

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Problem

According to Ur (1996, 120), speaking seems intuitively the most important of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). That also applies in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) era. In the AEC era, communication is much needed for the upcoming future. But for some people, especially FL (Foreign Language) learners, are still left behind because they do not know how to communicate well. In addition, speaking is also a great challenge for FL learners. They cannot pointlessly speak without paying attention to several things such as the pronunciation of unfamiliar words, the correct placement of stress and intonation, and the appropriate use of formal and informal expressions. As a result of doing so, their communication skill is still under the standards and specifications.

Outside those problems, FL learners are also very limited with some conditions and situations, especially in the classroom. In the classroom, they only have a limited period of time only for mastering “very-basic” English skills including the components (grammar and a slight portion of pronunciation). Also, the distribution between the four-basic skills is somehow distributed unevenly. Therefore, FL learners cannot optimally develop their speaking skill in the classroom. Instead, they have to develop their speaking skill outside the classroom. Talking about speaking activity outside the classroom, some FL learners literally

cannot make their time in practicing their speaking skill outside the classroom because of several reasons, for example, doing a part-time job, and others.

Fortunately in this digital era, technology has significantly grown since the last decade. It used to be expensive and hard to get, especially for those who are in the middle-low social class. But nowadays, it becomes cheaper and easier to get. It also can be accessed everywhere as long as there is a connection. FL learners can also obtain information and learn something easily only right through their little gadget according to Lorenzo, Dziuban (2006, 2). In other words, technology has affected the education field.

Many educators in the past used conventional way of assessing or practicing students' speaking skill in the classroom. The teacher asked the students to come in front and speak, asked the students to speak with their friends by giving several topics, and so on. Those activities only appeared in the classroom under the teacher's supervision; after the class ended, students would not use English when they were outside. They would only use their native language to ease their communication. In addition, some students are very "active" (talkative) while speaking with their friends. On the other hand, even in the classroom, there are some students who are not able to speak in front of people, even when they speak with their friends. As a result, those actives students tend to dominate the role and leave their friends behind. According to the reasons mentioned beforehand, FL learners' speaking ability is still under the standards. To overcome with those problems, educators need to implement four characteristics to conduct a successful speaking activity. First, learners have to

talk a lot. Second, their participation is evenly distributed. Third, they have high motivation to speak. Lastly, their language has to be understandable (Ur; 1996, 120).

Therefore, teachers need to implement a revolutionary method or way to make the students speak outside the classroom. Instead of conducting speaking activity in the classroom, teachers can also conduct a speaking activity outside the classroom as a variation. They need to connect the idea of using technology and education in the classroom so there is a new communication form between the students and the teacher. Also, by using “modern” communication method, teachers and students can work together to visualize how a “modern” classroom activity should actually function (Carmen Manning, William Brooks, Vanessa Crotteau, Annelise Diedrich, Jessie Moser, and Amanda Zwiefelhofer; 2011, 24).

In the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University (WMCU), more and more lecturers start to use *Schoology™* to keep in touch with their students. It is also used in the speaking class. The lecturers usually use it as a medium to share information, to upload an assignment, to make quizzes, and so on. *Schoology™* can be a solution to overcome the learning process that requires a lot of theories. Students who use *Schoology™* get more additional theories outside the school hours individually, so that the face-to-face meetings to provide the theoretical material can be optimized and replaced with practicum to the student. *Schoology™* also enables the students to practice their speaking skill because the materials are uploaded and the students only do the assignment without being shy or anxious about developing their speaking skill. It also offers a range of

advantages for students to improve their speaking skills in certain areas, especially pronunciation, expressions used, and so on. It helps students develop their skills by giving the students opportunity to explore their own learning style.

Furthermore, the importance of understanding perception is as important as understanding the benefits and advantages offered by using *SchoologyTM* in the classroom. It is important because learners are encouraged to express their perceptions overtly. According to Bulut and Durak (2002, p. 2-3), understanding perception would also allow them to consider why they are participating in certain activities, how these activities help them develop their skills, and what use they can make for academic purposes and outside the classroom. If the things mentioned are not understood, they would not be able to understand why they participate in certain activities, how the activities develop their skills, and the use they can make for academic purposes and outside the classroom. Therefore, it is highly important to understand students' perceptions due to its benefits and exposures offered.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In line with the background of the study, the problem investigated is formulated as the following research problem:

⇒ What are the perceptions of Speaking students of the English Department towards the speaking activity done through *SchoologyTM*, especially on the user experience perspectives?

