

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter mainly focuses on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

#### **A. Research Background**

This research analyzes EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. This study is concerned with the online learning environment for three introductory reasons. These reasons involve applying e-language learning for EFL learners, selecting synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning, and the essential roles of students' perceptions for language learning. Additionally, some previous studies lead to a gap in the present study.

This study is concerned with the online learning environment because e-language learning allows teachers and students to create a language learning environment available anywhere and anytime. Blake (2008, p. 1and6) stated, "Since the process of learning another language other than your mother tongue (L1), is both an intensive and time-consuming activity; incorporating technology into the FL curriculum can stimulate and even improve the overall language preparation of those majoring in a language." Its procedure necessitates a great deal of input and interaction. As a result, e-language learning may be a viable answer to this issue.

This study considers that selecting synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in an e-language learning environment has not paid much attention to their importance in supporting learning. Xie, Liu, Bhairma, and Shim (2018) stated, "Little consideration is given to how people use synchronous and asynchronous modes in e-learning." Furthermore, the choice of these technologies has an impact on the efficacy of the learning process and academic achievement. Alameri, Masedah, Hamadallah, Ismail, and Fakhouri (2020) discovered that "Self-studying and academic performance were significantly affected by the

selection of the use of e-platforms.” It is in line with the researcher’s limited personal observation result, the selection of communication tools on e-language learning did not receive sufficient consideration at the English Education Department. So that students are still experiencing difficulties due to the limits and inappropriate selection of communication tools in e-learning courses.

The existence of such difficulties will certainly lead to a variety of perceptions from students, especially the EFL college students of the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, about the use of communication tools in e-language learning. Students’ perceptions play an essential role in evaluating the effectiveness of using synchronous and asynchronous communication tools during e-language learning. Turner and Meyer (2000) stated, “Students’ perceptions of their classrooms or teacher differential treatment are important variables for understanding how classroom context affects participants.” Thus, students’ perceptions may naturally draw the learning process, and it can be a reliable measure that contributes to effective learning.

Regarding e-language learning, several previous studies have been completed. First, it found that asynchronous e-language learning was beneficial for second language (L2) learners, but synchronous sessions could address some limitations (Perveen, 2016). Furthermore, the participants were aware of online learning modes that they favored the synchronous online mode; however, face-to-face language learning was more effective than internet language learning (Özdal, Yükselir, and Akarsu, 2018). Then, it revealed that the blend of synchronous and asynchronous approaches in online learning is effective to help students’ interaction and material engagement (Riwayatningsih and Sulistyani, 2020). Therefore, the benefits, awareness, and effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous e-language learning inspire the present study to conduct similar research.

Based on previous studies above, the researchers focused on exploring the students’ perceptions about the advantages, awareness, and effectiveness of e-language learning environments rather than the communication tools in e-language learning. Therefore, it becomes a gap and differs from the present

research. This research aims to analyze EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning.

### **B. Research Questions**

The research is conducted to find the solution to the problem of using communication tools in e-language learning. As a result, it poses three related research questions in the context of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. These three research questions are presented as follows:

1. What is the EFL college students' majority perception on the use of synchronous communication tools in e-language learning?
2. What is the EFL college students' majority perception on the use of asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning?
3. Which is the most preferred between synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning?

### **C. Research Purposes**

The study is concerned with students' perceptions about synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. This study addresses three research questions concerning how synchronous and asynchronous communication tools are used. As a consequence, it develops three research purposes that are linked to previous research questions. First, this study is conducted to find out the EFL college students' majority perception on the use of synchronous communication tools in e-language learning. Second, this study is undertaken to discover the EFL college students' majority perception on the use of asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. Third, this study is conducted to ascertain the EFL college students' perceptions of the most preferred communication tools in e-language learning at the English Education Department, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

#### **D. Research Significances**

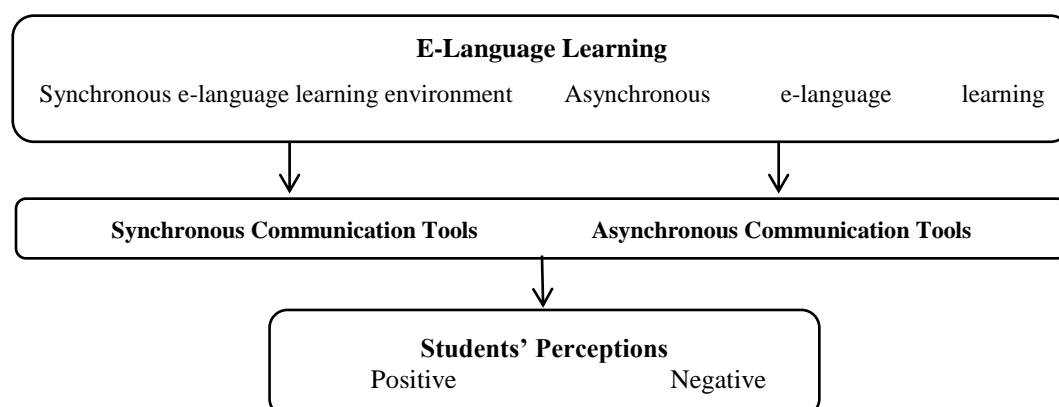
The research is concerned with analyzing the EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. It makes theoretical and practical contributions related to the online learning environment. First, theoretically, this research supplies particular knowledge about EFL college students' perception on the utilization of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. It may support and complement earlier ideas on e-language learning acquisition that deal with synchronous and asynchronous communication tools. Second, practically, this research may assist lecturers in deciding which communication tools to use while teaching EFL college students' during e-language learning. It may aid in making an effective online learning environment.

