

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Language is a communication tool used to deliver information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another. In other words, language is required to build good communication with others. As the global language, English is the language which is highly demanded in the globalization era. This can be viewed from the influence of English in several fields such as education, science, technology, finance, industry tourism and transportation (Jianing, 2007 cited in Agustina, 2018). In Indonesia, English is the most popular foreign language among other foreign languages; therefore, it becomes one of the compulsory subjects at schools from junior high school to senior high school levels according to the national curriculum which is the 2013 curriculum (Agustina, 2018). In addition to this, the globalized world in the 21st century requires the ability to communicate effectively because communication is one of the 4Cs of the century skills (i.e., communication, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity) (Chien, Hwang & Jong, 2020). So, being able to communicate in English as the global language will enable learners to participate in the 21st century.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is one of the key factors for communication (Cao & Wei, 2019). (McCroskey & Baer 1985 cited in Cao & Wei, 2019) propose the concept of WTC to understand why some people are more willing to speak in their native language. In other words, WTC plays an important role in language learning especially in speaking class where students are supposed to use the language. However, not all students have WTC and this become important for teachers to recognize that some students may be reluctant to speak in the classroom and be able to find ways how to increase their WTC (Buckingham & Alpaslan, 2017). Some scholars mention that creating social and emotional contexts can enhance students' WTC (Joe, Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Dewaele *et al.*, 2018; Khajavy, MacIntyre & Barabadi, 2018). For example, Mohammadi, Barati & Youhanace (2019) show that a flipped classroom can have a positive impact on students' WTC. In addition, Farouck (2016) states that students are able to develop communication skills using a project-based learner. While, Grant (2020) mentions that grit and classroom enjoyment have an effect on WTC in classroom context. From several research of students' WTC above, it can be noted that WTC has pedagogic implications, but each class can have different contexts which may need different strategies to increase students' WTC. Therefore, further investigations about WTC should be conducted in English language learning.

In English language teaching (ELT), WTC is one of the important issues affecting language learning (Peng, 2019). Moreover, the English language teaching based on the 2013 national curriculum focuses on the communication skills (Sarihuudin, 2013) meaning that students' WTC is regarded as an essential element in language learning. Yet, the condition of students' WTC in Indonesia show that it is still low (Muamaroh & Prihartanti, 2013; Wijaya & Rizkina, 2015). The low level of WTC could lead students to be reluctant to communicate in English (Subekti, 2019). Even though students recognize the value of English for their academic performance, but they still have a low level of WTC (Wijaya & Rizkina, 2015). The impact of students who have low level of WTC makes the class more passive and not conducive (Wijaya & Rizkina, 2015).

Recent empirical studies on WTC in English classroom have been investigated in Indonesia too. Ningsih, Narahara & Mulyono (2018) have found that high school are more willing to communicate if they feel the need to do it and comfortable to communicate. Subekti (2019) shows that learners show a high level of WTC because they have good communication skill and their level of communication is at moderate level. These studies were conducted in the face-to-face learning context, while currently the world is facing the COVID-19 pandemic in which the teaching and learning process is conducted online. Online learning could give different experience for students which may affect their WTC because some researchers also have noted some challenges in online learning such as the readiness of the instructors, economic status, pedagogical e-learning, and time management (Kuama & Intharaksa, 2016; Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Simamora, 2020). Students and teachers also deal with a lot of challenges such as the adaptability to switch from offline to online mode (Dhawan, 2020).

Simamora (2020) contends that students in Indonesia find online learning difficult because they are bored studying in a virtual environment. In addition, online learning is also difficult for teachers to create materials which involve students to be willing to communicate (Kebritchi, Lipschuetz & Santiague, 2017). Whereas in the speaking class, students should attempt to communicate to use the language meaning that they must have WTC (Havwini, 2019). Also, based on my observation on the teaching practice program or *Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan* (PPL) at SMPN 69 Jakarta for 6 weeks, students' reluctance to communicate in English in online learning was considerably found. In this sense, there could be various factors affecting their WTC as mentioned in the previous section. Therefore, knowing the fact that WTC is important in language learning and the implementation of online learning in Indonesia which still have some challenges, this research is going to investigate students' WTC in speaking class in online learning. This research is also going to explore what factors which may influence students to be reluctant to communicate in speaking class in online learning and teachers' strategies to encourage them to be willing to communicate.