1.3. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to find out the Speaking B students' perceptions towards the speaking activity done through *Schoology*TM. In order to accomplish the main objective, some sub-objectives need to be generated:

- To find out the students' perceptions towards speaking activity done through *Schoology*TM, especially Speaking B students.
- To identify the benefits of using *Schoology*TM.
- To identify the limitations of using *Schoology*TM.
- To identify the difficulties in using *Schoology*TM in and students' perspectives.
- To evaluate the benefits, limitations and difficulties in using *Schoology*TM.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

In this study, relevant theories are used to strengthen the topic discussed. The theories are served as the figure below:

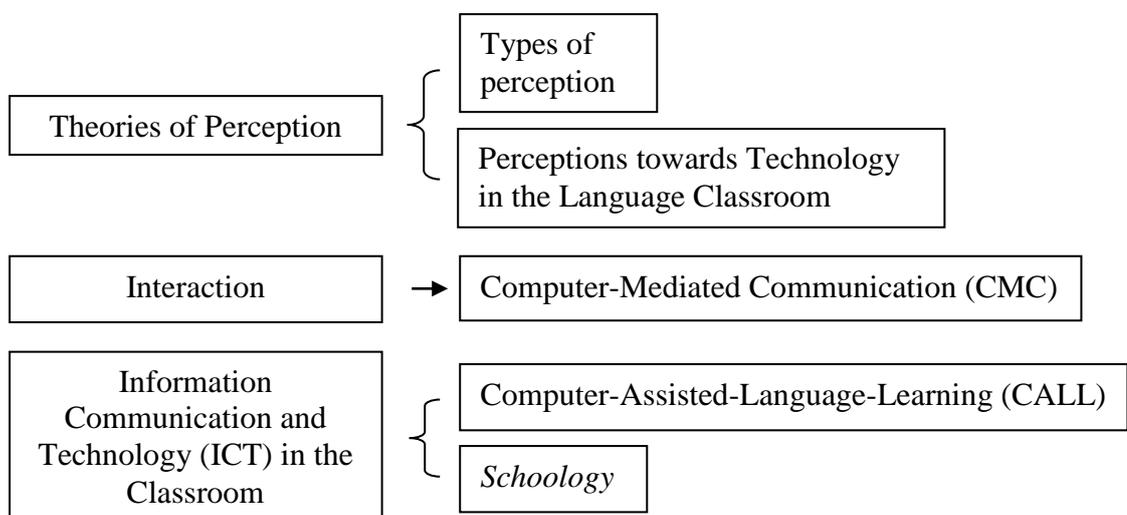


Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework

As stated in **Figure 1.1, theories of perception** serve as the first theory of this study. Then, it is extended to the **types of perception and perceptions towards technology in the language classroom.**

The second theory covers the interaction involved in speaking class. Then, it is also extended to the theory of **Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC).**

The last theory covers the **Information, Communication, and Technology in the classroom (ICT).** It branches out to **Computer-Assisted-Language-Learning (CALL)** and a brief description of *SchoolologyTM*. To clarify, the theory of Computer-Assisted-Language-Learning (CALL) is used for analyzing the result of the data obtained in the discussion and generating the suggestion and conclusions for further study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will contribute to the benefits of education community, especially teachers, considering that *SchoolologyTM* can be used to introduce a new way of conducting a new teaching-learning activity. It also applies for conducting a distant-learning activity since it can be accessed everywhere as long as their devices are connected to the Internet. Teachers will be guided to utilize *SchoolologyTM* as a tool for conducting a new teaching-learning style and developing the students' English skills, especially on Speaking. For other researchers, this study can be developed more for further studies.

1.6. Assumptions

The present study is based upon the following assumptions:

1. The students have language components and skills that are sufficient to develop their speaking skill and other types of speaking activity.
2. The students use *SchoolologyTM* as a speaking activity as required in the course.
3. The students get speaking activity on *SchoolologyTM*.
4. The students pass the course pre-requisite/requirements for Speaking B.

1.7. Limitation and Scope

This study will only be focusing on Speaking B Students (from the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University) who are taught using *SchoolologyTM* by Teacher X and those who have passed the subject using *SchoolologyTM*. Lastly, this study will also be focusing on their perceptions on the speaking activity and *SchoolologyTM* itself.

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding that might happen to the readers, the writer finds it necessary to define the key terms used in this study. The key terms to be defined are as follows:

1. **Perception:** different learning goals and expectations that may affect learners' willingness to participate in oral activities. (Le'ger, 2009, p: 158)
2. **Oral speaking skill:** the most important skill that is used for communicating with other people. (Ur, 1996, p: 120)
3. **Technology:** place where learners can obtain information and learn easily. (Lorenzo, Dziuban, 2006, p: 2)
4. **SchoologyTM:** a social media-education based platform that tries to improve learning through better discussion, group studies, and access to curriculum and additional contents provided by instructors. (Biswas, 2013, p: 187)

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, definition of key terms, and organization of the thesis. Chapter II presents the review of related literature which is relevant to this study. Chapter III deals with research method which consists of nature of the study, participants of the study, research instrument, procedure of data collection, and procedure of data analysis. Chapter IV serves the findings and discussions of the study. Chapter V provides conclusion and suggestions.