

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents (1) background, (2) research problem, (3) research objective, and (4) the significance of study.

1.1 Background

COVID-19 is a dangerous virus that is easily transmitted and the result of a decision from the Minister of Education that all learning activities both in school and college held at home each through the application available. According to Aji (2020), COVID-19 pandemic is a tragedy that threatens everyone on this earth. He also adds that, the pandemic has resulted in the loss of many employment and a variety of measures, particularly in Indonesia, which has closed schools, colleges, and universities. Abidah et al. (2020) state that people comply and implement government regulations by means of self-quarantine and maintain distance in this COVID-19 pandemic situation, this is to break the chain of spread of this virus by carrying out learning and teaching activities carried out online for all levels of education. In summary, face-to-face teaching and learning are prohibited in this pandemic, while online teaching and learning from home, where there is no physical contact and the transmission of this dangerous virus is permitted.

In the COVID-19 era, the teachers and students interact and transfer knowledge via online learning. The practice required both educators and students to interact and transfer knowledge online. According to Basilaila and Kvavadze (2020), online learning is defined as information and communication technology to gain knowledge transfer experience using videos, audio, image, text communication and software. Ahmed et al. (2020) defined that as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, educators began to take advantage of available technology to implement and transform information

in online learning. Gunawan et al. (2020) mentioned that online learning can take advantage of various platforms available in the form of applications, websites, social networks and learning management systems as a medium for delivering material or collecting assignments. Briefly, these various platform can help facilitate problems in the learning process supported by various discussion techniques and others.

Meanwhile, in the form of information technology development that can be used as a learning, the medium is it uses ICT. As mentioned by Prasojo et al. (2018), most teacher of education programs around the world include technical components. In comparison to their predecessors, today's students and teachers are in an environment that is more receptive of using technology into their teaching as a result of their training. As explained by Suryani (2008), to make efficient use of ICT in education, numerous organizational factors must be considered, including school culture, leadership roles, school integrity or ethical concerns, and the school administration system. In brief, information and communication technology (ICT) plays a critical part in the process of enhancing teachers and students' online learning so that it is more successful.

Compared to English learning techniques in general, teaching English by using social media has more benefits. According to Kumar and Raja (2018), in this modern era, one of the benefit is that through social media there must be good communication between teachers and students, if teachers and students do not communicate well, the teaching and learning process will be difficult. According to Husain (2014), the use of social media in learning is intended to enable students to study more autonomously and sustainably in accordance with their inherent abilities, and the internet as a learning system is highly effective in bridging the gap between teachers and

students. Thus, social media can make teachers and students closer and can increase the knowledge of students and teachers.

As one of the most popular applications, WhatsApp also provides several features that allow students and teachers to interact online. According to Rolfe (2013), most users select WhatsApp because it allows them to send low-cost messages to one another. This WhatsApp is widely used to communicate, both interpersonal communication and group communication. According to Kheryadi (2017), WhatsApp is a cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for smart phones and selected feature phones that use the internet for communication, and it is considered the easiest and most effective among various online media that can be used by teachers and cross-platform instant messaging subscription services for smart phones and selected feature phones that use the internet for communication. He also add, the teachers can share a video or a picture to the class in WhatsApp group. Hence, these features generate great opportunities for people, including students as well as teachers, to be able to articulate their feelings, thoughts, ideas, or experiences with increasing ease.

Speaking is a linguistic ability or a mode of communication in which a person can communicate his or her thoughts, feelings, and facts to another vocally. According to Erwadi (as cited in Wardani et al. 2020), because speaking skills are quite sophisticated and distinct from those learnt, especially by foreign language students, what students need in a language are abilities that employ language in communication. In other words, students will find it simpler to acquire a foreign language if they actively converse. Speaking is one of important skills to be mastered learners in learning English. Reading, listening, writing, speaking is one of the most crucial skills to acquire since it is extremely difficult for international students or second language learners to generate sentences without first mastering grammatical structures and mastering vocabulary

(Bueno, Madrid and McLaren, 2006). In short, English learners experience a lot of difficulty in speaking, because these speaking abilities are needed in order to communicate effectively, and speaking is the most crucial component of learning a second or foreign language.

Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researcher by using an informal interview through WhatsApp with English teachers at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang showed that a solution used by English teachers to teach English to make students learn speaking skill through WhatsApp during the spread of COVID-19 pandemic at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang, because most of the students and teachers have been familiar with how to operate it and the students also can practice speaking through video or voice note feature. Hence, the English teachers decided to select WhatsApp is a solution to run English subject such as speaking activities (V, personal communication, 9 April 2020).

Some previous related studies in this case have been conducted by numerous researchers and three are presented in this part. The study was conducted by Ahmad (2019). The results showed that there were differences in the speaking achievement of the students in the experimental class. The second study was conducted by Han and Keskin (2016). The results showed that WhatsApp experiences significantly impacted the students language acquisition by lowering EFL speaking anxiety. The last study was conducted by Nuryani et al. (2021). The results showed that WhatsApp could support online learning. Teachers state that material presented could be understood by students and they were comfortable because WhatsApp was simple and affordable.

Therefore, this phenomenon encouraged the researcher to conduct the same research about the use of WhatsApp in speaking activities. Then, this study was specified on teaching speaking. This research conducted at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang because based on the information

from the teacher at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang through preliminary study conducted by the researcher that WhatsApp is used in English class including speaking. Therefore, this research is entitled **“Teachers’ Perceptions on the Use of WhatsApp for Speaking Activities: A Case Study at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang”**.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background, the research problem is formulated as the following question: How were the teachers’ perceptions on the use of WhatsApp for speaking activities at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on research problem above, the objective of this study is formulated as following: To find out the teachers’ perceptions on the Use of WhatsApp for Speaking Activities at SMP Islam Az Zahra 2 Palembang.

1.4 The significance study

The results of this study are expected to give beneficial useful information for some parties. They are teachers of English, the researcher, and the next future researchers. The first is that English teachers learned about the benefits of teaching English speaking skills using WhatsApp, as well as the weakness of teaching English speaking skills using WhatsApp. Then, in order to improve students' English performance, English teachers should consider how to design an effective online speaking teaching activity using the WhatsApp.

This research can hopefully give beneficial insights about English teachers’ perceptions about teaching English speaking through online through WhatsApp. Then, the researcher can know

the strengths and weaknesses of teaching English speaking skills via online through WhatsApp so that the researcher can understand how to find the solutions to cope with the disadvantages of English speaking skills via online when the researcher experiences the same problem.

The last is this research can hopefully distribute useful information for other next researchers who are interested to conduct a research about English speaking skills via online by using WhatsApp application so that the result of this study can be used by them as an additional source in the purpose of researching a case in the same field.