

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to investigate the implementation of storytelling by videoconferencing to alleviate students' speaking anxiety while studying from home during the Covid-19 pandemic. The first chapter of the paper is introduction, which provides a general overview of the study. This chapter consists of the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and organization of the research.

1.1. Background of the Study

English is the language of international communication. Therefore, it is used throughout the world for education, business, communication, and others. With regard to the importance of English, English is a compulsory subject for the high school level as stated in the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia. To master English, high school students have to master four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of these four skills, speaking is the most difficult skill mastered by students. For them, speaking is considered to be one of the most threatening of language learning.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. This means English is not widely spoken by students in their daily lives, although English is the compulsory subject at school. As a result, most students do not have the opportunity to practice their speaking outside the classroom. Meanwhile, students' success in speaking is when they are able to communicate in English. As argued by Nunan (1999), the success of a person in learning a language is measured by its ability to hold conversations in the target language.

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Many factors cause speaking skill difficult for Indonesian students (Juhana, 2012; Wediyantoro, 2016; Zuhriyah, 2017). Widiati and Cahyono (2006) find that Indonesian EFL students face their speaking problems due to language and personal factors, as well as assignments given by the teacher. Another study, Juhana (2012) finds that psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of mistakes, and shyness caused students to be unsuccessful in practicing their speaking in English class. Many students are still afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends and their teachers. As Atas (2015) states that when students are afraid, they cannot speak, when they cannot speak, then it will affect students' speaking abilities. Therefore, it is important for the English teachers to find effective ways to help reduce students' anxiety in learning English, especially speaking.

In accordance to the factors that inhibit speaking ability, anxiety is one of the negative factors that hinder students' foreign language acquisition. This anxiety can prevent students from developing their achievement in higher level of proficiency in foreign language. Rachman (1998) emphasizes anxiety as a feeling of nervous tension. Because anxiety has a big impact on students' speaking, it has become the focus of research in foreign language education since the early 1970s. These studies prove that English learning outcomes of foreign language learners are influenced by anxiety (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Liu and Huang 2011; McIntyre, 1994; Young, 1986). Therefore, I, as the researcher in this study, am interested in conducting a research dealing with speaking anxiety. Based on my experience, I observed that most of students are still nervous while talking in front of the class and prefer to keep silent during the class.

It needs a great effort to reduce students' speaking anxiety. Many teachers find it difficult to make students actively speak in English. Moreover, in some areas in Indonesia, the only opportunity to speak English is in the classroom. This situation makes it harder for students to practice speaking English and their anxiety about English increases. A small survey in a Riau's school where the researcher teaches found that 63.48% of 115 students feel more anxious when

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they did not get the opportunity to learn in class because of various reasons. It indicates that students need to learn and get guidance from the teacher in class, especially for speaking lessons.

This situation is worse when the Covid-19 pandemic has hit the world recently. One of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic is the decreasing face-to-face meeting in education setting, especially in Indonesia. All learning activities at school are diverted from studying at school to studying at home because of the implementation of physical distancing.

Although they are learning from home, students should be connected to their teachers. To meet the learning needs of students from home, the teachers must find the right solution. Especially for English teachers, they have to think solutions that can be applied to their students during studying from home. In this case, online learning is really needed by students. Along with rapid development of technology, online learning is very easy to do. With so many applications available both on mobile phones and computer devices, students are able to keep learning while connecting with the teachers. Only with a mobile phone, students can still follow online English learning from their homes. Thus, the government's call for all levels of society to remain at home can be carried out properly.

There are many modern technologies that can be used in home study situation, such as video conference application. Now, many online conference applications have been made that can be used on cell phones or computer devices, such as Zoom Cloud Meets App, Cisco WebEx, Google Hangout Meets, Skype, etc. The teachers can take advantage of these technologies to assist their students during their learning from home. Students can enjoy the advantages of videoconferencing in the form of greater accessibility, flexibility, and efficiency (Bates, 2005; Gillies, 2008). Through videoconferencing students can communicate fully without being limited by their physical location. However, to use the video conference applications, students must provide a budget for their internet connection because not all applications provide it for free. Therefore, the

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teachers should be wiser in choosing good and inexpensive applications for the smooth online learning of students during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite its limitation, videoconferencing opens opportunities to overcome the problem of students' speaking anxiety, one of them is through implement storytelling techniques in videoconferencing. Most students are accustomed to storytelling because it has been part of culture for a long time. Storytelling is also considered as one of the most efficient and motivating approaches to learning English (Nunan, 1988). Storytelling is a simple method but it really helps students understand the learning experience by compiling a story line (Bruner, 1990; Gils, 2005). Furthermore, storytelling creates strong value when people listen to each other's stories (Thorpe, 2011).

