THE FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' LEVEL OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE (WTC) IN AN ENGLISH CLASS AT A PRIVATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN SURABAYA

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ABSTRACT

This article purposes to find out the level of students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in an English class at a private junior high school in Surabaya, to explain the factors affecting students' level of WTC, and to explore students' attempts or strategies to improve their level of WTC. This article is classified into qualitative research. The subjects of this article are students of junior high. The study focused on students' experiences of the factors and strategies demonstrated by students in class speaking and in front of the class. The data was in the form of the transcription of the interview and observation instrument. The detail information is obtained from interviewing the students. The result shows that the level of students' WTC in an English class was low. The writer also found several factors that affect students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC) using English proved by the observation result and interview result, they are self-confidence, communicative competence, learning anxiety, students' motivation, personality, teacher role, classroom atmosphere, interlocutor, the effect of topics, the effect of task types. It is appropriate that students who have poor self-confidence, lack communicative competence, lack the motivation to speak, and have n elevated level of anxiety are included in the category of having a low level of students' willingness to communicate. The most of students said that self-confidence affected their level of WTC. The writer found that the students have a variety of strategies such as using technology in language learning and following conversation club. Both of them showed their enthusiasm to speak in the classroom and did all the assignments in the Hybrid learning system. Combining technology and outside activity can improve the student' WTC.

KEYWORDS: WTC, Level of WTC, Factors of WTC, Students' Strategies

INTRODUCTION

A Language is a communication tool used to convey information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another. In other words, language is necessary to establish good communication with others. As a global language, English is the most demanded language in the era of globalization. This can be seen from the influence of English in several fields such as education, science, technology, finance, industry, tourism, and transportation (Jianing, cited in Agustina 2018). As a foreign language,

English is taught as a compulsory subject in secondary schools in Indonesia. The goal of the process of teaching and learning English is to help students understand and produce English.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is one of the important factors in communication (Cao & Wei, 2019). The WTC concept aims to understand why some people are more willing to speak their mother tongue. Likewise, Ningsih, Narahara, and Mulyono (2018) argue that communicative readiness is a condition in which someone is willing to communicate without constraints or burdens. From some of the definitions of WTC above, it can be concluded that WTC is a condition of the will to communicate. In other words, WTC plays an important role in language learning, especially in speaking classes where students must use the language.

Recent empirical studies on WTC in English classrooms have also been studied in Indonesia. Ningsih, Narahara, and Mulyono (2018) found that high school students are more willing to communicate if they feel necessary and feel comfortable communicating. Subekti (2019) shows that learners show a high level of WTC because they have good communication skills and an average communication level. Idzni and Setiawan (2021) show that the students had a low level of willingness to communicate, there were four factors influencing students to become reluctant to communicate (self-confidence, anxiety, motivation, students' personalities, and situational variables), and three strategies that the teachers employed to encourage students to be willing to communicate in speaking class such as playing games, using technology, and providing a variety of interactional activities. These studies were conducted in the context of face-to-face learning, as the world is currently grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, in which teaching and learning are done by hybrid learning.

The new normal education application forces us to adapt learning methods according to the current digital-based conditions, in which we must combine face-to-face learning methods class and e-learning or what we usually called it as hybrid learning. Offline learning in the new normal era is applied in a limited way with only a 5a 0% student ratio and the rest uses other synchronous or asynchronous learning media, for instance, Whatsapp, google classroom, telegram, and other LMS. There was a shift system so that there are no large gatherings between students in one class, then arrange study hours between the morning and afternoon shifts so that there were no waves of students going home and coming to school at the same time. The government allows face-to-face learning in schools located in the green zone but with a limited number of students and study time. These limitations of space and time require the creativity and innovation of lecturers to implement strategies and learning media that are in line with the current situation. The combined learning between face-to-face and online (hybrid) is an alternative in the new normal era (Othashewski, et.al:108, 2017).

