

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the problem

In this globalization era, I have encountered and experienced a lot of drastic changes occurring all over the world. Globalization is not a new phenomenon, with global ecological changes, an ever more integrated global economy, and other global trends, political activity increasingly takes place at the global level (Globalization, 2005). With that being said, globalization is a relatively not-so a new phenomenon since the Generation Z era in the late 2000s and already there for a long time. These tremendous vicissitudes phenomena continue to establish a modernization that contributes a big role in my daily life activities in everyday world as in technology, internet, and social media. I can reach other people from other countries easily through the connection from globalization itself either remotely or even in a personal situation. With that being said, globalization here has successfully helped me to boost my communication skills to interact with people around the world.

Hence, to communicate with people around the world, I as a human need to use a particular language as a bridging “lingua franca” to enable myself to interact well. English is currently the most important lingua franca of the international world in business, education, technology, entertainment, and many more. According to one of the articles from (Thierry, 2018), he states that “English has achieved prime status by becoming the most widely spoken language in the world – if one disregards proficiency

– ahead of Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. English is spoken in 101 countries, while Arabic is spoken in 60, French in 51, Chinese in 33, and Spanish in 31. From one small island, English has gone on to acquire lingua franca status in international business, worldwide diplomacy, and science.” As the most spoken and produced language around the world, it is more than “enough” for me to realize and see how important to learn English language, especially in this globalization era.

Crystal (as cited in Graddol, 2000) estimates that 85% of international organizations now use English as their working language. This highlights the importance of learning and mastering the English language in order to survive in this globalization era. Now, as a student who is not in the working area yet, I need to improve my English skills way further than before so that I can ensure myself that I can survive in the future. The form of communication that is most used in daily life is conversation. Thus, speaking skill is considered as the main skill of communication (Aamer Qureshi, 2013; Srinivas Rao, 2019). However, to master English language, there are four skills that need to be learned which are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among the four skills in the English language, speaking skills are the most effective one since it plays a major role communication. Nevertheless, it is extremely crucial to master other English skills as well. Reading aids in the natural language acquisition process, in which passive comprehension is transformed into active knowledge. In short, the more I read, the faster my English skills will improve. Meanwhile, writing allows you to organize and refine your ideas, it is also a good way to develop the brain's ability to think in English. Along with reading, writing, and

speaking, listening enhance your capacity and ability to understand and communicate, as well as making the experience of speaking with you more enjoyable for others.

Moreover, as a non-native English speaker, specifically, a student from Indonesia that never went to the United States before or even doing a study abroad program, studying and pursuing the education in the United States in which English is used as the number one language even without entitled as the “National” language, but English in the United States is used as a national language was not an easy thing to do. As a foreigner who are not familiar with the United States yet, there are a lot of differences, from my identity as an Indonesian that has to deal with people who have a completely different culture to a “gap” from the differences that limits the capability of my own skills that can prohibit my improvement in interacting and speaking with the people in the United States, blending with them, especially with the natives and international people.

In this study, I would like to find out my process of facing the differences, gaps, and the role of sociocultural context, language identity, and communicative competence in using English with native speakers and international students in the United States as an Indonesian. I would like to traceback my English competence experiences when interacting with native speakers and international students in real-life situations. I would like to find out whether my interactions native speakers and international students can be beneficial in developing my English competence and communication skills to be better. To interrogate the development of my competence, I would like to reflect to all critical events (Mertova, 2007) I encountered before, during

the exchange program. Shed light by the theory of Language Development by Lev Vygotsky, I would like to explore my efforts and experiences in developing the competence using Bonny Norton's (2010) construct of investment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. What Critical Events happened during my study in the United States?
2. What investments I deployed in developing my English competence?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore and depict the story of an Indonesian Exchange Student in developing English competence in the United States as a non-native English Speaker. In this study, the researcher will identify her own experiences based on the real events that have happened in the United States during her study.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study used two theories to assist the findings in chapter four. The first theory is the theory of Sociocultural in Language Development by Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky believed language plays a crucial role in human cognitive development. Language has a variety of functions, including affecting people's overt conduct as well as influencing their hidden behavior, such as thinking. Language has been defined as a psychological tool that shapes other mental functions while at the same time being socially-shaped itself (Kozulin, 1986).

The second one is Theory of Identity and Language Learning by Bonny Norton (2010). Norton argues that identity which refers to an individual sense to the larger social world plays an important role in learning a second language. Rather than using motivation as the drive for learning a second language, Norton used a construct of “investment” which conceives of the language learner as having a complex identity, changing across time and space, and being reproduced in social interaction.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Language Identity

Language Identity refers to someone’s identification as a speaker of one or more languages which can not be separated to one’s own sociocultural context.

2. Narrative Inquiry

(Clandinin & Connelly 2000) identified a narrative inquiry study as the meaning people give to their experiences.

3. Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is a research method and methodology which uses the researcher's personal experience as the data for their research. (Campbell 2016).

4. Critical Events

Stories feature critical events and are the mechanism by which the most

important occurrences are transmitted to listeners. In this way critical events are communicated across generations and centuries. (Mertova 2007)

5. English Competence

The ability to apply, use, and communicate with English language effectively.

6. Exchange Students

A chance to study in foreign country to improve their English language skills, develop new competencies, or even pick up a new hobby from a different culture. Students who take part in student and youth exchange programs are allowed to meet each other and recognize the culture of the foreign regions that host them in an atmosphere of tolerance and multiculturalism (Haj-yehia & Erez, 2018).

7. Investments

The term “investment” can not only be used in the financial world but is also applicable in language learning and an individual’s identity, investment in learning a language will result the individual to acquire positive returns. Investment is related to an individual's identity, power relations and language learning. (Norton 2010).

1.6 Organization of the Study

Chapter I is the first chapter of this thesis labeled as “Introduction” which consist of Background of the Study, Research Problem, Objective of the

Study, Theoretical Framework, Significance of the Study, Definition of Key Terms, and Organization of the thesis.

Chapter II is the second chapter of this thesis labeled as “Theory Review” which consist of Related theories (Language Development, Identity and Language Learning, Communicative Competence, and Cross-cultural Communication), and Previous studies.

Chapter III is the third chapter of this thesis labeled as “Research Methodology” which consists of Research Design, Data Sources, Data Collections, and Data Analysis.

Chapter IV is the fourth chapter of this thesis labeled as “Findings and Discussion” which consists of My Auto-ethnography, Critical Events: Before Departure, First Month in the United States, Second Month in the United States, Third Month in the United States, Last Month in the Unites States, and Investment I deployed in developing my English Competence: Self-Confidence, Practice in Social Context.

Chapter V is the last chapter of this thesis labeled as “Conclusions and Suggestions” which consists of the conclusions and suggestions of this thesis.