

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The capability to communicate is one of the most important skills for human beings in social life, as people need to communicate to convey their ideas, feelings and needs (Bialystok 1990). People take part in many communicative events for interaction, information exchange, situation management and mental-state reading or influencing (Rickheit & Strohner 2008). Bashir and Ashiq (2011) explain communication as the process of “hearing or reading and responding to the spoken or written words” (36). Moreover, communication is defined as “the process by which people exchange information or express their thoughts and feelings” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1976). Therefore, communication can be regarded as a social tool used by people to maintain their everyday lives (Savignon 2005). Having a great ability to communicate with others enable people to understand the underlying meaning of messages and interpret non-verbal behaviors of their interlocutors. As communication happens in every situation, the classroom communication especially in foreign language classroom is very much needed to ensure effective communication in a language classroom.

The main goal of a language learning classroom is to enable effective communication both inside and outside a classroom. Actively participating in any kind of classroom activity is very much needed in the classroom to reach the success of each material being taught. However, enabling students to actively participate in the classroom would be even harder when students do not have the audacity to be active or effortless in a language classroom. Communication in the classroom is very much needed to enable students to understand the whole material and, most importantly to enable students to apply the knowledge they get throughout the learning process. Communicating effectively in a foreign language becomes a more important skill for people to meet the requirements of today’s world since as a result of globalization cultural diversity has come into prominence by changing societies

into multi-lingual settings, which increases the significance of students' ability to communicate interculturally (Byram 1997). In that vein, learning English as a foreign language becomes an important issue across the globe, in the same way, the main aim of learning a foreign language in educational contexts is to learn how to speak that language effectively (Saville-Troike 2003) As an additional language in Indonesia, English is rarely used in English classroom activities. Students tend to communicate by using their mother tongue instead of using the language being taught. Some students are very enthusiastic about delivering, sharing, and expressing their ideas using English when they already have a decent English knowledge that enables them to communicate in English. It is an undeniable fact that students learn to speak the target language through speaking (Savignon 2005). Therefore, students should have the motivation to speak in the classroom and having a desire to communicate becomes a crucial factor affecting students' success in language learning (Kang 2005). Students' active participation thus comes into play in the learning process, but not all students are able to engage in communication actively during the lesson, so they vary from each other in terms of communication behaviors (Gałajda 2017).

Unwillingness to communicate is a predisposition representing a chronic tendency to avoid and/ or devalue oral communication (Pearson et al., 2013, p. 219). Burgoon (1976) as cited in Liu and Jackson (2008, p. 71) argued that "individuals with communication reticence exhibit the predisposition of unwillingness to communicate," which stems from a variety of causes, such as apprehension, low self-esteem, lack of communicative competence, anomie, alienation, and introversion. Willingness and unwillingness to communicate in a foreign language (FL) or a second language (L2) classroom have become interesting issues for foreign and second language learning and teaching (Macintyre, 2007; Ningsih et al, 2018; Khany, Nejad, 2016; Liu, Jackson, 2008; Fukuta, 2017; Riasati, 2012; Peng, 2012; Peng, 2013; Barjesteh et al., 2012; Nazari, Allahyar, 2012; Macintyre et al., 2011; Zarrinabadi, Abdi, 2011; Mirsane, Khabiri, 2016; Oz, 2014; & Fu et al, 2012). Willingness and unwillingness to communicate in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom have been issues for foreign language teachers and

learners (e.g. Amiryousefi, 2016; Cao, 2010; Goldoust, 2017; Peng, 2012; Zarrinabadi, 2014; Zarrinabadi, Ketabi & Abdi, 2014) because they affect students' FL learning and achievement. Peng (2012) states that student participation and successful classroom interaction may primarily rely on the degree of students' willingness or unwillingness to use the target language for communication. Several authors have identified contributing factors to WTC. The terms of unwillingness to communicate arise in the field of second language acquisition. Unwillingness induces classroom silence, which is an obstacle to acquiring the target language in a classroom, and results from avoidance of communication (Harumi as cited in Fukuta, 2017, p. 2). McCroskey (1977) as cited in Kelly (1982, p. 99) reported that reticence is the most global construct, that unwillingness to communicate is essentially similar to reticence, that communication apprehension is subsumed by reticence and unwillingness to communicate, and that shyness is basically the same as communication apprehension. Unwillingness to communicate happens a lot during English classroom sessions, even when the students have the ability to understand what is being taught in English it is still hard for them to have the courage to communicate with either the teacher or students in English. Zarrinabadi et al. (2014) for example found that students reported difficulties in practising their L2 knowledge due to an uncomfortable classroom climate, the unfamiliar topic under discussion, group size and even that interlocutors did not support them in communicating in the target language. Furthermore, Cao (2010) identified a few factors that contributed to WTC, including students' cultural background, shyness, their troublesome partner, or all combination of these factors in a classroom situation. Willingly to communicate in English in a language classroom has never been easy for Indonesian students even though they have been taught with English for years.

