

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

The advancement of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) has led to a new paradigm and approach of communication practices in the digital era. One of them is the emergence of online learning activities. As stated by Alkamel & Chouthaiwale (2018), that ICT is gaining a vast advantage in foreign language teaching and learning as more and more educators are using it, technology has changed the modern classroom environment more than the previous traditional environment. The online learning activities was implemented at a university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. In particular, one of the courses applying online learning practices was the Academic Listening and Speaking course (hereafter, ALS course). This situation impacts the English-speaking learning process, which can no longer conduct face-to-face interactions in one room. Meanwhile, in learning English, students are required to have speaking competence. As stated by Brown (2004), there are five essential and complementary components in developing their students' speaking skills: vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation. Therefore, webinars are an alternative activity in English-speaking learning to overcome this situation.

The ALS course was chosen as the focus of this research because this course carried out online learning and assessment activities using a Zoom-based webinar series that is appropriate to the topic of this research. Webinars are web-based seminar, in which participants and facilitators communicate live over the internet across distant geographical locations using IP technology and web camera equipment (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019). For another reason, the ALS course has the main points of learning, improving, and strengthening listening and speaking skills to participate in seminars and give academic presentations through lectures by receiving feedback, small group discussions, etc. (Oxford et al., 2012). Thus, this course is appropriate for this research, especially in narrating students' experiences in learning English-speaking through a Zoom-based webinar series. In

addition, implementing webinars in English-speaking learning, especially in the ALS course, is an appropriate learning activity because, as previously mentioned, the ALS course focuses on students' listening and speaking skills to participate in academic seminars (Oxford et al., 2012). The participant recruited in this research were English Education Department student who had completed the ALS course and taken part in a Zoom-based webinar series. She took an Academic Listening and Speaking (ALS) class in the 4<sup>th</sup> semester of university and was given the final project as presenter of an academic webinar. She prepared the webinar material well and delivered it with good speaking skills so that the audience could understand the webinar material presented, thus, she is one of the best presenters in the ALS Zoom-based webinar series.

To support the online learning process, experts recommend using applications that support modern classrooms, especially in the ICT fields, such as Zoom meeting, Google Meet, and Google Classroom. However, Zoom Meeting is more effective because it provides a share screen feature so students can see the material directly and makes it easier for participants to interact even if they do not see each other (Ilhami et al., 2021). Zoom is a free HD application with video and screen sharing for up to 100 people and even more and is also a learning medium using video and audio (Gunawan et al., 2021). In addition, Ahluwalia (2020) stated that Zoom is a breakthrough technology that can be used in different sectors, including but not limited to the business sector, industry, and higher education. Given these facts, Zoom is a platform suitable for online learning activities, especially in this research topic; the use of Zoom is suitable for the webinar activity in English-speaking learning in the ALS course.

Numerous studies have investigated using various technological devices and digital platforms as a breakthrough for language teaching and learning practices during COVID-19. To illustrate, Ilhami et al. (2021) researched the effectiveness of the contextual learning method (CTL) via Zoom in improving speaking skills during COVID-19. The findings explain that the contextual learning method (CTL) through Zoom effectively improves speaking skills. Gunawan et al. (2021) “conducted research by observing the use of the Zoom meeting application during

a pandemic in online learning to evaluate the constraints and benefits of the Zoom meeting application from several features during a pandemic”. The findings show that lecturers and students can more easily interact synchronously in the learning process by implementing the Zoom meeting application for learning during this pandemic. Another research conducted by Hidayati et al. (2021) reported on a study of 30 students' first learning experiences when using Skype in a series of English Language Teaching (ELT) webinars; the findings revealed that Skype-based webinars provide an opportunity to stimulate student motivation, broaden their horizons, and offer a fun learning atmosphere. In addition, Irawan et al. (2022) conducted research to describe the English students' speaking performances in English webinar series and the findings showed that English students are pretty good at mastering the components of speaking performance such as fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and comprehension. Another recent study conducted by Novita et al. (2022) explains how students engage in the online learning of the Academic Listening and Speaking course and focuses on the factors influencing student engagement in the online course. The findings reveal that students engage cognitively by understanding the teaching materials and activities in online ALS courses, engage emotionally by enjoying in-class learning activities, and engage by participating in discussions, developing problem-solving skills, and applying online learning norms in the classroom. In addition, factors that influence student engagement include social engagement, collaborative engagement, and interest in learning for the Academic Listening and Speaking course.

Nevertheless, probing the students' experiences of learning English speaking through the Zoom-based webinar series in Academic Listening and Speaking course remains under-researched. Therefore, based on data taken from the experience of students who are the best presenters at the Zoom-based webinar series in the ALS course, the present study aims at filling this investigative gap.

## 1.2 Formulation of the Problem

According to the background of the study, there is a problem following it. To clarify the problem that is going to be analyzed, the statements of the problems are formulated as follows:

“How is the student’s experience of learning English speaking through Zoom-based webinar series in the Academic Listening and Speaking course?”

## 1.3 Operational Definitions

The definition of key terms is to avoid misunderstanding the reader about the terms used. Then, the study provides some of the definitions of the critical terms related as follows:

1.3.1 Student’ Experience of Speaking Learning	Student’ experience of speaking learning is the involvement of students in the learning process, which includes the process of learning, practicing, and testing involves feelings, abilities, and the impact felt by students during the learning process to be able to speak, communicate, and share information.
1.3.2 Zoom-Based Webinar Series	Zoom-based webinar series is a web-based seminar by using a Zoom meeting application where participants and facilitators communicate directly via the internet and interact through voice-over IP technology and web camera equipment.
1.3.3 Academic Listening and Speaking course	The Academic Listening and Speaking course is a course that explains preparing and giving presentations for

prospective teachers who have never presented at a conference, then will be tested with the task of extensive listening, creating conducive conditions, democratizing how to conceptualize, formulate systematically, and articulate ideas in academic presentations to reflect on in order to retain students as reflective practitioners. This course also provides students with a mini-conference which can be a means to imagine them as prospective research students for the dissemination of scientific work.

#### **1.4 Aim of the Research**

The study aims to narrate the students' experiences of learning English speaking through Zoom-based webinar series in the Academic Listening and Speaking course.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Uses**

Theoretically, this study complements other theories related to students' experiences regarding the use of Zoom-based webinar series in English-speaking learning.

##### **1.5.2 Practical Uses**

This study contributes to the teachers, students, policymakers, and other related stakeholders by providing new insights and evaluation materials on using media in English-speaking

learning through Zoom-based webinar series based on the best presenter students' experiences.

### 1.5.3 Empirical Uses

This study contributes to the existing studies in implementing digital platforms to language learning, particularly Zoom-based language learning activities.