

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief description of the research. It covers the background of the study, research questions, purposes, significance, and previous studies.

A. Background

The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected various fields, such as the economy, tourism, health services, and even the educational system. The government must temporarily close the schools and universities, and regular classes cannot be carried out. Teachers and students have been required to conduct online learning. There is a transformation of the system to teach students from a physical to a virtual classroom.

Meanwhile, in communication, social networks have become a normal thing. It is also used, especially, in language learning, for learning collaboratively. Apps for social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and many others, have become immensely popular in the field of communication (Riyanto, 2013). Teachers and students are all linked online in a virtual classroom through communication tools or their devices, such as laptops or smartphones.

Nowadays, WhatsApp is one of the alternative mobile technologies that can be used to support, reinforce, or even provide necessary online instruction by teachers (Kheryadi, 2017). WhatsApp is simple, straightforward, and does not require a huge data quota. Learning took place optimally via WhatsApp accounts, as students and teachers were able to connect and exchange PowerPoint files, Microsoft Word files, JPGs, Voice Notes, videos, and other links to learning resources (Wargadinata, et, al., 2020).

Furthermore, interactions in the classroom and during school days between students and teachers are just part of their contact. Today, students and teachers also connect in many other ways through various easy-to-use digital networks,

using various communication channels, such as school administrative systems, e-mails, pages for a social network, or services for instant messaging (Hershkovitz,et,al., 2019). Although the learning process is carried out online, classroom climate is still essential because it affects students learning (Young, 2014). In a supportive atmosphere or classroom climate, students feel a sense of belonging, trust others, and feel inspired to solve challenges and ask questions (Bucholz,et,al., 2009). When students view the learning environment as positive and encouraging, students will learn better (Dorman,et,al., 2006).

Moreover, one of the significant factors influencing the success or failure of educational management is the school environment or classroom climate (Daily, et, al., 2020). A successful or favourable school environment may provide the school principals, teachers, staff, and students with support or motivation to conduct different activities according to their respective duties and functions (Hadiyanto, 2018). Creating a good classroom climate can be challenging because students often lack motivation; keeping the students engaged and focused in a physical classroom can be difficult, which is further intensified in the virtual setting. Teachers cannot see whether students are involved in the task or distracted by games or distractions at home; teachers cannot walk around the classroom. So, teachers need strategies to overcome and create a good classroom climate. This research investigates teachers' strategies for creating a classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp.

Based on the preliminary observation in one of the junior high schools in Sukabumi, the students were easily getting bored, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic; all of the learning processes were transferred to the smartphone on this research site only using WhatsApp. Learning activities that were initially at school become at home, making students easily get distracted. Also, the frequent use of WhatsApp applications for learning English on this research site makes the students not familiar with their teacher and their friends. Furthermore, several research has been conducted regarding classroom climate and WhatsApp for learning. Muhtadi (2005) conducted a study about the learning process in schools is essential not only to the material being taught or who teaches

it but how the material is taught and how the teacher creates a classroom climate in the learning process. The learning process should create a conducive classroom climate to support the creation of a quality learning process. The reason it was accessible and low technology for distance learning, a study (Kholis, 2020) shows that teachers have made several efforts to simplify teaching and learning, including the use of digital technologies such as WhatsApp, which allows for asynchronous communication with students in any location and at any time. Shapiro (2010) conducted a study which focuses on a favourable social classroom climate that must be established by the teacher for learning to take place. The values, expectations, leadership, and cohesion within the classroom are the four components that must be evaluated before establishing a positive social classroom climate.

Despite the similarity in focus on classroom climate and the use of WhatsApp for teaching, the current research is different from the previous ones. The current research focuses on teachers' strategies to create a classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp and students' responses toward the teachers' strategies. In contrast, the previous studies focus on factors affecting classroom climate and how WhatsApp is used as an application for learning English during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A. Research Questions

From the description of the background of the study above, this research is intended to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the teacher create the classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the teacher's strategies for creating a classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp?

B. Research Purposes

From the research question above, this research aims to obtain the two following purposes:

1. To find out the teacher's strategies for creating a classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp.
2. To find out the students' perceptions of the teacher's strategies for creating a classroom climate in English online learning aided by WhatsApp.

C. Research Significances

This research gives several significance. Theoretically, this research is expected to give comprehensive information about the teacher's strategies to create the classroom climate in online English learning. This research is expected to be used as a reference for further study and increase knowledge about how a good classroom climate can be set up in online learning, especially using WhatsApp, for lecturers, teachers, and students how to create a conducive classroom climate in online learning.

Practically, this research is expected to be a teacher evaluation material for teachers, especially in creating a classroom climate in online English learning. The teachers can improve their teaching styles or methods to become more effective and active through WhatsApp.

D. Conceptual Framework

Teacher's Strategy

Teacher's strategies can be said as the important and the first step to master in teaching English because different kinds of teaching strategies can be used in the classroom. In order to contribute most effectively to student learning, strategies must be carefully chosen. A good strategy in the teaching process will provide a different value to the students. As a result, the teacher must master effective strategies in teaching. Sarode (2018) says that teaching strategies are

methods used to assist students in learning the contents of the desired course and can develop goals that can be met in the future. Teacher's strategy is a broad plan for a lesson or series of lessons that include a structure for desired learner behaviour in terms of instruction goals and a list of methods that will be used to carry out the strategy. In conclusion, teacher's strategies are approaches for assisting students in learning required course information and developing future goals that are attainable. The teacher's strategy identifies the various possible learning methods in order to build the best plan for dealing with the chosen target group.