Some students are very enthusiastic in delivering, sharing, and expressing their ideas using English when they already have a decent English knowledge that enables them to communicate in English. While most of the students are most likely demonstrating their unwillingness to communicate due to several reasons. Pakpahan, Ikhsanudin, & Sada (2017) stated that here are several major factors that affected

participants unwillingness to communicate in campus were linguistic factors (e.g. English grammar knowledge, lack of vocabulary, improper pronunciation, and another sort of things), psycholinguistic factors (e.g. feeling a bit shy of making mistakes, and feeling uneasy of being judged as “showing-off” person), socio-cultural factors (e.g. students in general prefer to talk in their mother tongue), and institutional factors (e.g. no clear strict rules, lecturers’ teaching style, inappropriate way of criticizing students’ mistakes, inconsistency in speaking English).

As a mandatory subject at school, English has been taught through elementary years to senior high years which means that students should be able to communicate in the target language in an English classroom. However, reality has shown that it is very hard for students to embrace communication in the English classroom using English. Most students are still using their mother tongue in English class even when they already received English for almost six years. It is still questionable whether the six years of learning English had marked a good outcome, especially in communicating with others using the target language in an English classroom. This study aims to discover what are the major factors that affect students’ unwillingness to communicate even when they are already receiving 6 years or more in English. As there are many factors that might contribute to the unwillingness to communicate this study will only focus on the major factors that generally support students’ unwillingness to communicate. This study will put more attention and focus to high school students’ performance in an English classroom activity. This study will focus in discovering the factors to give positive input for both teacher and students in the classroom to reflect the whole factors that affected students’ unwillingness to study. These inputs perhaps will be a means of evaluation for both teacher and students to know the factors to help students to willingly communicate in an English class.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is going to conduct a study entitled “**Factors Affecting EFL High School Learners’ Unwillingness to Communicate**”. The writer intends to investigate the underlying factors of students’ unwillingness to communicate especially in secondary level students of SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen in the academic year 2021/2022.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the background provided by the writer above, the writer will answer the question, “what are the factors that affecting the unwillingness of the eleventh grade of SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen to communicate in classroom activities?”

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to find out factors affecting the unwillingness of the eleventh grade of SMA Santo Arnoldus Janssen to communicate in classroom activities.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Four significances expected from this study are:

1. For the Lecturers and Teachers

This study will provide information about the factors affecting senior high school students’ unwillingness to communicate in classroom activities which will give positive inputs for both parties on why students are most likely to be unwilling in communicating using English in classroom activities. A better understanding on the reasons why senior high school students is unwilling to communicate in English during an English class can help teachers to find a proper teaching method and technique which is suitable to the curriculum but also enable the students to be willing to communicate using English in an English class. The writer also expects that by reading these writing, teachers and lecturer will have a better perspective on how to manage the class by understanding the several reasons that courage the students’ unwillingness to communicate. This new perspective of both parties might help them as means of evaluation to shape themselves in teaching. Therefore, based on the factors affecting students’ unwillingness to communicate teachers and lecturers are able to understand students’ situations and work on them together with students to create a more acceptable and enjoyable class environment. This study also will

provide more detailed kinds of factors of students' unwillingness to communicate whether it is affective factors, environmental factors, or teacher-related factors that affects students' unwillingness to communicate.

2. For Students

This study will give students a great understanding of three major factors, which consists of affective factors, environmental factors, and teacher-related factors that influence their unwillingness to communicate. This will be helpful for them to measure how could these factors affect their ability in communicating negatively and how these factors affects their performance in an English class. The writer expects that the students are able to eliminate those kinds of factors to be able to have effective English class communication in the future.

3. For all the Readers

The findings of this study will help the readers in general as a reference to conduct another research about classroom communication in the near future, and also it is expected to enrich readers' knowledge on the factors affecting students' unwillingness to communicate especially in classroom activities.

4. For the Writer

This study is really beneficial for the writer because during the process of writing this paper, the writer could learn many things regarding factors affecting students' unwillingness to communicate and how could these kind of factors affect the students in upholding an effective communication inside an English class. It will also help the writers to understand in depth ideas of unwillingness of communication proposed by the experts based on their studies and its comparison to nowadays situation.

