

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

English is one of the world's most frequently spoken languages (Kembaren, 2011:1). English is a global language that is used to communicate across borders. Language is an essential means of communication in everyday life. Humans utilize language to engage and socialize by expressing their opinions, thoughts, and ideas (Damanik, 2019:2). As a result, English has become the most often studied the second language in schools and universities. Students find it challenging to acquire a second language because they learn about something they have never known before. Learning English entails learning to read and memorize specific vocabulary and learning about grammatical competency, cultural variations, and sociolinguistic characteristics. As a result, students require particular learning strategies to assist them in acquiring knowledge and abilities.

Not only gaining knowledge but learning strategies also affect students achievement. Achievement or language learning proficiency has also been consistent with the use of the strategy. According to (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012:119), the more techniques, students use, the greater their level of achievement. Language learning strategies make learning settings more active, entertaining, and learner-centred, resulting in a greater degree of proficiency for the learner (Bromley, 2013:819). The compatibility of learning tactics with learning styles is still a point of contention among academics (Tulbure, 2012:399). Further research is consequently required to provide light on the link between learning styles and techniques. Such insights can assist students, lecturers, and even potential researchers striving to re-evaluate learning methodologies to improve students' academic progress.

Teaching and learning activities are the most critical activities in education. This activity cannot be separated from the interaction between lecturers and students to realize a goal. Learning achievement is one of the realizations of learning objectives obtained by students. The success or failure of a student's learning achievement influences the role of the lecturer who participates in increasing student activity. In addition, other factors greatly influence the success of student achievement, namely how the students' learning strategies themselves. The learning strategy used in the Indonesian education system is the classical system or direct face-to-face instruction. However, all levels of education, whether under the aegis of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture or the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, are currently eliminating face-to-face instruction and requiring students to study from home to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spread worldwide, affecting many facets of life, particularly education (Stambough et al., 2020:60). Covid-19 has spread to practically all nations, and in order to support the World Health Organization (WHO) strategy, the community must take a variety of preventive measures. Physical separation, hand washing with soap and water regularly, building immunity through enough vitamin C and E consumption, wearing masks, and disinfecting equipment are some examples (Arribathi et al., 2021:192).

During this COVID-19 pandemic, all students worldwide are required to carry out activities and learning at home or called work from home. According to (Mungkasa, 2020:2), work from home is doing work activities and carrying out daily activities, not going outside the home. It does minimize the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, the government urges all people not to carry out activities outside the home.

In March 2020, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic began to feel in the world of education. From the center to the regions, the Indonesian government issued a policy, namely to suspend all educational institutions. It does prevent the

spread of the Covid-19 virus. In this case, the government hopes that all educational institutions will be patient and not carry out activities outside the home as usual to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus. In various countries detected as being affected by the Covid-19 virus, they have also done the same thing, issuing self-isolation and lockdown policies to reduce interacting and gathering with many people because they can transmit the Covid-19 virus (Rahmatullah et al., 2021:47).

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges for Australian higher education. Importantly, and related to other vital issues such as the future of international student enrollment and the expansion in online travel, the pandemic is likely the risks and disadvantages of education in Australia. Disruption to universities and the labour market will leave a large proportion of the student population with considerable experience completing their degree, and ultimately, into the workforce with significantly reduced opportunities in the short term (O'Shea et al., 2021:576).

Not only poses challenges for higher education in Australia but also in Indonesia, including in Medan. State Islamic University of North Sumatra is one of the campuses in Medan and has been affected by COVID-19, so it must use an online learning model. The online learning model is a learning process by utilizing a computer network or the internet to design an appropriate and efficient learning process to achieve learning objectives. There are three points related to online learning, including:

1. Online/distance learning to deliver a meaningful learning experience without the strain of completing all curriculum achievements for grade promotion and graduation.
2. Can be centered on life skills education, such as covid-19.
3. Learning activities and assignments may differ across students based on their interests and circumstances, such as a lack of access/learning facilities at home.

Online learning occurs so that students and lecturers can connect utilizing various apps such as the classroom, video conference, phone/live chat, zoom, and WhatsApp group. It aids students since learning can take place anywhere and at any time. However, several research results state that online learning has several impacts on the student learning process. For example, students feel forced to study from home without adequate facilities and infrastructure. They are not used to distance learning because the learning process is usually face-to-face, and many students feel bored because they have been off for too long.

Changes in online-based learning models will certainly affect student learning strategies as we know that every student has their learning strategy. Different learning strategies will, of course, produce different results. If students have good learning strategies, every learning effort will give good results, and vice versa. If students have poor learning strategies, it will undoubtedly produce poor results. Learning strategies are not something that already exists but must be made and used.

Previously, research on the learning strategies utilized by exceptional pupils was also undertaken. Like Sisca's, focused on the learning processes of high-achieving English students at SMA Dharma Pancasila Medan. Another study conducted by Hairus looked at the English Learning Strategies of High Achievers. Retno's other study looked at how to learn for exceptional students during the Covid 19 pandemic. At the Faculty of Technical Sciences, Šafranĵ's research focused on Strategies for Learning English as a Foreign Language. Ngo Cong-Lem's study focused on language learning strategies among Vietnamese EFL High School students.

Although learning strategies of high achievement students have been much discussed, little have discussed learning strategies of high achievement students in English during covid-19. Keeping in mind the importance of knowing learning strategies, the purpose of this research is to find out information about how the learning strategies of outstanding students during the covid-19 pandemic. After

doing this research, it is expected that students can determine the learning strategies they enjoy to reduce boredom or stress when studying. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research under the title **“Learning Strategies of Outstanding Students in English at State Islamic University in Medan During Covid-19”**.

1.2 Limitation of Study

Based on the explanation that have been explained above, the researcher focuses in learning strategies used by high achievement students in English at State Islamic University in Medan.

1.3 Formulation of Problem

1. How are learning strategies used by outstanding students in English at State Islamic university in Medan during covid-19?
2. What challenges do outstanding students face while learning English during covid-19?

1.4 Objective of Study

1. To describe learning strategies used by outstanding students in English at State Islamic university in Medan during covid-19.
2. To find out challenges faced by outstanding students in English at State Islamic University in Medan during covid-19.

1.5 The Significance of Study

The significances of this study are divided into two categories:

1.5.1 Theoretical Benefit

For other researchers, the authors hope it can be used as a scientific reference to find out learning strategies for outstanding students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5.2 Practical Benefits

The results of this study expect to provide benefits for all parties involved in this research, including:

a. Students

- 1) Maximizing students' learning potential independently in the online learning period.
- 2) Understand how to learn best to reduce students' frustration, stress, and boredom during the learning process.
- 3) Increasing the productivity of brain work as an effort to maximize self-ability and skills during the online learning process.

b. Educator

- 1) Increase the productivity of brain work as an effort to maximize self-ability and skills during the online learning process.
- 2) Make it easier to provide an environment or determine learning strategies that support and make it easier for students to absorb information optimally during the online learning process.
- 3) As a reference to motivate educators to present active, creative, practical, and fun learning to increase their students' enthusiasm to study harder.

c. University/Institution

The results of this study expect to be a source of student reading to provide benefits to improve the quality of university/institution.

d. Researcher

This research expects it will improve her knowledge and motivation in learning English to be a high achieving student.



UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI
SUMATERA UTARA MEDAN