

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Academic Listening and Speaking (ALS) is one of the courses provided by the English department at the university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. The ALS course was chosen as the focus of this research because it carried out a webinar that was relevant to the research topic. This class held in Semester 4, focuses on identifying and responding to spoken English texts from various academic contexts, particularly in educational practice and presentations. The students took the class once a week for about four months. The ALS course aims to encourage communicative students through extensive listening and discussion sessions, thereby enabling them to understand the meaning of a topic. Then, at the end of this class, enrolled students were required to give a presentation through a webinar.

The English webinar presentation is one of the assessment aspects of this class. For some people, the webinar presentation is as simple as explaining the topic to the audience, while for others, it is not easy. Based on the short preliminary interview with the students at the university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia, the researcher found that some students enjoyed their English webinar presentation preparation and performance. Meanwhile, the rest of the students feel unsure about English webinar presentations. They did a lot of preparation for the webinar, from linguistic aspects to the topic that they chose. Additionally, they were afraid to make mistakes, so they believed they could not execute it well. It relates to Sahara's et al. (2021) statement that some students who speak English may slip or make mistakes when they try to articulate words, expressions, or sentences. It can happen because students feel nervous speaking in front of an audience. Therefore, students have different experiences in webinar presentations.

The obstacles during webinar presentations include technological factors, material understanding, distraction, etc. Technological factors can indeed impact in webinar presentations, as Ferri et al. (2020) noted that technological factors are

related to internet connectivity and the electronic devices used by students. For the students' performance, they should master the material and choose a great topic based on students' interests. In addition, a distraction from the environment is one of the obstacles to online presentation. In line with Abubakar et al. (2022), the students are disturbed by their surroundings, so that students do not focus on doing online presentations. To summarize briefly, some students encountered various obstacles when giving a webinar presentation.

At this point, concerning students' obstacles in webinar presentation, a study by Hizriani et al. (2022) investigated the challenges and the solutions in online and offline presentations in thesis proposals at one of the Islamic universities in Kalimantan. Their research found that there are four challenges during the presentation: students' preparation, topic mastery, students' confidence, and technical issues, and the solutions to these challenges are understanding the topic, planning, and preparation for the presentation. Then, their research also used a qualitative descriptive as research design. However, their study was based on a thesis proposal presentation and used a questionnaire and an interview to collect data. Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher focused on the webinar presentation and used the interview as the data collection. Another study was conducted by Sahara et al. (2021). They investigated the factors that contributed to English presentation problems in the classroom, which made it difficult for students to articulate words in English due to fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and issues with grammar and pronunciation. The similarities with this research are finding the problems of oral presentation and employing qualitative methods.

Based on the previous studies mentioned above, the obstacles and solutions in the English webinar presentation have not been observed, despite online learning being widely used nowadays. In addition, the students faced pressure in delivering the webinar presentation due to a large audience from other institutions. Therefore, to address this gap, the present study was conducted to reveal students' obstacles in English webinar presentations and the solutions based on the difficulties in presentation theory, as proposed by Al-Nouh et al. (2015). This research is

important for students who are taking academic listening and speaking classes, as it helps them understand common difficulties encountered in English webinar presentations and provides solutions to overcome these obstacles. Thus, the students would not encounter the same obstacles when conducting webinar presentations.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

One research question is addressed in the present study, “What are the students’ obstacles and solutions in English webinar presentation in Academic Listening and Speaking class?”

1.3. Operational Definitions

To avoid misunderstanding, the terms set out in this study, the researcher provides some definitions related to this study, as follows:

1. The Students’ Obstacles and solutions : Obstacles are things faced in doing a webinar presentation by the students that affect their performance. Meanwhile, students prepared a solution to overcome the obstacles.
2. English Webinar Presentation: An English webinar presentation is a virtual presentation and discussion session conducted online in English. At the end of the class, students will participate in an English webinar presentation as a final project of the ALS course 2022. It will allow students to imagine themselves as student researchers. Thus, it involves the lecturer, students, and participants from other institutions who are allowed to join.
3. Academic Listening and Speaking class: Academic Listening and Speaking classes are one of the courses experienced in the 4th semester of the English Education Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teacher’s Training of a State University in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. ALS is spoken text multimodally in an academic

context, where the students experience extensive listening tasks and speaking skills.

1.4. Aim of the Study

This research aims to investigate the students' obstacles in English webinar presentations in Academic Listening and Speaking class.

1.5. Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contribution of this study is to enrich the literature on students' challenges in English webinar presentations, particularly in academic speaking and listening contexts, by classifying the types of obstacles students face and the practical solutions.

1.5.2 Practical contribution

Practically, this study is expected to contribute to students preparing and practicing extensively and provide practical solutions to their obstacles. Also, the English lecturer determined learning strategies based on the obstacles they faced to minimize the obstacles in webinar presentations. This practical support is important to help students perform more confidently and effectively during academic webinars.

1.5.3 Empirical contribution

The empirical contribution of this study is to increase researchers' knowledge and experience regarding the obstacles and solutions faced by students in English webinar presentations in ALS classes. These findings are used as a reference for future studies focusing on academic speaking obstacles.