1.2. Research Questions

The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What level are students willing to communicate in speaking class in online learning?
2. What factors may have influenced students become reluctant to communicate in speaking class online learning?
3. How do teachers encourage students to be willing to communicate in speaking class online learning?

1.3. Aims of the Study

According to the research questions, the aims for this study can be formulated as follows:

1. To investigate students' willingness to communicate in speaking class in online learning.
2. To explore the factors influencing students become reluctant to communicate in speaking class in online learning.
3. To find out teachers' strategies to encourage students to be willing to communicate in speaking class in online learning.

1.4. Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the students' willingness to communicate in speaking class in a synchronous learning. Synchronous learning is communication where a teacher interacts with the students in the same time-space as video conferencing by Zoom meeting, Google meet, or video-call (Simamora, 2020). While in speaking class, willingness to communicate has important role. It embodies anything that affect the willingness to communicate including factors students' willingness to communicate, the level of students' willingness to communicate in English and the roles of teacher to encourage students to communicate. The choice of this problem limitation is based on the fact that willingness to communicate is one of the influencing factors in communication in English.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to produce the results that will be beneficial both theoretically and practically. The following presents possible outcomes:

a. Theoretical Aspects

Theoretically, this study is expected to add insight and knowledge that will enrich the previous studies about factors affecting students' willingness to communicate, levels of students' willingness to communicate, and teaching strategies to improve students'

willingness to communicate in speaking class in online learning. Hopefully, this study could also give new information and become a reference for other researchers to explore and conduct research regarding students' WTC in online learning.

b. **Practical Aspects**

Practically, the results of this research is expected to be a reference for students to know the factors influencing their WTC. After knowing the factors, students can improve their WTC by increasing the factors that can influence their WTC. For teachers, this could be used as a reference to improve students' WTC in online learning and to create materials which engage students communicatively.

1.6. Definition of Key terms

Some definitions are given in order to clarify the key terms used in this study.

- a. **Willingness to Communicate:** Willingness to communicate is a term that requires learners' readiness to communicate; hence, WTC is an integral part of language learning and communication, playing a critical role in the growth of language learners' communicative competence (Elahi Shirvan *et al.*, 2019). Students' willingness to communicate refers to their willingness or readiness to be involved or not involved in communication using the English they learned in speaking class.
- b. **Speaking skills:** According to Masuram & Sripada (2020) speaking is an productive skill and interactive process that entails making systematic verbal utterances to express meaning. Students' skills to convey sentences to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, or convey messages to others using English.
- c. **Online learning:** Online learning is defined as internet-based learning or web-based learning has no time or space limitations, allowing teaching and learning to be separated using internet-based knowledge delivery systems (Pei & Wu, 2019). Online learning is a teaching and learning process that utilizes the internet and digital media in delivering materials.
- d. **Synchronous learning:** Synchronous learning is a type of online learning that takes the form of a chat room and accomplished by the use of various digital technologies. Interactivity involves interactions between teachers and students, as well as interactions between students and technology (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Synchronous learning is a type of online in which teachers and students interact face-to-face via teleconferencing media such as Zoom meetings, Google Meet, and Skype.
- e. **Teaching strategies:** A teaching strategy, according to Sarode (2018), is a generalized plan for a lesson(s) that involves the layout of desired learner actions in terms of

objectives of instructions as well as an outline of planned strategies used to execute the strategy. The teacher's teaching technique or the efforts made by the teacher in attracting students' attention to be willing to communicate in English in the speaking class in online learning.

1.7. Organization of the Paper

This paper consist of six chapters. The first chapter describes the context of the problem which explains why the problem is chosen and the reason why this study is important. It also reveals the aims of the study, the research questions, the advantages of the research and the definition of key terms. Chapter two provides a theoretical framework. This section analyses theories and empirical findings that are important to the issue under the study. Relevant studies include previous research that are relevant to the topic of the research. Chapter three describes the research methodology and components relates to the research method used. The components of the research consist of research design and procedure, research setting, data collection, and data analysis. The research settings is a place the research is conducted and describes the participants of the study. Data collection is a procedure that is carried out until the data can be collected. Chapter four discusses research findings. This chapter contains a description of research findings. The researcher writes down all the data obtained from the research. Chapter five explores the discussion. This chapter explains why and how the research results occurred. The outcomes of the study are related to the theories. The last chapter six presents the conclusion and suggestions. These suggestions are a follow-up to research findings for the development of theory or practice.