CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to investigate the small group implementation in EFL classrooms on students' WTC. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study and the definition of the key terms used in this study. In the background of the study, it will show the reason for conducting the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been investigated by researchers for a few decades now (Kruk, 2019). Concerning English as a second language (ESL), the trend of WTC over the last two decades has mainly been focused on the Western context (Fadilah, 2018). Kruk (2019), states that WTC is viewed as the association of a variety of internal factors (e.g. personality, language anxiety, learning style) and external factors (e.g. interlocutors' attitude, teaching methods, techniques). On the other hand, WTC was first introduced by McCroskey & Bear (1985) based on the use of native language in literature. Since the introduction of the WTC concept into the fields of second-language research and pedagogy, scholars and readers have been undertaking and witnessing still-ongoing efforts to understand second-language WTC (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2014).

Likely, in recent years, there has been an increasing interest in investigating the construct of second language willingness to communicate

(Rafiee & Nghneh, 2018). In addition, a recent paper that investigated the concept of WTC has been conducted in Serbia in the context of tertiary education (Resetar, Knezevic, & Topalov, 2018). The term WTC soon became relevant in a foreign language as well as stated by Tavakoli & Narrinabadi (2026) that second language WTC was considered an important component of communicative language teaching.

Furthermore, some studies that investigated WTC also have been conducted in the international context. Jamalifar & Salehi (2017), in their study that investigated WTC, focus on the impact of rehearsal and strategic task planning on Iranian EFL students' L2 willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. The result of the study shows that strategic task planning did not exert an influence on L2 WTC, while task planning was found to significantly improve L2 WTC. Meanwhile, another study by Syed & Kuzborska (2018) also conducted the study of WTC in Pakistan. The result of the study shows that participants' L2 WTC emerged as a result of the complex, dynamic, and nonlinear interaction between contextual, psychological, linguistic, and psychological factors. Moreover, another study that focuses on WTC was also conducted in Japan (Sato, 2017). The study explores a Japanese EFL teacher's WTC, focusing on its fluctuation throughout of a lesson. The result shows that the teacher's WTC both increased and decreased.

However, in the Indonesian context, studies on WTC have also been conducted by some researchers. Fadilah (2018) has investigated factors such as dynamic complex systems and subsystems underlying students' willingness to

communicate (WTC) in the classroom context. The finding reveals that classroom systems such as social and classroom context, linguistics competence, individual differences, and cultural context affect participants' WTC in L2. Besides, Manipuspika (2018) also conducted the same study on WTC but focused on the relationship between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' language anxiety and their willingness to communicate.

The result of the study indicated a strong positive correlation between learners' foreign language classroom anxiety and their willingness to communicate. Thus, the growing body of research has begun to shed light on external variables that affect learners' L2 WTC, such as group size, group dynamics, familiarity with an interlocutor, social support from friends or teachers, topic familiarity and interest, teacher's frequent use of L2, communication mode (e.g. face-to-face vs. online), and international experience (Cao and Philp 2006; Clement, Baker, and MacIntyre 2003; Dewaele and Dewaele 2018; Kang 2014; Kruk 2019; Lee 2018, 2019; MacIntyre et al. 2001; Matsubara 2007; Peng 2019; Peng and Woodrow 2010; Satar and Ozdener 2008).

Regarding the WTC, one of the language learning strategies that can be applied in the classroom to encourage students to communicate in English is small group discussion (Wehrli, 2003). The type of small group discussion that is carried out in the classroom usually consists of 5 to 10 students (Pollock (2011); Wehrli (2003). According to Larson (1997) Small group discussion strategy promotes well-organized forms of discussion among group members who present, study, evaluate and understand ideas- comparable and different ideas about certain

issues Also, the small group discussion strategy is an efficient means of encouraging advance-level opinion, building learner attitudes and improving learning abilities. In addition, some studies that have been conducted still have lacked in terms of students' willingness to communicate especially in small group discussions. Recently, studies about WTC were conducted in one of the Islamic state universities in Southeast Sulawesi. Studies with the focus on teacher's factors engendering students' willingness to speak English in a foreign language have been conducted by Anggraini (2020). Also, another study comes with a new focus on WTC that is situational factors influencing students' willingness to communicate in the speaking classroom (Qamaria, 2021). Finally, based on the two studies above, the researcher found that there is an interesting gap to fill regarding students' willingness to communicate in small group discussion implementation in EFL classrooms.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on students' WTC and investigates the small group discussion implementation in the EFL classroom that gives an effect on students toward their willingness to communicate. This research is conducted in the second semester as an English Education major in one of the Islamic state institutions in Kendari, especially in Speaking Class.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates a question "How is the small group discussion implemented in EFL classroom on students' WTC".

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the small group discussion implementation in the EFL classroom on students' WTC.

1.5 Significant of the Study

This study offers some important insight into many aspects of theoretical and practical benefits. First, the findings of this study can be used as references for those who want to conduct research in analyzing student willingness to communicate in a speaking classroom. Moreover, it can give positive impacts on all levels of academic society.

Second, this study is expected to be beneficial for the teacher to improve the student's willingness to communicate in class, especially in speaking class. Also, this study is expected to give new knowledge that the increase in willingness to communicate should be taken into account by the teachers in their teaching preparation.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

This section aimed to define some terms that are important to know in this study as in the following.

EFL Classroom: This study refers to the educational situation of teaching/learning English as a foreign language. The educational setting is where English is taught to learners whose native language is not English and who are in a country where English is not an official language.

Small Group Discussion: Refers to a group of learning in terms of that made in the EFL classroom with a total number of participants three or four. The group is made in the process of learning in the classroom and is expected to engage students to speak in English actively.

Willingness to communicate: This is the idea that engages students who are willing to communicate in the second language actively look for a chance to communicate. Therefore, this study is defined as EFL learners who are willing to communicate in English in small group discussions.