

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Increasing globalization today has a major impact on all aspects of life, one of which is the field of education. According to (Wende, 2017; Mitra & Borza, 2015) higher education has undergone significant changes due to internationalization. Internationalization has a great influence on higher education, especially among the students themselves, so communication interactions have become increasingly important. One form of interaction is speaking between domestic students and foreign students. (Lehto et al., 2014) stated in their research that the absence of opportunities for exchanges with others and the perception of students not having sufficient interactional skills to engage comfortably in intercultural interactions, cause anxiety or uncertainty. The lack of communication interactions between undergraduate EFL students is a negative impact caused by the internationalization of universities. This phenomenon is still common in universities that accept overseas students studying at domestic universities. Previous research conducted by (Fariha, 2024) found that EFL students often struggle to understand differences in communication styles and norms, communication barriers, power dynamics, and strategies to improve communication and mutual understanding. Additionally, research by (Park et al., 2017) highlighted that accents can significantly affect international students ability to communicate effectively with those around them. And many studies have found that speaking English is not easy for language learners (Abrar et al., 2022; Chiu, 2019; Sayuri, 2016). So there are many complexities faced by foreign language learners in having communicative competence. Because they are often only required to develop various types of knowledge such as: grammar, vocabulary, multi-word units, phonology, pragmatics, types of genres and purposes of speech acts, and characteristics of spoken language. In developing the ability to engage in the oral production of foreign languages. This is also in line with (Pawlak, 2018) statement that language learners must also use the language in real-time under considerable time pressure to achieve their communicative goals. According to (Kosar & Bedir, 2014), to help students develop their speaking skills, teachers are expected to organize speaking strategies into the flow of their courses, which can create an atmosphere to encourage them to strive harder. Through the above

studies that address the challenges of speaking interactions using English, some studies focus on the experiences of international students in English-speaking countries. Not many studies have specifically explored the experiences of undergraduate EFL students in interacting with international students in Indonesia, particularly in Jambi. In addition, previous studies have mostly identified communication barriers but are still limited in discussing the communication strategies used by EFL students to overcome these barriers. Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap. Where language learners must find effective ways to communicate their thoughts in English. The goal is for the message to be understood well, and effective ways that help them communicate despite these shortcomings can be referred to as communication strategies. Jambi University is a university that also has students from various countries, so this phenomenon can occur at Jambi University. It is important to understand the challenges faced by undergraduate English education students in communicating with international students in spoken English. Using a qualitative approach, this study aims to identify various communication challenges faced by undergraduate English education students at the University of Jambi in speaking English and to explore in depth the communication strategies used by undergraduate English education students in facing these challenges. Through this research, it is hoped that it can help improve the quality of communication interactions between students and create a more inclusive learning environment.

This research is entitled “English Speaking Challenges And Communication Strategies Of Efl Students In Interactions With International Students At Jambi University”. The relevance of this topic remains high as international student exchange continues to occur. Students who learn English as a foreign language are called EFL students and are students whose primary language is not English. The participants in the study were undergraduate EFL students from within the country, namely Indonesia. It is important to understand cultural differences when communicating with people who have different cultures. In the context of communication interaction, of course, differences in language style, word usage, and educational background can be a major obstacle in communication. The researcher hopes that the findings of this study can be useful for the world of education and also for readers.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background described above, the researcher formulated the following research questions:

1. What challenges do EFL undergraduate students face when speaking English with international students?
2. What communication strategies do they use, and which ones are most frequently used to overcome these challenges?

1.3 Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions above, there are two research objectives as follows:

1. To explore the challenges that EFL undergraduate students face in speaking interactions with international students.
2. To identify the types of communication strategies they use, and to examine which ones are most commonly employed to overcome the challenges?

1.4 Limitation of the Research

This study is limited to two things. First, the participants of this study are students at the University of Jambi in the fourth semester who are studying with English education majors. Second, the interaction communication in this study only focused on classroom interaction between EFL undergraduate students and international students studying at Jambi University.

1.5 Significance of the Research

The theoretical benefit of this study is to examine and enrich existing theories of communication strategies by verifying their relevance in intercultural EFL contexts and offering possible extensions based on the findings. In addition, the Practical Benefit of this study is to help EFL undergraduate students of English Language Education later find concrete solutions to overcoming challenges in communicating with international students in the campus environment by exploring various effective communication strategies that can be used. This research can also be the basis for designing programs or policies that can improve the communication skills of EFL undergraduate students of English Language Education in interacting with international students.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

To clarify the terms used in this research, the researcher provides the definition below:

1. Communicative interaction refers to the various ways in which individuals express their needs and desires, transfer information, strengthen social bonds, and comply with social ethics through communication (Assistive Technology Book, Fourth Edition, 2015). In the interaction process, there are actions and reactions that occur between people in a social context, both verbally and non-verbally. However, the interaction in this study is more specific, namely speaking.
2. Language is a tool used by humans as a medium to convey (communicate) thoughts, ideas, feelings, and information (nasution et al., 2022). Language can be spoken, written, or used as a gesture, and consists of words, grammar, and structures that help people interact with each other.
3. EFL stands for (English as a Foreign Language) this term is usually used to refer to students who learn English as a foreign language which means the student lives in a country where the main language is not English so it is not used in everyday life. (Iwai, 2011) defined EFL refers to those who learn English in non-English speaking countries. Example, Japanese people who learn English in their country are EFL learners.
4. International students are students who study abroad for the long term. Quoted from CLRN (California Learning Resource Network), international students are participants in formal overseas study programs, which generally involve reciprocal agreements between institutions for academic exchanges lasting one semester (or longer). In this study, international students are those who leave their home country to pursue undergraduate education at Jambi University.
5. Challenges are difficulties encountered by EFL students of English education when communicating using English, so challenges must be faced or overcome with effort and several strategies to be able to overcome any difficulties in a particular process/condition.
6. Strategy is something that is designed to achieve a certain goal. Usually, strategies are used to deal with something difficult or challenging in the process of achieving something. As in this research, communication strategies are used by EFL students to face every challenge that exists at Jambi University.