CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is the beginning of the undergraduate thesis that present the background of the study to give an understanding of the research. It contains the explanation of the research phenomenon, research context, research gap, research question, operational definitions, the aims of the research, and the significance of the research supported by several relevant literature.

1.1. Background of The Study

In the realm of education, especially in countries that use English as a foreign language, students are merely able to learn the language but not apply it effectively. EFL students in Indonesia rarely to use English in daily life situations, because there are less people who could understand English, and according to the one of the discussion forums in Quora 2022 about "Why is it difficult for Indonesians to speak English?" one of the reasons in the forum stated the students could get embarrassed because of being teased by their friends, which leads to the lack of peers learning. One of the key components of the learning process is communication as stated by Kristiawan (2019), communication plays a crucial role in the learning process. However, in English oral communication skills for standard EFL students may be the most difficult skill to master (Zhang, 2009), this can lead to learning challenges for the EFL students while using English, in a previous study they discovered that the largest challenge for EFL students is a lack of practice time (Woodrow, 2006). Lack of proper practice with peers, as well as assistance and feedback from the teacher, this results in poor EFL speaking development (Wang, 2014; Chen et al. 2017). Thus, in the context of developing oral communication for the EFL students using VRChat as the learning medium might become new strategies to overcome the issues. Education is primarily a means of enhancing the quality of human resources, the utilization of technology has an important role in improving students' learning quality (Sutarman, 2015).

Virtual reality is a technology that can generate a virtual environment from the actual world with accompanying technologies to combine the user's reality into

a virtual environment (Călin, 2018). For education purposes, virtual reality technology could create new methods or media for students and teachers to practice because VRChat has some offers for the user to interact with people in the virtual world. According to Aulia (2017), most of the current virtual reality experiences are visual, presented on a computer screen or through a holographic viewer.

The phenomenon involves observing EFL students who face challenges with learning English. The participant mostly lacked peers, facilitation, or mediums for practicing skills like speaking, listening, and communicating in English. While the participant already had a basic understanding of English, they struggled to improve their skills to a higher proficiency level. One notable tool is VRChat, within this application, it serves as an educational platform that improves the proficiency of the students who have basic comprehension, help them practice their speaking, listening and communication skills, with the native speakers in advance level of English proficiency. If the learners perceive the learning media used positively, they will positively learn and achieve the proficiency improvement. An individual's acceptance and utilization of technology can be influenced by their perception of it (Davis, 1989). It can be concluded that students' perception of using VRChat as learning media influence their utilization and acceptance of VRChat usage in oral communication learning.

Differing from previous studies examine, the utilization of VRChat as a learning medium to increase students' ability to speak and listen in English (Cahyadi, 2020), the purpose of the research was to observe the literature on studies that examine the use of VRChat as learning medium, and showed how the students communicate with people in the virtual world. The study utilized a qualitative method to provide an in-depth exploration and comprehensive understanding of the experiences of using VRChat in learning oral communication.

Therefore, to fill the gap, this study investigated the perception and experiences of the students in VRChat to build their oral communication as their autonomous learning tool to practice. Moreover, the researcher wants to know the impact of the VRChat on EFL students' oral communication skills.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The question of the research is "What are the EFL students' perceptions of the use of VRChat as a learning medium to facilitate their communication skills?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

The researcher provides three definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding the terms set out in this study as follows;

1.3.1 VRChat

VRChat is a platform for creating virtual social environments, it is still an early access program or it is still an underdeveloped program that was released on steam in February (2017). It is one of the programs or applications for the students to be connected to the people in virtual world. VRChat does not have goal to win unlike competitive games, it is a place for people to talk, learn, or meet people in virtual form, such as using 3d avatars and communicate with each other in the servers.

1.3.2 Students' Oral Communication

According Fiorini et al. (2014), oral communication is considered the most comprehensive system for conveying ideas and thoughts, shaping human interactions, and influencing behaviors by creating, maintaining, and modifying them. In this research, students' oral communication skill it requires more than mechanics, such as good pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. Oral communication also refers to the process of transmitting information or messages through spoken words, sounds, or verbal expressions (Adler, 2020). It involves two key activities, listening and speaking. Listening: This entails receiving and interpreting sounds through the ears. It involves recognizing speech sounds and converting them into words and sentences. Our ears detect specific sounds (such as letters, intonation, rhythm, and pauses), which our brain then processes into understandable information. Speaking: This is the process of producing language through the mouth. It requires the coordinated effort of the lungs, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth, and lips to generate sounds and convey messages. According to Bakhyt

et al. (2019), usually language refers to "the means of speaking" for people who use it because they know how to use it.

1.3.3 Learning Media

Learning media are tools and materials used in the teaching and learning process that are especially designed to develop speaking abilities and encourage growth in thought and expression. Text-based (books, whiteboards, posters, computer screens, etc.), audio-based (conversational recordings, music, mechanical sounds, etc.), visual (diagrams, images, graphics, photographs, etc.), motion-based (videos, films, animations), real objects and models (tangible three-dimensional aids), and people (teachers, students, or subject experts) are the six categories into which these media can be divided. Technology development over time has produced a variety of educational media, including audiovisual resources. These are multimedia presentations or videos that teach English through both the visual and hearing senses.

1.4 Aims of the Research

This research is aimed to describe how the EFL students' perceptions of using VRChat to facilitate their oral communication skills.

1.5 Significances of the Research

1.5.1 Theoretical use

This research will expand on EFL students' perceptions and strategies in using VRChat as the learning medium to extend their English Oral communication skills.

1.5.2 Practical Use

The result of this study would explain about how VRChat can help students in building their oral communication as they use it in daily life situations.

1.5.3 Empirical Use

This study gives the insight into how EFL students perceive the uses of VRChat as learning media to facilitate their communication skills and how it helps motivates students to improve their oral communication skills.