

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a brief explanation of some theories that support the study. The theories relate to definitions of silence, silence in the classroom, and factors of students' silence.

2.1 Silence

Students' involvement in the classroom varies greatly. According to Liu (2002) there are four forms of student involvement in the classroom, namely; a) total integration is the students who actively engage in classroom participation possess a clear understanding of when, what, and how to contribute verbally during class discussions. b) conditional participation as a classroom communication pattern refers to students engage in class participation influenced by various socio-cultural, cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors. Although these students might be highly motivated to attend class, their level of participation and interaction with peers and instructors remains constrained. They are still navigating the process of determining when and how to engage in discussions about class topics. c) marginal interaction refers to students typically demonstrate keen listening skills during class, but rarely actively participate orally. Their engagement in class discussions remains on the periphery, often supplemented by attentive listening, note-taking, and engaging in group discussions after class sessions. d) silent observation refers to students' withdrawal from oral class, and their acceptance of what is being taught or the class. Students use a variety of compensation strategies (e.g. recording tapes, taking notes, or relying on small group discussions after class) to help digest and ascertain what is being communicated in class.

Silence is a common phenomenon when interacting in the classroom, especially in EFL classes. The researcher found several definitions related to silence in the classroom, Ping (2010) stated that "silent" is not merely defined as an individual decision not to speak. Regarding those statements above, it is

indicated that silence is a means of the inability of students to talk or express their thoughts and ideas in front of others. Students' silence is also pointed out as typical persons who still have difficulties conveying their ideas using English as a foreign language and tend to be mute, have lower sounds, or do not even answer questions from the teacher (Juniati et al., 2018). Furthermore, Kandila et al., (2021) stated that the emergence of the phenomenon of student silence shows several views such as low interaction to answer questions given by the teacher by only bowing their heads or looking at the teacher, lack of participation in giving opinions or ideas, and also lack of interest in joining a small group activity. When students have difficulty conveying their ideas in English, silence becomes their only option. Therefore, students' silence is a situation where students have low participation in class. When the students make a sound, the sound emitted is low, and then they just bow their heads and stare at the teacher.

Tannen and Saville-Troike (1985), revealed that “silence” is different from “quiet” when it is used for classroom scenarios. Silence in the classroom often implies a lack of verbal communication among students or between students and the teacher, indicating various things like confusion, lack of engagement, contemplation, or a pause in the learning process. In some cases, silence might be desirable, such as during individual work periods, moments of reflection, or when students are processing information. “Quiet” refers to an objective state possessing no or slight sound or motion. Quietness in the classroom suggests a conducive environment for learning where noise levels are kept low but not necessarily absent. Quietness facilitates focused attention, concentration, and engagement in classroom activities without being disrupted by loud or distracting sounds. Thus, in this study, the researcher used "silence" because the phenomenon that occurred was the lack of verbal communication by students in the classroom.

2.1.1 Silence in Classroom Situation

Silence can bring educational benefits in some cases because the students can optimally process and retain information. Jaworski and

Sachdev (1998) believed that students' silence is a "facilitative device that allows students to gain access to, organize, and absorb new material." Being silent in class can also mean the student actively thinks about and pays full attention to the lesson. It is in line with Davys (2011), as cited in Anindyarizky (2013), who believed that when students keep silent, it is a time for them to think and reveal unique ideas. There are several ways for students to learn; one is by being silent in class. Meanwhile, some students can learn and understand more quickly when they keep silent and listen carefully to teacher explanations or class discussions. Therefore, being silent in class does not mean a student is not doing anything.

Many research results show that students' silence is an unfavorable phenomenon. Min (2016) believed that classroom silence makes the learning atmosphere embarrassing, negatively influences teacher-student interactions, and can harm teaching and learning. Students' silence becomes an obstacle to the interaction between teacher and students, affecting not only the achievement of teaching objectives in class but also an obstacle to mastering the target language.

To categorize different types of student silence, Kurzon (2007) classified this variable into two groups: intentional and unintentional. While students' intentional silence is strategic and deliberately employed for specific reasons, their unintentional silence is accidental and unconscious, occurring when a student is highly anxious or ashamed.

Students' silence happens when the teachers pose questions, and the students nod and stare at the teacher; if they answer the teacher, the sound emitted is low. Silence in the classroom cannot be categorized as negative behavior because many factors of students' silence affect positive perceptions of oral classroom participation, and it can be as varied as students' participation.

