

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains conclusion of the research, limitation of the research, implication of the research, and recommendations for future research. The first to be presented is the conclusion of this study's findings. This part elaborates the answers to the formulated research questions. The second to serve is the limitation of the study that explains the gaps and the restrictions of the present study. Third, the implication of the study provides the pedagogical insight that may be useful for the educational field development. Fourth, recommendation offers suggestions for future research regarding rapport building strategies in the context of online learning.

5.1 Conclusion of the Research

One of the findings of the present study showed that establishing rapport in the context of online learning was much more challenging. Comparing to traditional offline learning where distance might not be considered as a major problem; in online learning, distance seemed to create negative outcome such as limiting the interactions between the students and the teachers. Constant and frequent interaction was an essential factor in building and maintaining rapport. For this reason, establishing rapport in online learning context was much harder and more challenging. However, despite the circumstance, the findings showed that the teacher had successfully built positive rapport with his students during online learning, especially by implementing several strategies including: recognizing students (e.g. calling students by their names), carrying out non-academic interactions (e.g. initiating small talk and attempting to get to know the students personally) and non-text-based interactions (e.g. meeting the students virtually), monitoring and supporting students (e.g. providing feedback and monitoring students' writing progress inside and outside online classes), showing respect (e.g. listening to students' opinions without

interrupting), and using positive tone of interactions (e.g. using friendly speaking tone and showing patience).

The findings further showed that the students also had positive perception towards the strategies mentioned above. In fact, the findings revealed that the existence of positive rapport encouraged the students to be more engaged to the course, more confident to speak in the target language, and more respectful and thankful toward their English teacher.

This study further revealed that the correlation between two dimensions of rapport—teacher and connectedness dimension and students' anxiety when interacting with teacher dimension—and students' writing performance were all significant. More particularly, the correlation between teacher connectedness and students' writing performance was positive, meaning that the increase in independent variable—in this case, teacher connectedness—would result in a corresponding increase in the dependent variable—in this case, higher score in writing test. However, this did not necessarily mean that one variable affected the other; it simply meant that the variables were correlated with each other; that when one variable changed, so did the other. Next, the correlation between students' anxiety when interacting with teacher and their writing performance was negative, meaning that the decrease in independent variable—students' anxiety—resulted in corresponding increase in the dependent variable—in this case, higher score in writing test.

To summarize, the findings from this study had shown that the existence of positive rapport between the teacher and the student became even more crucial during online learning, especially due to the absence of in person meeting. Additionally, not only did this study discovered significant correlations between two dimensions of rapport and the students' writing performance, positive rapport could also promote various positive outcomes such as: encouraging the students to be more engaged to the course, more confident to speak in target language, and more respectful and thankful towards their teacher.

5.2 Limitations of the Research

Based on the findings discovered throughout the study, there were some limitations that needed to be addressed. First, among the four basic essential skills to master in learning a second/foreign language—listening, reading, speaking, and writing—this study only focused on writing. Second, as writing could be evaluated through various texts, this study only assessed student’s writing performance through descriptive text. Third, the term “students’ anxiety” in this study referred to one of the two dimensions of teacher-student rapport and it was defined as the feeling of nervousness when the students were interacting with the teacher during online learning or in need to reach out to the teacher outside online classes. Fourth, the findings did not reflect the experiences of all students or take into account the practice of online learning at other schools. Fifth, this study only focused on the rapport building strategies which were implemented by the teacher without taking into account other strategies that the students wished to have been implemented by the teacher. Sixth, since online classroom observations were only conducted twice, there might be some rapport building strategies that had not been observed. Lastly, the findings regarding the correlation between two dimensions of rapport (teacher connectedness and students’ anxiety when interacting with the teacher) and students’ writing performance in the context of online learning were seen and interpreted as tendency and not as causation; i.e. the independent variable (two dimensions of teacher-student rapport) was not a cause for the change or improvement of the dependent variable (students’ writing performance); the changes (either up or down) simply meant that the two variables were correlated with each other.

5.3 Implications of the Research

One of the significances of this study was to provide language teachers with some potential rapport building strategies, specifically in online learning context. Then through the data collected throughout the study, three practical implications of rapport building strategies were discovered.

First, appreciating and respecting students were found to be an endearing action a teacher could do to establish positive rapport. Appreciation could be

demonstrated through a simple action such as giving the students a compliment or positive comment about their hard work. The findings showed that praising students could lift their motivation and self-confidence. Then as for respect, the teacher could show it through paying attention and listening to what the students said without rudely interrupting them. Through online classroom observations and student interviews, it was discovered that respectful silence also stimulated the students' input so they became more active to voice out their ideas and opinions. Besides, knowing the teacher would listen without unnecessary interruption also gave the students some assurance as well.

Second, for rapport to be established and maintained, the interaction between the teacher and the students should be constant and frequent. In this study, the teacher did not limit the students to only interact with him during the class; he encouraged and reminded the students to reach out to him when needed. The findings revealed that such simple action created an approachable and friendly impression or vibe around their English teacher; it also what made the students thought that it was not such a challenging task for them to get close to their English teacher or to simply be able to reach out to him when they had questions or guidance regarding the course. For this reason, it was necessary for teachers to maintain communication even outside online classes.

Third, there were also some practical implications regarding maintaining rapport while focusing on students' writing performance, those are: monitoring students' writing progress—during and outside the online classes—and providing the students with some writing assistance through written feedback. The findings revealed, not only did assistance—in this case, written feedback—help strengthening teacher-student positive relationship; it also made the students respect the teacher more. The findings further showed how satisfied and thankful the students were to receive feedback on their writings as it helped them to figure out their mistakes and improve the aspects that they were still lacking on. Furthermore, monitoring the students during writing process—especially outside online classes—was found to

preserve the feeling of connectedness or closeness between the teacher and the students.

5.4 Recommendation for Future Research

According to the limitations that have previously been addressed above, this research then offered some recommendations for future research. First, future studies might focus on the correlation of teacher-student rapport and other skills such as listening, reading, or speaking in the context of online learning. Second, future researchers might investigate teacher-student rapport farther and deeper with larger groups in various settings or diverse cultures. Third, it was also recommended that future studies could focus on the teacher's perspective of rapport. For example: the challenges faced by the teacher while establishing rapport during online learning and the correlation between rapport and the teacher's teaching practices or performances in online learning. Fourth, future studies might also expand the area of investigation by comparing teacher's and students' perceptions of rapport in online/distance learning. Fifth, considering this study focused on the correlation between two dimensions of rapport and students' writing performance, future studies might dig deeper on whether or not rapport had significant influence on students' writing skill.

5.5 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented four major categories namely conclusion of the research, limitation of the research, implications of the research, and recommendation for future research.