# CHAPTER IINTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the general introduction of the study. It includes the background of the study, research question, research objective, research significance and the definition of terminology.

## **Background of the Study**

Coronavirus disease, or what is familiarly called COVID-19, is a new disease that emerged in 2019 that can cause death. This virus can spread from one person to another through droplets from the respiratory tract, which are often produced when coughing or sneezing (Organization, 2019). This pandemic has spread to almost all countries and has affected many sectors, such as health, education, tourism, and the economy (Hebebci, Bertiz, & Alan, 2020). Thus, the government implement people to work, perform worship, and study from home to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and the Minister of Education and Culture, suspends conventional teaching and learning activities in schools and implements learning done from home through e-learning. In other words, distance learning was the obvious answer for teaching and learning during COVID-19 (Macintyre & Macdonald, 2011).

Distance learning is a learning process when the teachers and students does not allow direct learning in the classroom. According to Mary Porter (2004), distance learning is learning between separate teachers and students, and technology is used to help the learning process. The implementation of distance learning cannot be separated from the use of technology and internet connection (Putri, Setyaningsih, & Putra, 2021). As we know, the utilization of technology helps increase the existing interactions between the student and the teacher during the distance learning process. The use of technology in the classroom for language learning helps enhance and improve students' performance; interaction, feedback,

and motivation are equally benecial as more conventional methods (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). Besides that, educators and researchers explained that technology has the most significant part in increasing students' awareness, imparting knowledge, and help English language learning (Ahmadi, 2018). Thus, the utilization of technology hoped that overcoming the teaching and learning process could continue running smoothly even amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Numerous studies showed no direct interaction between teachers and students, while the distance learning process of teaching the English language is challenging.Huang et al. (2020) also detailed the significant challenges in distance learning. First, teachers have minimal time to prepare and adjust the offline learning material to the online. Second, the lack of teachers and students interacting directly and accessible during online learning disrupts the learning process. Third, effective pedagogy approaches require more challenging efforts in motivating and activating students in distance learning. Lembani, Gunter, Breines, & Dalu (2019) argued that geographical location also plays a role in technological improvements and internet network gaps between countries, urban areas, and rural areas that can influence the flexibility and effectiveness of students in learning during distance learning. The finding of the study conducted by Niwagila (2014) showed that there is a situation of poor infrastructure and many technological challenges faced in rural areas.

Referring to the importance of the new learning process held in Indonesia, not all students are familiar with the system. Therefore, the learning system raises a different perception. Based on the findings above, the researcher is interested in exploring rural students' experiences in learning English during distance learning.

### Research Question

Based on the background above, the researcher attempted to investigate the rural students' experiences in learning English during distance learning through the following questions :

* + 1. What is rural students' perspective on learning English during distance learning?
		2. What are the obstacles rural students faces while learning English through distance learning?
		3. What strategies do they take to overcome the obstacles?

### Research Objective

The research objectives of this study are :

* + 1. To explore the perspective of rural students in learning English during distance learning.
		2. To find out rural students' obstacles while learning English through distance learning.
		3. To find out the strategies they take to overcome these obstacles.

### Research Significance

The researcher hopes that this research can be helpful either directly or indirectly, such as :

* + 1. **Theoretical benefit**

The results of this study are expected to add to the existing literature source and give information about students' experience include perception, obstacles, and the strategies to overcome the obstacles about they face while learning english through distance learning, and to contribute to the advancement of science and technology in the field of education, especialy in the field of English

language education.

* + 1. **Practical benefits**

**a. For Students**

With this research, it is hoped that students will be interested and motivated to understand the material and more freely browse information through online learning.

**b. For Teacher**

Teachers can evaluate the teaching sytem after knowing what students face during distance learning process and it is hoped that it can help increase creativity in maximizing the use of information technology in learning English.

**c. For Other Researchers**

The results of this study can be used as data that can provide further information for other researchers who conduct related research.

1. For English Studies

The result of this research is hoped to provide information and an overview of the state of education and the ability of human resources in English-learning education to contribute to the advancement of science and technology in the field of education, especially in the field of English language education.

## **Definition of Terminology**

Based on the explanations above, some key terms have become the centre of this research. They are:

1. Rural areas are large open areas with few houses and buildings with a small population in contrast to urban areas with a larger population (2017). Therefore, based on the definition, the population density of rural areas is low, and family isolation, and community remoteness.
2. Experience as something that has been experienced, lived, or for long ago and recently (Mapp, 2013).
3. Distance learning is a methodical process for teaching students in different places and physically separated from the learning institution, its tutor/teacher, and other students (Doorgapersad, 2011). Distance learning is a teaching and learning method that utilizes the internet and digital media in delivering material. The teaching and learning process can continue while students and teachers are not present in the same place/ do not face-to-face.