

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Students' silence is a common phenomenon of the learning process in the foreign language. It has been observed that while a few students actively interact in the classroom, the majority of students remain silent in the English classroom (Zhouyuan, 2016). They are mostly silent, taking notes, and listening, and they are hesitant to offer questions or express their ideas. This is in line with King and Aono (2017) said that silence with the type of absence of oral participation during learning tasks is seen as the main problem by many educators.

The reasons of students silent may be varied, such as they may have nothing to say; they may feel insecure and shy; they may feel that their ideas are not valued; they may be disciplined by the teacher, or they may need more time to think and reflect (Zembylas & Vrasidas, 2007). Furthermore, Zhouyuan (2016) argued that most teachers are faced with the phenomenon of students who are silent and they also find it difficult to motivate students to participate actively in an academic atmosphere.

Above all, silence is not distinctive to face-to-face instruction, but silence is also experienced in online communication, one of which is silence occurring when synchronous virtual classroom. Markova, Glazkova, and Zabrova (2017) pointed out that challenges while learning at a distance is lack of interaction. Otherwise, the fact that many college students did not make a vocal participation during the learning process in a synchronous virtual classroom.

Based on preliminary research (observation) that has been done by the researcher in the children literature class, in the English education department in one of the universities in Tasikmalaya, it has been found that there are five students who tend to be silent in synchronous virtual classrooms. Those students did not make any comments or vocal contributions from the beginning to the end of the learning process, they did not participate in answering questions when the

lecturer asked the class questions, and they did not respond when the lecturer directly asked them to express their opinion. By those conditions, the phenomenon of classroom silence in the synchronous virtual classroom is an interesting object to observe. Classroom silence becomes a common phenomenon and it has become an obstacle to the interaction between teacher and the students (Zhouyuan, 2016; Hanh, 2020). It also happened during the virtual classroom. Zhouyuan (2016) stated that Asian learners of English as a foreign language have been arguably conveyed as silent and inactive learners.

The students' silence in the English classroom has been mentioned in several past works, both in face to face learning or in online learning, for instance Zembylas and Vrasidas (2007) examined how students and teachers in two online courses use and interpret silence from an ethnographic perspective. In particular, this study focuses on how learner silence affects itself in asynchronous and synchronous text-based, online communication. Choi (2015) explored the perception and reasons for Korean students' silence and low levels of oral participation in U.S. graduate programs. Zhouyuan (2016) analyzed the factors of silence in college English Classrooms. Hanh (2020) examines the reasons behind student silence in the classroom, or lack of verbal participation, and then suggests some suggested solutions to fulfill in the classroom more effectively. Tang, Wang, and Wong (2020) examined Chinese elementary students' stories about why they do not speak in class.

The study of students' silence in synchronous virtual classrooms less exists in some research. The previous research mostly focused on investigating student silence in face-to-face learning and text-based online encounters. Hence, this research aims at investigating the factors affecting EFL college students' remaining silent in the English classroom during the synchronous virtual classrooms. It hopes this study may enlighten the instructors' ability to deal with those silent learners effectively. The key focus and emphasis of this study is on the meanings and forms of online silence in the context of synchronous communication. Silence can be defined in multiple ways. In this study, silence

reflects the soundless non-verbal communicative behavior that students act in the learning process in the classroom.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The formulation of the problem in this research is “what are the factors affecting students’ silence in synchronous virtual classrooms?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides three definitions related to this study as follow:

1.3.1 Student’s silence

Student’s silence is a condition in which students are being quiet and not making any comment or vocal contribution to the learning process unless specifically asked.

1.3.2 Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is a general term used to describe forms of education, and learning in which a group of participants is engaged in learning at the same time. For that, the participants should be in the same online environment, such as in a web conference, where they can interact with the instructor and other participants. There is real-interaction with other people.

1.3.3 Virtual Classroom

Virtual classroom is a digital learning environment that allows students and teachers to be online in real-time.

1.4 Aim(s) of the Research

This research aims to investigate the factors affecting students’ silence in the synchronous virtual classroom.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The finding of this research aims to give a contribution to:

1.5.1 Practical Use

This study is expected to be useful to the English lecturers or English teachers, English Education Department students, and other researchers.

1.5.1.1 For English lecturer/ English teacher

The findings of this research will give an overview to the lecturer about what factors affecting Indonesian students' remain silent during learning English in synchronous virtual classroom, thus, the lecturer or the teacher can find out how to deal with silent students.

1.5.1.2 For English Education Department students

It is expected that the students will be more active while learning English in synchronous virtual classrooms.

1.5.1.3 For other researchers

This research is expected to give information, model, or reference to be developed for further studies, the researcher hopes that other researchers evaluate, revise, reconstruct, or modify this study and write further studies for other levels and objectives.

1.5.2 Empirical Use

This study will provide empirical understanding of what factors affecting Indonesian students' remain silent during learning English in synchronous virtual classrooms.