An Exploration of Students` Unwillingness to Communicate English during Blended Learning

Wardah Meilisa Rahayu, Anita Dewi Ekawati

wardahmeilisa@gmail.com
University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka, Jakarta, Indonesia

anita.dewieka@uhamka.ac.id
University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. Hamka, Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

Unwillingness to Communicate (UTC) is one of the factors that often appears in learning foreign languages, especially in blended learning during this pandemic. Many students are unwilling to communicate in English because they are ashamed and not confident. This study aims to explore students' unwillingness to communicate English as a foreign language during blended learning. This research applies the descriptive quantitative method. This research was collected online using a Google Form questionnaire that was distributed on WhatsApp and Instagram for senior high school students in Jakarta for the 2022/2023 academic year. Respondents of this study were 117 respondents, consisting of 83 Senior High School students and 34 Vocational High School students in Jakarta. The results of this research indicate that students avoid communicating in front of the class and choose to communicate in English in group discussions and they are afraid to try difficult sentences in blended learning. The findings of this research can be information about the higher factor of unwillingness to communicate in English and provide an overview of students' willingness to communicate in English.

Keywords: *Unwillingness to Communicate (UTC), foreign language, blended learning, discussion*

Introduction

The four key components of language acquisition are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of the four important skills above, speaking is the thing that has the most problems. Many people are anxious to speak or communicate a foreign language especially when they believe that their speaking skills are low or understandable (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020). When anxiety happens, students begin to avoid and unwillingness to communicate in a second language. Even though students have been in school for years, most foreign language students still cannot communicate well (Kella, 2021). The willingness to communicate is an important role in learning a second language. (Husna, 2009) stated the source language must be able to encourage students to speak a foreign language because being able to

communicate well inside and outside the classroom is one of the main goals in learning a foreign or second language.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) in foreign language classes can be developed if students are given the freedom to communicate (Goldoust, 2017). To enhance and realize their effective, consistent, and meaningful English communication skills, foreign language students must be a Willingness to Communicate (WTC) in English during the learning process. (Ningsih et al., 2018) stated that Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is a person's plan or preparation to communicate at certain communication events. Individual and social aspects like self-assurance, character, global style, gender, age, as well as cultural and academic status can affect someone's Willingness to Communicate (WTC). When we learn a foreign language, the important thing is to communicate fluently without any coercion, burden, or something other (Bursali & Oz, 2017). It can be concluded that Willingness to Communicate (WTC) is a situation where students learn to communicate a foreign language without any barriers or coercion.

Since March 2020, Indonesia, as well as the rest of the globe, has been dealing with an unexpected condition: a coronavirus pandemic. As a result of the pandemic, all schools and other educational institutions are forced to undertake a change to avoid the virus from spreading. All face-to-face classes have been replaced with virtual classes, and all language course activities have been converted to online activities (Subandowo et al., 2020). So during the pandemic, Indonesia implemented a blended learning system, where students in senior high school and vocational high school learn face-to-face and learn virtually. The learning that teachers used is adjusted to the existing conditions. According to (Aji et al., 2020) blended learning involves face-to-face classroom meetings, with some classroom conferences being replaced by e-learning. Web-based learning was utilized to replace some of the face-to-face learning in blended learning. In a strategic approach, blended learning combined online and face-to-face class activities to enhance learning during the pandemic situation.

Blended Learning (BL) is an educational concept that can combine many technologies into the traditional classroom (Siripongdee et al., 2020). Blended learning mixes aspects of synchronous and asynchronous online learning options, as well as teaching and learning approaches from face-to-face and virtual. (Subandowo et al., 2020) explained that Blended learning is an effective combination of various instructional strategies, teaching models, and learning theories that may be achieved in an interactive learning environment, both online and in-person learning. So blended learning has a variety of teaching models that can be applied in the classroom. One of the objectives of this learning is to reduce the spread of the virus and students do not feel bored studying during the pandemic because students will get different situations when studying face-to-face and learning online.

In a second language, both teachers and students have to receive instructions on how to communicate in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) situation because they influence how well students study and accomplish in foreign languages (Amiryousefi, 2018; Goldoust, 2017; Ningsih et al.,

2018). The level to which students are interested or unwilling to communicate in the native language in the classrooms may have a significant effect on student engagement and effective classroom engagement (Peng, 2012). Some researchers have recognized aspects of the WTC. (Ningsih et al., 2018) found that the results of the research showed a substantial association between the language class risk-taking scale and the language class sociability scale, which are the two elements that build up the unwillingness to communicate scale. According to the authors, the majority of learners were found to be particularly encouraged to participate in interpersonal contact in the classroom. Few people who avoided such a communication event believed they were at ease with the entire communication action or that it was useless.