There are some similarities and differences between the previous studies above with this article. The similarity between this article and other articles is the same on the topic of students' willingness to communicate. While the differences lie in the subject of research. The writer will not only focus on

students' speaking skills but also on how the students attempt to improve their willingness to communicate by using hybrid learning

Based on the explanation above, the writer finally wants to know the students' level of WTC, factors, and strategies to improve their willingness to communicate in an English class at a private junior high school in Surabaya.

METHOD

This article is classified into qualitative research. Qualitative research attempts to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participant's viewpoint (Merriam and Granier, 2019:6). The writer can approach the phenomena from an interpretive, critical, or postmodern perspective. It does not deal with the testing of a theory or hypothesis, but it deals with an understanding of the theory. This article is classified into basic interpretive research. It exemplifies all characteristics of qualitative research. The writer is interested in understanding how participants make meaning in a situation or phenomenon. This meaning is mediated through the writer as an instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive.

The subjects of this article are students of junior high. The study focused on students' experiences of the factors and strategies demonstrated by students in class speaking and in front of the class. The writer chooses the participants because of using a full-day school system for improving speaking ability. The problem can be identified not all students can communicate in English when they speak in class. In practice, students are less and less confident in communicating in English. Students have difficulty initiating conversations in English in class. Students still have difficulty answering the teacher's questions in English during the conversation. The teacher should remind the students to use English when the conversation is in the English learning process.

The data of this article were taken from the phenomenon or subject of the research. The data was analyzed and interpreted because it is still in the raw information form. The data was in the form of the transcription of the interview and observation instrument. The detail information is obtained from interviewing the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the observation, it is apparent that qualitative data gave results data findings in terms of recording students' willingness to communicate in English in speaking class in hybrid learning. Firstly, the majority of students or participants believed they have self-confidence when communicating in English. The other data indicated that they were also insecure while speaking English since they did not know how to pronounce English words and, on average, did not know English vocabulary. Furthermore, when their English teacher asked them a question in English, they

became anxious. This data can be classified into four categories. First, students had low levels of confidence. Second students had high levels of anxiety. Third students had low levels of communicative competence; fourth, students had moderate motivation. After classifying students into four categories, it is clear that the students had a low level of willingness to communicate.

Tin the second RQ, the writer uses the interview to know the factors affecting students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC). The use of interviews in qualitative research has the advantage of providing useful information when the writer cannot directly observe the participants. Besides, the writer can get detailed personal information. The writer asked the student several questions about how students are willing to communicate (WTC) at that level. There were 10 questions that the writer asked the student. It can be seen in the dialog from one of the respondents below:

1). **Question**: *Apakah kamu merasa percaya diri ketika berbicara menggunakan Bahasa Inggris?*
   Answer: *ya, meskipun sedikit belepotan dalam pengucapannya*

2). **Question**: *Apakah pernah merasa cemas saat pelajaran Bahasa Inggris? Apa alasannya?*
   Answer: *ada, seperti lupa kosa kata apa yang akan digunakan*

3). **Question**: *Apakah kamu merasa memiliki kemampuan lebih daripada teman – temanmu yang lain ketika berbicara Bahasa Inggris?*
   Answer: *sedikit sih, tapi masih ada yang lebih bagus dari saya*

4). **Question**: *Apakah kamu mempunyai motivasi dari diri sendiri untuk memberanikan diri dalam berbicara menggunakan Bahasa inggris?*
   Answer: *pastinya ada*

5). **Question**: *Apakah kamu memiliki kemauan untuk berbicara Bahasa Ingrris di dalam kelas?*
   Answer: *sedikit, tapi kalau ditanya guru pasti berusaha untuk menjawabnya*

6). **Question**: *Apakah pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di kelas difokuskan pada kemampuan berbicara?*
   Answer: *tidak hanya berbicara saja, akan tetapi membaca, kosa kata dll*

7). **Question**: *Apakah pemilihan topik mempengaruhi kamu untuk berbicara Bahasa Inggris?*
   Answer: *pastiya, kalau tidak memahami topiknya akan sulit untuk berkomunikasi*