Besides its efficient and simple method, storytelling is also suitable for all levels of education. Storytelling techniques have been used by Bin As (2016) in his research. With the subject of middle school students, he investigated improving students' speaking skills in real life situations by using storytelling. The results showed that the students who were taught with storytelling techniques increased their speaking skills significantly. At the high school level, Sharma (2018) applies the Cooperative Storytelling Strategy to improve the speaking proficiency of students from 11th grade students in Nepal. The results showed that there was an increase in students' speaking abilities after the application of storytelling strategies. Storytelling can be also applied for university students, as it was applied by Rahmawati (2014). She proved that by using storytelling is an effective way to teach speaking.

In response to this current situation, I believe that storytelling through videoconferencing can also reduce students' English-speaking anxiety. As stated by Green (2004), stories have multiple functions in the classroom; one of them is overcoming students' anxiety in learning foreign language. Furthermore, students can still practice English through this storytelling activity facilitated by online conference application. It is hoped that this activity is not only able to reduce students' speaking anxiety but also the activities are able to keep students actively

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speaking English during studying from home. Therefore, in this research, I aim to investigate storytelling by videoconferencing to alleviate secondary students' speaking anxiety. To determine the level of students' anxiety in speaking English, I use the framework of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Meanwhile, for storytelling technique, I adapt the Wright's (1995) storytelling technique. Although Wright focuses more on storytelling for children, I believe it is also suitable for high school students. Atta-Alla (2012) in his journal also proves that storytelling is effective in improving the language skills of adult English language learners. Furthermore, this research also hopefully gives insight into the use of videoconferencing for home learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.2. Research Questions

In line with the background of the study that is mentioned above, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How is storytelling in videoconferencing implemented to alleviate secondary students' speaking anxiety in learning English during Covid-19 pandemic?
2. What are the benefits and challenges found in the implementation of storytelling in videoconferencing from the students' perspectives?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Referring to the research questions above, the study intends to address these following purposes:

1. To investigate the implementation of storytelling in videoconferencing to alleviate secondary students' speaking anxiety in learning English during Covid-19 pandemic. In this case, the goal the implementation of storytelling is that participants are able to be active in storytelling activities in videoconferencing which indicates their ability to communicate. They are able

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to tell stories fluently as well. In this way, students' anxiety is expected to be reduced.

2. To find out students' perspectives on benefits and challenges in implementation of storytelling in videoconferencing can alleviate the students' speaking anxiety.

1.4. Scope of the Study

With regard to the purposes, the study only covers two aspects. Firstly, it focuses on storytelling in videoconferencing to reduce senior high school students' language anxiety, particularly in speaking anxiety. Secondly, this study investigates senior high school students' perspectives towards the benefits and challenges experienced during the implementation of storytelling by videoconferencing in alleviating their speaking anxiety during Covid-19 pandemic.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is expected to give contribution and benefits in English language teaching and learning in Indonesian EFL context, especially for improving secondary students' speaking skill. Theoretically, it is hoped that the results of the study enrich literature related to the use of storytelling using online videoconference application. Furthermore, it is also expected beneficial to further researches related to the use of storytelling using online videoconference application as one of teaching English method in alleviating speaking anxiety of secondary students, especially during Covid-19 pandemic. Practically, it is expected to give new and useful information or suggestions related to implementation of storytelling and videoconferencing in alleviating speaking anxiety of secondary students in speaking ability. It is also hoped that the teachers

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can implement storytelling in videoconferencing as one of the solution during learning from home. Finally, this study is hoped to be useful for stakeholders in education to support teachers' professionalism in developing their teaching practices with creating attractive atmosphere for students in learning process.

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, several definitions of the terms in this study were defined as follow:

1. Storytelling

Storytelling according to Kusniati (2005) in Aisyah and Setiawan (2009), is a verbal activity that conveys a message, information, or just a story, whether using equipment or not, to be heard to others with pleasure, and delivered in an interesting and joyful manner.

2. Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing refers to sharing information from video and audio between two or more points that allows people to communicate simultaneously while being able to see the person in another location. (Acar; 2007 & Dudding; 2008).

3. Zoom application

Zoom is an application found on cellphones or computer networks that can be used for communication modern enterprise video, with an easy and reliable cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars.

4. Alleviate

Alleviate is defined as to make something bad such as pain or problem less severe (Cambridge Dictionary). In this research, alleviate refers to the level of students' speaking anxiety which is reduced after implementing storytelling.

5. Anxiety

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According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), anxiety is a subjective feeling of tension, fear, nervousness, and worries associated with arousal of the autonomic nervous system that affects a person in learning the language. In this study, anxiety is referred to a subjective feeling of tension, fear, nervousness, and anxiety experienced by students when learning and practicing their speaking.

1.7. Organization of the Research

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one elaborates general introduction. It consists of the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and the organization of the research. Chapter two discusses the relevant literature on speaking, speaking anxiety in EFL classes, storytelling, videoconferencing and some reviews of the previous researches. Chapter three focuses on the clarification of the study's research design, data collection methods and the data analysis. Chapter four describes and analyses the data collected in effort to answer the research questions. Chapter five summaries what has been found out and discussed throughout the processes of the study. It also recommends proposition for further research in the future.