CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research, the formulation of the research problem, the objectives of the research, significance of the research, research hypothesis, scope and limitation of the research, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of The Research

Social presence has been indicated as a significant factor that affect a learner's satisfaction with online learning in which computer-mediated communication is used. Social presence, or "the degree to which participants are able to project themselves affectively within a medium" (Garrison,1997, p. 6), affects student satisfaction and learning (Newberry, 2001). Social presence is also a "significant factor in improving instructional effectiveness" (Tu, 2000, p. 1663). So & Brush (2008) as well as Richardson & Swan (2003) stated that social presence has a powerful effect on the process of learning, enhancing student's performance and the satisfaction they get both from their tutor and the course. In addition, learners' perceptions of social presence can guess perceived learning; learners who perceived a high social presence received high scores for perceived learning (Richardson & Swan, 2003). Social presence also has an effect on learners' enjoyment and the quality of the learning experience (Mansour, El-Said, & Bennett, 2010).

Social presence has been proven to be of particular importance in the context of online learning. Studies finished on the construct of social presence at the higher level have confirmed some interesting findings (e.g. J. Crim & Reio, Jr, 2006; R.M. Mackey & L. Freyberg, 2010; Alsadoon, 2018; Caspi and Blau, 2008; Almashi and Zhu, 2018; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Angelaki & Mavroidis, 2013; Hayashi, et. al, 2004). Firstly, J. Crim & Reio, Jr (2006) concluded a heightened need for investigating the relationship between social presence and perceived learning and satisfaction as well as retention in online courses. Connecting social presence into online courses might drive better learning. Further research on learning in an online environment is needed to guide educators in giving the best educational environment.

Secondly, R.M. Mackey & L. Freyberg (2010) researched the effect of social presence on affective and cognitive learning via distance learning. All participants in this study were adults above the age of 18. They were enrolled in the course without prior knowledge of the study and subsequently gave their informed consent to participate in the study. To assess student perceptions of the technologically-rich classroom environment and its impact on their learning experiences during the 2004 distance learning format, two surveys were developed and distributed to students on five occasions throughout the course. The result of this study showed that encourage social presence may create a more positive learning experience for students in distance courses.

In addition, Almashi and Zhu (2018) investigated students' perceptions of social presence in blended learning courses. The study involved 144 medical

students. Qualitative results show that social presence was encouraged through provision of group assignments, teacher online activities, and students' group discussions. Through social presence and interaction, students learnt various concepts, examination questions in both online and in face-to-face discussions. The conclusion is that students' characteristics are not crucial, however, group discussion and social presence influence their learning.

Lastly, Hayashi, et. al (2004) researched the role of social presence and moderating role of computer self efficacy in predicting the continuance usage of e-learning systems. The experiment was conducted in a field setting that enabled the study to garner greater external validity than would be the case with a laboratory experiment. The setting for the field experiment was two accredited universities: California State University at Northridge and Loyola Marymount University. The experiment was motivated by the need of 110 college undergraduate Business majors to learn Microsoft Access. Participants filled out a questionnaire regarding their experiences of using Microsoft Access and other database applications to assess the relative importance of social presence in helping online learners to prevail over the online asynchronous environment. The result indicates that in the context of assimilating IT skills, there is not a significant relationship among the CSE of online learners, their perceived usefulness, confirmation, and satisfaction level. As a moderating factor, computer self-efficacy does not have significant influence on learning outcomes. Social presence was shown to have an effect in different VLEs.

Most of the empirical evidence that does exist in some studies focused more on investigated the social aspects and/or benefits of social presence in blended or distance learning, not particularly in courses or programs of study that are totally online (e.g. J. Crim & Reio, Jr, 2006; R.M. Mackey & L. Freyberg, 2010; Alsadoon, 2018; Caspi and Blau, 2008; Almashi and Zhu, 2018; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Angelaki & Mavroidis, 2013; Hayashi, et. al, 2004). In connection with a pandemic Coronavirus condition supposes all educational institutions to apply a comprehensive online learning system. Therefore, this study will conduct a research at university school and aimed to gain insights of learners' social presence and perceived learning in online learning especially for English course.

Based on the explainations above, the researcher is interested to conduct a research concerning in investigating social presence and perceived learning toward English course in online learning environment entitled "*Social Presence and Perceived Learning Toward English Course in Online Learning Environment.*"

B. Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates the research problems as follow:

1. How is the social presence toward English course in online learning environment?

2. How is perceived learning toward English course in online learning environment?

C. Objectives of The Research

Based on the research problem above, the objectives of the study as follow:

1. To investigate the social presence toward English course in online learning environment.

2. To investigate perceived learning toward English course in online learning environment.

D. Significance of The Research

The findings of this research will hopefully give some contributions to these following parties:

1. For the students

   It can motivate and improve their understanding on social presence. In addition, they knew what the strengths and weaknesses of him/her self and by the feedback that given by teacher can overcome his/her problems in gaining the lesson.

2. For the teachers

   It can give inspiration for their teaching-learning. The result of this study might be increased teachers' understanding of how learners' needs, experiences, and perspectives influence optimal educational environments and opportunities for online learning context.

3. For the readers

It is expected that the result of this study can give an inspiration for them, and can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct a research espicially about social presence.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Research Problem

The scope of this research limited to the subject and object that investigated. The subject of this research is the students of sixth semester at IAIN Tulungagung. The object of this research is social presence and perceived learning toward English course in online learning environment.

F. Definition of Key Terms

The researcher would like to study about "Social Presence and Perceived Learning Toward English Course in Online Learning Environment". Therefore to make the understanding of this thesis, the researcher would like to explain some defenitions and terms:

1. Social presence is defined as the degree to which a person is perceived as a 'real person' in mediated communication" (Gunawardena, 1995, p.151) and it "is an individual matter, linked to the teaching style, content delivery, and established patterns of instructor-student feedback" (Stone & Chapman, 2006, p.1).

2. Perceived learning is the extent to which a certain level of knowledge obtained on the new learning recognized by students (Lewis, 2011).

3. Online Learning Environment is defined as "learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Online learning is appealing to a range of learners and is becoming more commonplace in settings from elementary schools to high schools and into post-secondary education.