelan, & Williams, 2014). According to Lin and Reigeluth (2016), Google Docs, Wikis, and other communication platforms are frequently utilized to facilitate online collaborative projects. Wikis can facilitate collaborative writing in general and L2 writing assignments in particular, as well as online collaboration (Awada, Burston, & Ghannage, 2019; Ebadi & Rahimi, 2017, 2018, 2019; Elola & Oskoz, 2017; Fathi & Rahimi, 2020). For instance, the Web 2.0 platform Wiki enables users to generate information online in real-time and with collaboration (Cho & Lim, 2017; Reinhardt, 2019).

Online collaborative learning offers a framework for learning where students are supported and encouraged to collaborate to produce and share knowledge or to identify and investigate ideas and new methods to innovate (Chen, Chuang, & Laceste, 2021). Research on collaborative learning has lately expanded due to the influence of social constructivist ideas in second and foreign language education, which contrasts with competitive classrooms and individualistic learning tasks of traditional learning (Jeong, 2019). Each participant in a collaborative learning environment unites their self-perceptions, motives, and attitudes in the knowledge that these elements will significantly influence how well they perform in group activities. Hsu (2020), Li and Kim (2016), Li and Zhu (2017), and Wang (2019) concluded that students in small schools interact in standard ways when doing cooperative work. In an instance, Li and Kim (2016) discovered that two small groups of ESL graduate students enrolled in English for educational purposes exhibited diverse shapes of interaction and that these interacting shapes changed among each cluster during various activities.

In an international context, Wang (2019) discovered that two small groups of Chinese students engaged in two collaborative essays changed their interaction patterns when the task was given in synchronous writing: one group was more willing to engage in real-time collaboration, while the other group displayed poor communication. In a recent study, Hsu (2020) examined the impact of task complexity on peer interaction during an online, asynchronous collaborative writing assignment in an EFL classroom environment at a Taiwan university. Between tasks, he found that interactional patterns remained constant.

In the Indonesian context, Lubis, Lubis, and Purba (2020) revealed that project-based learning and digital media are appropriate forms of collaboration in an Indonesian EFL context to increase students' confidence and communication skills. Rahayu (2021) examines online learning through blogs in collaborative writing. She discovered that students' writing was superior to that produced using conventional techniques, they could solve EFL students' problems, and their participation in collaborative writing had grown. On the other hand, Rojabi (2020) contends that Microsoft Teams-based online classes provide the best support for student learning environments, peer relationships, and interactions with teachers.

Numerous studies have been conducted on online collaborative projects in the context of online media platform utilization. Lubis, Lubis, and Purba (2020) looked at collaborative project-based learning with digital media to boost EFL learners' self-confidence. Another study has investigated the completion of Google Docs' online collaborative writing assignments (Kitjaroonchai & Suppasetsee, 2021). Rahimi and Fathi (2021) also examined the effect of collaborative writing through wikis on writing in EFL students. Given that many researchers discussed online collaborative projects, especially on media platforms, some factors are left unattended and have not been studied extensively in the context of online collaborative projects that focus on the benefits and challenges of EFL students. Group members' motivational ideas, attitudes, and aspirations are brought together in the context of collaborative learning. These elements will significantly impact how well they do in group activities in the classroom (Jeong, 2019). Therefore, this research uses narrative review studies to examine the benefits and challenges of EFL students in online collaborative projects. The

primary goal of this study is to find out the benefits and challenges of online collaborative projects for EFL students.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This research uses the specified relevant articles published in journals. This study investigates and focuses on the benefits and challenges that EFL students perceived during their online collaborative projects.

1.3 Research Question

Regarding the background of the research, this research focuses on the following question: What are EFL students' perceived benefits and challenges during online collaborative projects?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research question, this study investigates the benefits and challenges EFL students perceive during online collaborative projects.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research addresses students, lecturers, and universities that online collaborative projects are essential in learning because collaboration allows much-added value for students and teachers. For the future researcher, it can be used as a reference in conducting similar research.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

For this study, the terms to be defined are listed as the following.

EFL student: It generally refers to English taught in countries where English is generally not used as the primary language of communication; this typically applies in Indonesia, China, etc. While the EFL students referred to in this study cover all levels, including elementary school, middle school, and university students.

Online collaboration: This is concerned with studying how people can learn together with the help of computers. From this perspective, online collaboration refers to how technology supports collaborative learning and improves interaction which facilitates the sharing and distributing of knowledge.

Collaborative learning: It provides a learning framework where students are encouraged and supported to collaborate to create and share knowledge or find and explore opportunities to innovate and share ideas.

Collaborative projects: It generally requires members to work together to create a result or product.

Online collaborative projects: It occurs when individuals use digital meeting platforms to work together on specific tasks from multiple locations. Team members can co-create documents or presentations from wherever they are. Online collaboration allows teams and organizations to grow and increase project efficiency by removing barriers like distance and time and facilitating better connection and communication.