CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the teacher's encouragement factors influencing EFL students' willingness to communicate in speaking class. This focuses on data that has been collected from 5 EFL students. The data was collected using reflection via Google forms and analyzed qualitatively. This section presents the research background, questions, scope, and purpose. In addition, it also measures the significance of the study and the definition of critical terms used in this study.

1.1 Background of Study

Due to globalization, English language communication skills have become a ticket to success in different aspects of life (Saadat & Mukundan, 2019). Thus, to help language learners get involved in communicative tasks to facilitate their language learning and improve their communicative abilities, a sense of willingness to communicate should be engendered in them (Amiryousefi, 2016). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence the willingness to communicate is essential to find out how it can be achieved in improving student communication. In the last few decades, there has been a surge in researchers' interest in willingness to communicate (Peng & Woodrow, 2010; Öz et al., 2015; Ro & Rue, 2020). Moreover, willingness to communicate (WTC) has been an intensely debated topic among scholars of language learning (Alimorad & Farahmand, 2021).

In the global context, WTC has also drawn the attention of language researchers and practitioners in recent years. The research focus concern the effect of the interlocutor, age, and gender on WTC, the effects of comparison (self-referential vs. normative) and regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention) feedback on EFL learners' WTC, Willingness to communicate in a multilingual context, effect of classroom management in oral communication and willingness to communicate, cross-cultural insights effect in WTC, situational affecting L2 WTC, and the roles of motivation, affective attitudes, the effect of teacher, and willingness to communicate in early English immersion programs (see, Alqurashi & Assulaimani, 2021; Henry et al., 2021; J. S. Lee et al., 2021; Syed & Kuzborska, 2020; Tavakoli & Davoudi, 2017; Zarrinabadi & Saberi Dehkordi, 2021; Zarrinabadi, 2013).

This phenomenon was also developing in the Asian context. The research shows very varied results, such as the role of grit and classroom enjoyment in WTC, willingness to communicate in foreign language acquisition, and factors that influence students' willingness to communicate, and it can be concluded five factors, such as teachers, topic discussions, classroom environment, peers, and types of activities. Besides, there is students' familiarity with interlocutors, the correctness of speech, and motivation (Latifah et al., 2016; Lee, 2020; Susanti, 2004; Tan et al., 2020; Vongsila & Reinders, 2016; Wulandari, 2015).

Willingness to communicate has also become an exciting topic in the EFL student's context. Altiner (2018) stated that willingness to communicate in a second language had gained importance recently with the improving popularity of communicative language teaching. The issues that are mainly discussed are the

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underlying factors that lead to students' (un)WTC, situational and individual factors engendering WTC, factors including task type, the topic of discussion, interlocutor, teacher, class atmosphere, personality, and self-perceived speaking ability, factors affecting willingness to communicate (WTC), and the relationship between language learners' WTC and their oral language proficiency (see, Alimorad & Farahmand, 2021; Riasati, 2012; Riasati & Rahimi, 2018; Valadi et al., 2015; Weda et al., 2021). Besides, this is slightly different from other contexts; a study discusses fostering intrinsic motivation and willingness to communicate through digital storytelling (Al-Amri, 2019). In addition, a study discussed the students' WTC in EFL classrooms: The case in native and non-native speaker teachers that focus on the teacher factor (Syukri & Haseng, 2021).

While there is still a scarcity of empirical studies that focus on exploring the teacher factors that influence EFL students' willingness to communicate, both in global and Asian contexts, including Indonesia, then, to explore the teacher's factors influencing EFL students' willingness to communicate, the research focuses on gaining data from the teacher's encouragement factor influencing EFL students' willingness to communicate in class. Thus, the data of this study have investigated teacher encouragement.

1.2 Research Questions

Following the research focus, it was formed to explore the following research question "How does the teacher's encouragement factor influence EFL students' willingness to communicate in speaking class?"

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on their responses related to their willingness to communicate in speaking class that is influenced by teacher encouragement. It was limited to students' experiences of how teacher encouragement factors affect their willingness to communicate based on psychological, social, methodological, or linguistic processes. Meanwhile, they have gone through the learning process in speaking class for four semesters, from the first semester until the fourth semester.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research question, this study explores how teacher encouragement influences EFL students' willingness to communicate in speaking class.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research provides an accurate fundamental picture. The findings of this study can be used as a reference for anyone who wants to do related research, such as exploring students' experiences about how teacher factors affect students' willingness to communicate. So, the contribution of this research is to provide awareness to students to think more critically in responding to every

encouragement the teacher gives them, either through actions or words or something else.

In addition, this research creates awareness among EFL teachers. They will understand how much influence the teacher's encouragement has on students' willingness to communicate in class. Thus, teachers will be able to help students through the selection of actions and words that they will say or give to students as motivation or encouragement for students' willingness to speak. Teachers will be careful in choosing actions or words in communicating with students because sometimes what we give or show that we consider trivial turns out to have a different response or impact on everyone. There are positive and even negative impacts.

Therefore, this study integrates good teaching to increase students' willingness to communicate through teacher encouragement. In addition, it presents a paradigm about the importance of teacher encouragement, not only to stimulate students' willingness to speak but for other aspects of the world of education so that this research is expected to be able to contribute to the world of education that seeks to improve or have an influence on students' English skills, especially in the context of speaking classes, namely the willingness of students to communicate and participate actively in class.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To clarify the key terms in this study, the definition of the following terms were listed:

Teacher Encouragement: In this study, it is believed to be a form of encouragement through the words or actions of the teacher that can help or influence students' willingness to speak. This encouragement focuses on efforts to have students' willingness to communicate. This conveys confidence to students that they exist and are valuable regardless of the results achieved. In addition, teacher encouragement assumes that students will be intrinsically motivated and willing to communicate if there is satisfaction or self-confidence. Meanwhile, encouragement is not only given to students who have "poor" communication skills but can be given at any time, even to students who have "good" communication skills or often communicate in class.

EFL Students' Willingness to Communication: This study defines EFL students' tendency to communicate in English freely. The willingness of EFL students to communicate is associated with teacher encouragement factors that influence it. But in this case, the teacher's encouragement can influence students to engage in communication.

Speaking Class: In this study, it is defined as the context in which this research was conducted. Speaking class is one of the compulsory subjects that EFL students must offer for four semesters, from the first semester until the fourth. This is a forum for students to have the opportunity to communicate.