8). **Question**: *Apakah kamu memahami apa yang disampaikan oleh Guru Bahasa Inggris ketika pembelajaran di kelas?*
   Answer: *sedikit memahami, kalau ada kesulitan ya pasti bertanya*

9). **Question**: *Apakah kamu menikmati suasana kelas ketika mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris?*
   Answer: *ya, apalagi sudah mulai offline ya, kalau dulu online sedikit merasa bosan*

10). **Question**: *Apakah kamu berusaha untuk memulai berbicara Bahasa Inggris dengan teman sekelasmu ketika kelas Bahasa Inggris berlangsung?*
   Answer: *ya*

Based on the interview above, the writer found several factors that affect students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC) using English proved by the observation result and interview result, they are self-confidence, communicative competence, learning anxiety, students' motivation, personality, teacher role, classroom atmosphere, interlocutor, the effect of topics, effect of task types.

Most students said that self-confidence affected their willingness to communicate in English. These factors also back to the personality of the students. Then, the students with good communicative competence could make them more confident to talk in English than the students with less communicative competence. The student's anxiety to talk in English became the next factor that influenced the students' willingness. It was needed habitual speaking in English to decrease the students' anxiety. The student's motivation defines as students trying to acquire the language because of the desire to do. It also depends on the students themselves. The students with high motivation had easier learning and practicing communicating in English than the students with no motivation from themselves. Personality is an important factor that contributes to their willingness to communicate. It can be seen from their desire to speak in English.

Students should be aware of their willingness to communicate. Many factors make students not want to communicate, such as less motivation, less confidence, less practice in English, shyness, etc. Not only teachers, but students should also have strategies to improve their level of willingness to communicate (WTC). It can be seen in the dialog below:

Question : *Bagaimana usaha kamu untuk meningkatkan dan memotivasi diri untuk bisa berbicara dalam Bahasa Inggris?*

Answer : Responden 1: *biasanya sih mendengarkan percakapan bahasa Inggris dari televisi dan media lainnya seperti Youtube. Kalau motivasi diri ada dan biasanya ditambahkan sama motivasi dari guru kami pada pelajaran, misalkan membentuk teamwork untuk mengerjakan dialog yang diberikan oleh guru kami.*
Responden 2 (Samuel Simbolon): *playing word game with another student sih, kadang – kadang bermain tebak kata gitu, khan bisa memperkaya vocabulary kita.*

Based on the interview above, the writer found that the students have a variety of strategies to improve their level of willingness to communicate (WTC) such as using technology in language learning and following conversation club. Both of them showed enthusiasm to speak in the classroom and did all the assignments.

DISCUSSION

The first RQ is the level of students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in an English class at a private junior high school in Surabaya. The majority of students or participants believed they have self-confidence when communicating in English. The other data indicated that they were also insecure

while speaking English since they did not know how to pronounce English words and, on average, did not know English vocabulary. Furthermore, when their English teacher asked them a question in English, they became anxious. This data can be classified into four categories. First, students had low levels of confidence. Second students had high levels of anxiety. Third students had low levels of communicative competence; fourth, students had moderate motivation. After classifying students into four categories, it is clear that the students had a low level of willingness to communicate.

Confidence has many influences on students' willingness to communicate. For example, anxiety and proficiency were recognized as the strongest predictors of WTC among the individual variables, and they had a strong influence on students' L2 WTC (Tuyen, Thị, & Loan, 2019: 253). Based on the previous study Idzni and Setiawan (2021) find that the students had a low level of willingness to communicate, there were four factors influencing students to become reluctant to communicate (self-confidence, anxiety, motivation, students' personalities, and situational variables)

The writer found several factors that affect students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC) using English that proved by the observation result and interview result, are self-confidence, communicative competence, learning anxiety, students' motivation, personality, teacher role, classroom atmosphere, interlocutor, the effect of topics, the effect of task types. It is appropriate that students who have poor self-confidence, lack of communicative competence, lack of motivation to speak, and an elevated level of anxiety are included in the category of having a low level of students' willingness to communicate