2.1.2 Factors Affecting Students' Silence

The silence in EFL classrooms is caused by multiple reasons, which may vary from one context to another. Based on an earlier study, the researcher determined several reasons for the students' silence. Silence might indicate several reasons, such as students' anxiety, peer pressures, lack of proficiency, and motivation (Zafarina, 2022). In addition, other researchers found that the causes of students being reluctant to respond to the teacher and choosing to remain silent are low English skills, fear of speaking in front of other people, lack of confidence and preparation, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and being laughed at (Hamouda, 2013). It is in line with Jackson (2002) that anxiety is a feeling of tension, nervousness, and concern related to an arousal of the automatic nervous system. EFL students will likely feel more anxious because they try to use a foreign language but do not use it competently. Yu (2016) conducted studies about students' silence in college English classrooms and revealed three factors that cause students' silence:

1. **Students Factors**

Learner factors in classroom silence mainly include the students' personality, lack of confidence, low proficiency in English, and few opportunities to use English for communicative purposes, labeled in classroom silence.

2. **Teachers Factors**

Teacher factors play a very important role in classroom silence. Many teacher factors influence classroom silence. The traditional teaching method is the main factor of students' silence. Also, the teacher's lecture style and teachers' questioning skills are responsible for students' silence in the classroom.

3. **Cultural Factors**

Cultural factors refer to cultural beliefs, values, and moral judgments that are influenced by their cultural background and previous education in their home country

2.2 Study of the Relevant Research

Before the researcher decided to do this research, the researcher studied previous research on students' silence. The prior studies are discussed in the following order:

Anindyarizky (2013) investigated six students from the Satya Wacana Christian University English Department. This study revealed that students do not always view silent students as ones who do nothing in class; it is how they learn a lesson. This study has also found some interesting facts about why students remain silent in the classroom. First, silence is one of the students' personality behaviors. Then, the psychological problem is that the participants feel afraid to speak in front of many people because they think they are not smart enough. Third, being silent is a part of Indonesian culture. The last is the teacher's teaching method, one of the most critical factors affecting the students' attitudes in class.

Choi (2015) explored the perception and reasons for Korean students' silence and low levels of oral participation in U.S. graduate programs. The results of this study showed that the participants considered themselves to be the quietest members of their class. Their reasons for being quiet in class were their lack of mastery of English terms relevant to their discipline, the influence of Korean classroom manners, and saving face. However, the participants strongly desired to contribute, which was visible when they actively worked in the online discussion forum. This implies the need for pedagogical tools to encourage and help students to speak actively in classrooms in the United States.

Purwanti & Yeni (2021) investigated classroom silence the eleventh grade of SMKN 1 Tembilahan. This study revealed ten factors that cause students to be silent when learning English. They are inadequate vocabulary, inability to manage vocabulary, lack of understanding of English grammar, not confident in their abilities, fear of making mistakes, lack of pronunciation, feeling nervous when speaking, difficulty understanding English material, fear of criticism, and feeling shy to speak in front of the class. According to this research, students'

proficiency is the dominant factor that causes student silence in the EFL classroom.

Deng (2022) conducted research in the online EFL classes at the Hunan Institute of Technology. The participants in this study were one hundred and two English major students, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen teachers. The study shows four factors as the causes of silence, namely, student-related factors, teacher-related factors, online-related factors, and cultural factors. The student- and online-related factors were cited as crucial contributing factors to the silence.

Huynh and Adams (2022) investigated students' silence during online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in EFL classes through teacher perceptions. The study highlights a link between cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. The results show that silence is experienced by teacher educators in different ways: as a thinking or learning opportunity, as an indication of teacher uncertainty, and as a release of consciousness.

While most previous studies focus on regular English classes, this present study set apart to study at one of the English clubs at the vocational high school level.

2.3 Framework

Based on the literature review, students' silence was pointed out as typical persons who still have difficulties conveying their ideas using English as a foreign language and tend to be mute, lower sound, or even not answer questions from the teacher (Juniati et al., 2018). The silence referred to in this study is students' silence, where students only bow and stare at the teacher. If they make a sound, the sound emitted is low during the learning process in English club class. Contextually, this phenomenon appears in one of the English Clubs at the Vocational High School in Tasikmalaya. An idea emerged for researchers to investigate the factors affecting the students' silence in the EFL classroom.

In this study, the researcher will only investigate students' silence based on Yu (2016); student factors refer to students' confidence, students' personality, and students' motivation; teacher factors are the characteristics of a teacher's ability to understand the character and carry out exciting learning activities for students, cultural factors are the influence of social and cultural contexts on learning and education, and cultural factors refer to fear of embarrassment, cultural norms of respect, and treasure of silence. Furthermore, the sub-indicators will be developed into several questions for research interview guidelines.