

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Speaking is one of the four skills that must be mastered by students who are learning English, whether they are EFL or ESL student. According to Brown and Yule (1983) (as cited in Bahadorfar & Omidvar 2014), speaking is the skill in which the students will be judged upon most in real-life situations. It is an important part of everyday interaction and most often the first impression of a person is based on his/her ability to speak fluently and comprehensively. It is not wrong if a lot of learners say that speaking is a skill that is hard to master because in the process of communicating directly, speaking needs to involve various aspects. Not only knowing a lot of vocabulary and using the right grammar but speaking also requires the correct pronunciation of every word that will be spoken. Therefore, in the learning process in the classroom, students need a special learning method and practice to train students' interaction skills in mastering speaking skills.

A significant challenge in online speaking classrooms is fostering consistent student engagement. One phenomenon observed in online speaking classroom is the varying levels of students' participation and interaction during discussions or collaborative activities. Some students actively engage by contributing ideas, asking questions, and responding to peers, while others may remain passive, contributing minimally or not at all. Classroom interaction is seen as one of the important focus points to help students increase their speaking ability. Yuniar and Siregar (2022) classroom interaction could be seen as mediation for learning where learners develop their knowledge and understandings through collaborative activities and dialogic processes that take place during the learning process in class

However, the students who experienced online speaking learning have to adapt to online speaking learning provided by the lecturer. From this change, there are challenges and advantages experienced by students, especially in the EFL speaking class. The challenge is how lecturers and students can adapt to the new learning process which could be affected by the effectiveness of online speaking

learning. These learning challenges also raise the advantages and disadvantages of the learning process that can affect students' learning achievement in learning speaking online.

In facing the challenges of online learning, students have their own learning experiences, because they are in a period of adaptation to the new learning process. Knowing students' learning experiences in online speaking learning is very important to know the various advantages or disadvantages of implementing the online learning process. As we know in learning speaking various activities are quite specific, such as practicing conversation with various learning techniques, then practicing pronunciation, fluency, and others. In the application of online learning, many aspects need to be prepared by students in addition to readiness in the virtual classroom, students also need to prepare tools to support the learning process. From those activities, students will describe the experience of learning speaking online based on what they have faced during the learning process.

There have been several relevant studies on online learning in speaking classes. For example, Wibowo and Khairunas (2020) researched student perceptions of public relations majors in online learning in public speaking classes where they found that many of the students experienced negative impacts using online learning. In another research by Alzamil (2021) about teaching English speaking online, the participants were 18 second-year male Saudi students who were studying English at a Saudi university. He found that mastering speaking was important and a lot of participants preferred to receive the teacher's feedback on their speaking task face-to-face rather than online. Although, they felt they could improve their speaking skill by delivering their speaking task online. Moreover, Fitriani et al. (2020) who researched students in non-English departments, found that online learning influenced the improvement of their speaking skills.

The previous studies were talking about teaching or learning speaking online which is conducted by students who were not majoring in English. However, the writer wants to explore how the experience felt by students in the English department in learning speaking online. Hence, the study will focus on exploring

students' experiences in an online speaking classroom, to find out what are the strengths and weaknesses of online learning in the speaking classroom conducted by students in English major. The results of this research can also provide better knowledge about online speaking learning, which can be used as a reference for teachers in determining learning strategies by considering their strengths and weaknesses to create better learning strategies in the future.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

A research question addressed in the present study is “What are the strengths and weaknesses of online learning in the speaking classroom?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the writer provides three operational definitions related to this study as follows:

- 1.3.1 EFL : This research was conducted at a university in Indonesia in which people in Indonesia used English as a foreign language (EFL). Moreover, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to people is non-native speakers who learn English in a country where English is not the official language or not the dominant language of the country.
- 1.3.2 Online Speaking Class : Online speaking class is where students can study and practice speaking skill by utilizing technology such as the internet, WhatsApp, Elsa Speak, Google Classroom, Zoom meeting, YouTube and laptop or smart phone as the medium for learning.
- 1.3.3 Students' Experiences : The process of activities, events, and interactions carried out by students to obtain new information and

competencies in accordance with the learning objectives to be achieved in the context of online speaking learning.

1.4 Aim of the Study

This study aims to find out the strengths and weaknesses based on students' experience in online speaking classroom.

1.5 Significances of the Study

- 1.5.1 Theoretical Use : This study expands the literature of online speaking learning in the Public Speaking course at Siliwangi University and hopefully, it gives the lecturer or teacher knowledge about how online learning has an impact on speaking classrooms. Especially the strengths and weaknesses of online speaking learning.
- 1.5.2 Empirical Use : This study will give empirical insight into how online learning has an impact on speaking classrooms. This study will also expand the literature on online learning to the speaking classroom.
- 1.5.3 Practical Use : As a practical contribution, this study can be used as a reference for the lecturer or teacher that online learning has an impact on the speaking classroom and how to overcome the impact of the students during the activities of online speaking learning.