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The teacher role means the teacher's behavior involves actions in class including giving clear explanations, feedback, or encouragement and providing opportunities for students to talk. The classroom atmosphere is defined as the emotion, mood, or situation created and enjoyed by the class group, which shows the involvement and participation of all members of the class. The students that actively talked in English gave a good impact on others students to talk in English too. The interlocutor influenced the students to speak in English. The students wanted to talk in English if their interlocutor have the same perception and proficiency as them. The effect of topics meant that the familiar topic was more interesting for the students. So, the students wanted to speak in English. The effect of task types Tasks are defined as the learning activities organized in a class targeted at either structural knowledge or communicative ability. Here, the students were helped with the oral task by the teacher

to make them more habitual with English. In addition, the written task also helped the students to repair their grammar and added new vocabulary.

The descriptions above are in line with the statement of Tuyen, Thị, & Loan (2019: 253) that explained two of the variables that are considered to have influences on students' WTC. They are psychological variables and situational variables. The psychological variable consisted of self-confidence, communicative competence, learning anxiety, students' motivation, and personality. Meanwhile, the situational variable consisted of the teacher's role, classroom atmosphere, interlocutor, the effect of topics, and the effect of task types.

Furthermore, according to the interview result, the writer found some strategies that were applied by the teacher to enhance the students' willingness to communicate. That were remembering the students to speak in English, applying for the special program from the bilingual program, making group projects, keeping humorous and solidarity with the students, giving exciting methods to the students, giving rewards and punishment to the students, making abbreviation to make it easy remembering, applying English hours, making event meet and greet with a native speaker, following event bilingual students show.

According to Vongsila (2016: 6), there are ten teacher's strategies to encourage students' willingness to communicate: group size, cultural background, speaking ability, classroom atmosphere, selecting task type, reducing shyness, self-confidence, familiarity with interlocutor, reducing anxiety, topic familiarity. The teacher applied these strategies in the class with some modified strategies from her, but the aim of the strategies was the same, that is to make the students more willing to communicate in English.

The writer found that the students have a variety of strategies to improve their level of willingness to communicate (WTC) such as using technology in language learning and following conversation club. Both of them showed their enthusiasm to speak in the classroom and did all the assignments in the Hybrid learning system. Combining technology and outside activity can improve the student' WTC.

CONCLUSION

After describing and analyzing the data, the writer had conclusions about the level of students' willingness to communicate (WTC) in an English class at a private junior high school in Surabaya. the students had a low level of willingness to communicate. The writer also found several factors that affect students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC) using English that proved by the observation result and interview result, are self-confidence, communicative competence, learning anxiety, students' motivation, personality, teacher role, classroom atmosphere, interlocutor, the effect of topics, the effect of task types. It is appropriate that students with poor self-confidence, lack of communicative competence, lack of motivation to speak, and an elevated level of anxiety are included in the category of having a low level of willingness to communicate. Most students said that self-confidence affected their willingness to communicate in English. The writer found that the students have a variety of strategies to improve their level of willingness to communicate (WTC) such as using

technology in language learning and following conversation club. Both of them showed their enthusiasm to speak in the classroom and did all the assignments in the Hybrid learning system. Combining technology and outside activity can improve the student' WTC.

The writer gives suggestions related to the article and then hopes these suggestions are useful for teachers, institutions, and other writers. The writer hopes that teachers can develop strategies to improve the student's willingness to communicate (WTC) in an English class. After finding what factors affect students' level of willingness to communicate (WTC), the teacher can understand difficult factors to communicate in English. So, the teacher can create new strategies to make the students more willing to communicate in English. The writer hopes that the school can provide the best services for teachers and students, such as adding facilities in the classroom that increase students' interest in communicating in English. Then it is necessary to develop or implement technology to improve the English communication skills of teachers and students. The writer recommends another writer to analyze other aspects of students' willingness to communicate (WTC). So the article can be continued and developed by other writers because according to the writer, there are still many problems found in the same type of research.

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