Classroom Climate

Classroom climate is the condition of the classroom environment in relation to learning activities and also is an atmosphere characterized by a pattern of interaction or communication between teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student (Muhtadi, 2005). Classroom climate is a broad construct consisting of students' feelings about their teacher and friends. It involves the student's impressions of the class's rigour, their relationships with their teacher and class peers, and their participation in the class (Barr, 2016).

According to (Tsukada, 2016), the teacher should look at the following aspects of student growth and consider how each aspect relates to teaching and learning in the classroom environment.

1. Student Development

a. Intellectual Development

They can react differently to course material or a class discussion to form a particular atmosphere in the classroom, depending on where students are in their intellectual development.

b. Social Identity Development

For college-level students, one of the most influential areas of growth is social identity-identification with such social classes and various aspects in which each student sees himself will establish a complex environment in the classroom.

2. Classroom Climate

a. Physical

Physical aspects of the classroom and implementation of the course, such as the type of classroom (e.g., a library, a classroom or a laboratory), layout or arrangement (e.g., students sit in front of the class, students sit in a circle or small group), and instruments (e.g., face-to-face, online).

b. Intellectual

Intellectual elements of the course and class, such as the content of the course, subjects of class conversation, course materials (e.g., textbooks, videos), and the types and levels of expertise and information required to be exhibited by students.

c. Social

The social element of the classroom environment applies to relationships between students (e.g., individualistic vs team-oriented or competitive vs cooperative) and between students and teachers (e.g., students are open or authoritative to the teacher) and the classroom social climate (e.g., casual, formal, democratic, inclusive).

d. Emotional

There are different emotions in the classroom, and emotions will change easily. Students and teachers may have different emotional responses to the materials and class discussions. Such emotions can vary widely from discomfort to comfort, from anger to happiness, from fear to empowerment, from uncertainty to excitement, and everything between and beyond.

WhatsApp for Educational Purposes

WhatsApp is one of the technological tools that has been so popular among teachers and their students. Teachers can create a group in WhatsApp, a type of "simple social network" for the classroom. WhatsApp seems to have advantages over other technological tools used by the educational system, such as low cost, convenience, ease of access, and efficiency (Nuraeni,et.al., 2020).

WhatsApp help provides group communication, cultivate a sense of community and sustain the environment of communication between students and teachers (Yudhiantara, et, al., 2017). A study examined that WhatsApp has enabled simpler and quicker communication between teachers and students. It is possible for students to share and exchange information through WhatsApp features, such as images, audio, videos, and many others. Another advantage of using WhatsApp was how it often helped students actively understand e-learning activities. The alternative way to engaging e-learning courses is WhatsApp, and it motivates students to learn English; it helps students overcome their fear when using a language through discussion on WhatsApp. (Nuraeni,et,al., 2020).

E. Previous Studies

A study conducted by Kholis in (2020) concentrates on describing and investigating the application of WhatsApp in distance language learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the current study focuses on creating a classroom climate in online learning by WhatsApp. The research design of this study was a case study. The questionnaire, interview, and observation were used to collect the data. The researcher chose at least 40 students from the English Education Department and particular English Education lecturers to be responders for the study's subject. This study showed that WhatsApp would support and enable language learning to be more efficient and effective for the reason that it was accessible and had low technology for distance learning. The students were more responsible and enthusiastic in attending the class. Indeed, in reality, it has provided more facilities and satisfaction (Kholis, 2020).

A research conducted by Asmara (2020) focused on teaching English in a virtual classroom using WhatsApp. A qualitative descriptive research method was used to conduct this study. This study included one lecturer and fourteen students enrolled in the Language and Society program. Language in Society was one of the subjects offered to sixth-semester students in the English Language Education department. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires to the fourteen

students and interviewing the lecturer of language in society subject as the host of the class WhatsApp group. The findings displayed that the challenges of learning online using WhatsApp were 1) students' attendance checking, 2) Students' English language skills, and 3) internet connection. The study was conducted to know some challenges of teaching English in a virtual classroom using WhatsApp during COVID-19 (Asmara, 2020). However, this study is different from the study above. However, this study is different from the current study. This study focuses just on teaching English using WhatsApp in online learning, while the current study focuses on finding some strategies for creating a classroom climate in online learning via WhatsApp.

A research by Muhtadi (2005) focused on creating a conducive and quality classroom climate in the learning process. There are several factors that need to be considered in creating a classroom climate, such as 1) student-centred, 2) Student reward, and 3) Providing several learning resources. That study explained that what is important in a learning process is not only the material being taught or who teaches it but also how the material is taught and how the teacher creates a classroom climate in the learning process (Muhtadi, 2005).

A study conducted by Ikhsan (2019) focused on the teacher's strategy for growing a conducive classroom climate. This study uses qualitative research. The participants are the teacher and the headmaster of the school, as well as students in the second grade in elementary school. The data collection was carried out using the method of observation, interviews, and documentation. The study showed that the teacher's strategy in fostering a conducive classroom climate are: 1) seating arrangements, 2) regulating ventilation and light regulation, 3) regulating the storage of goods, 4) creating a clean and beautiful classroom, and 5) increasing self-awareness as a teacher and students (Ikhsan, 2019). However, this study focuses on offline classrooms, while the current study focuses on EFL online learning using WhatsApp during the COVID-19 pandemic.