#### **E. Research Scope**

This study intends to address the issue of selecting synchronous and asynchronous communication tools for use in e-language learning based on the perspectives of EFL college students. Then, it leads to this study's research scope, including subjects, objects, and research location. First, the subjects of this study are EFL college students of the English Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Second, the study's object is students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. Third, the research is conducted at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, one of the Islamic universities in Bandung, Indonesian context.

#### **F. Conceptual Framework**

The study focuses on analyzing EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. Furthermore, it proceeds to the conceptual framework on which this research is based. This conceptual framework explains the connection between numerous ideas in this study, such as e-language learning, synchronous and asynchronous communication tools, and students' perceptions. The following Figure 1.1 depicts the connection of each notion.



**Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework**

The study focuses on e-language learning. E-language learning is a learning technique for comprehending a second or foreign language that uses a digital device to aid teaching and learning language activities (Perveen, 2016). The communication tools that are employed have been affected by the context of e-language learning. Lim (2017) distinguished two kinds of communication tools: synchronous and asynchronous. Furthermore, two types of e-language learning environments are synchronous and asynchronous E-Language Learning Environments (ELLE) (Perveen, 2016).

This study looks at the usage of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning at English Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Lim (2017) pointed out that synchronous communication tools are media used for communicating or delivering a message face-to-face or in real-time. Video conferencing, web conferencing, audio conferencing, live chat, whiteboarding, and application sharing are examples of synchronous communication tools. On the other hand, asynchronous communication tools are media for communicating or delivering a message that does not occur in real-time. Discussion forums, weblogs, e-mail messaging, and social media messaging are examples of asynchronous communication tools. Knowing these types of communication tools aims to reference the communication tools mentioned in this study and specify the research issue.

This study considers that students' perceptions about synchronous and asynchronous communication tools are essential. Gregory (1980) states that perception is a constructive process based on top-down processing, it starts with sensory data that require the higher cognitive information, whether from previous experiences or stored information to create judgments about what people observe. Irwanto (2002) and Robbins and Judge (2012) divide perception into positive and negative. First, positive perception is a style of perceiving the world that describes all information and knowledge in a positive light (known and unknown). Every perceived action will be accepted and supported. Second, negative perception associates information (known or unknown) unfavorably or inappropriately with the encountered thing. Every apparent action will be rejected and refused.

In the educational context, perception is critical. Turner and Meyer (2000) stated that perception of the learning environment is essential for creating and assessing learning. Students' perceptions may naturally draw the learning process. It can be a dependable metric that contributes to effective learning. Furthermore, it is relevant to the current study, which intends to find out EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. This research believes that analyzing students' perceptions on the use of those communication tools may help lecturers determine which communication tools to utilize when teaching EFL students in e-language learning. Therefore, it may contribute to creating an effective e-language learning environment at English Education Department UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

### **G. Previous Studies**

The research is conducted to address the issue of the employment of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. In terms of e-language learning, several past studies are relevant to this research. Previous studies include both in the non-Indonesian and Indonesian contexts. In addition, these previous studies result in a gap in the current study.

The previous studies in the non-Indonesian context relevant to e-language learning involve two studies. First, Perveen (2016) used a case study to evaluate the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous E-Language Learning activities (ELL-activities) in an E-Language Learning Environment (ELLE) at the Virtual University of Pakistan. It found that asynchronous e-language learning was effective for second language (L2) learners rather than synchronous e-language learning. This research is comparable to the present research in that it focuses on e-language learning at university. On the other hand, this study differs from the current study in terms of the case study method, the study's focus on the efficiency of an e-language learning environment, and the study's use of SL learners as the research subject.

Second, Özdal et al. (2021) used a mixed-method approach to investigate English Language and Literature (ELL) students' perspectives, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses of synchronous and asynchronous approaches, and comparison of face-to-face language instruction with online learning at Turkey's Atatürk University. It discovered that the characteristics of synchronous and asynchronous online language learning approaches are not as advantageous as face-to-face learning, and they preferred synchronous online learning. This study is similar to the present study in terms of EFL learners as the research participants, and it focuses on e-language learning at university. Nevertheless, this study differs from the current study in terms of the mixed-method approach, and it focuses on students' perspectives, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses of the online and offline learning approaches.

Two previous studies in the Indonesian context are included pertinent to the current study. First, Riwayatningsih and Sulistyani (2020) used the case study method to assess the effectiveness of university students' synchronous and asynchronous e-language learning environments. It discovered that using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous approaches in online learning might help students interact and connect with materials more effectively. This study is equivalent to the current research in that it utilizes EFL students as research subjects and focuses on e-language learning at university. Moreover, this study varies from the



present study in that it employs a case study method and focuses on the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous approaches.

Second, Yulitriana (2021) employed survey research to analyze EFL students' attitudes about synchronous and asynchronous learning based on their online learning experiences at the University of Palangka Raya during the pandemic. It revealed that both synchronous and asynchronous activities in e-learning give the students new experiences and that they prefer a combination of the two in their e-learning. This study is relevant to the current study because of the survey study method, EFL learners as research participants, and its focus on e-language learning at university. Meanwhile, this study differs from the present study because it focuses on the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous approaches.

The previous studies have used various methods based on several prior studies above. They looked at students' perspectives of the usefulness of e-language learning environments, approaches, and preferences. Furthermore, this study is based on a survey, and it analyzes EFL college students' perceptions on the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools in e-language learning. Consequently, it becomes the gap of the current study.