On the other hand, (Weda et al., 2020) showed that the majority of students were ready to take part in the group discussions, and they were aware that their friends had paid attention to what they had to share. The students find it simple to engage in a discussion with their classmates in the EFL classroom because they were not hesitant to speak up during class discussions. Yet the students were hesitant to communicate their opinions to other students because they got nervous. Moreover, (Kella, 2021) showed that speaking English in class generally creates little fear among students. The outcome shows that speaking English in class often creates much fear in students. They found it challenging to learn a second language because they had terrible vocabulary and pronunciation, were terrified of their grammar, lacked desire, or were unconfident. As a result, they struggled to learn a foreign language, especially English, and also experienced significant levels of fear.

Research Methodology

Respondents

Data for this research was collected online using a Google Form questionnaire that was distributed on WhatsApp and Instagram for senior high school students in Jakarta for the 2022/2023 academic year. The total respondents of this research were 117 respondents, consisting of 83 Senior High School students (71%) and 34 Vocational High School students (29%) in Jakarta. The respondents were mostly female (63%) with 74 females and male (37%) with 43 males.

Instruments & Procedure

The goal of this research is to explore the students` unwillingness to communicate in English during blended learning among Senior High Schools and Vocational High School students in Jakarta. The goal of this research is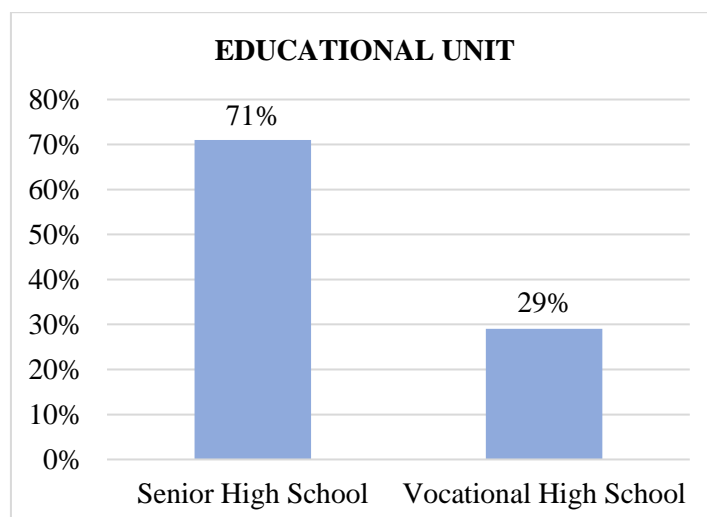 to explore the students` unwillingness to communicate in English during blended learning among Senior High Schools and Vocational High School students in Jakarta. The research design was adopted by (Liu & Zhang, 2008) but this research focused on blended learning. To achieve the goals of the research, modifications were also applied to the data collection instrument and data analysis technique.

Result and Discussion

Figure 1. Gender of Respondents
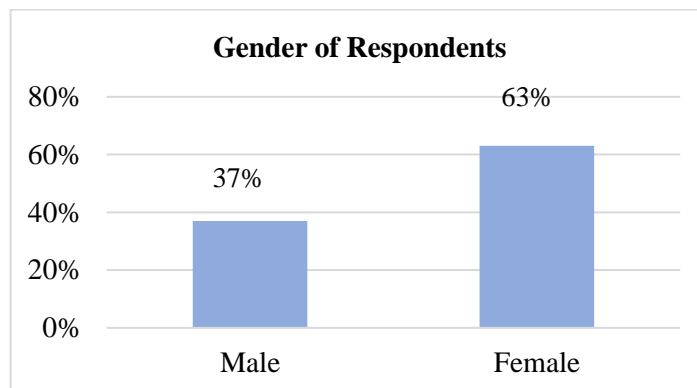
Figure 2. Educational Unit

Descriptive Statistics

Unwillingness to Communicate Scale (UCS) must be analyzed by calculating the minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis to show the main pattern of students' Unwillingness to communicate. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics (min, max, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) for the scale of unwillingness to communicate problems among EFL students. In item 1 which reads "I am afraid to speak in a conversation" the researcher gets the results that the respondents reach a mean of 3.2650 and a standard deviation of 1.2484. The respondents' results for item 2 "I talk less because I'm shy" were 3.0684 for the mean and 1.2712 for the standard deviation. The respondents' results for item 3 "I talk a lot because I am not shy" were 3.1880 for the mean and 1.2243 for the standard deviation. In item 4 which reads "I like to get involved in group discussion" the researcher gets the results that the respondents reach a mean of 2.6325 and a standard deviation of 1.1492. The respondents' results for item 5 "I feel nervous when I

have to speak to others." were 2.9573 for the mean and 1.1700 for the standard deviation. Table 1 until Table 3 it has been clearly shown the mean and standard division for the opinion of respondents on items 6 until 28. In this research, the skewness and kurtosis values shown in Table 1 demonstrate that the normal range can be seen for all scales. The results value for skewness and kurtosis are around -1 and +1.

Table 1. Unwillingness to Communicate Scale (N = 117)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	1.00	5.00	3.2650	1.2484	-.137	-.923
2	1.00	5.00	3.0684	1.2712	-.053	-1.055
3	1.00	5.00	3.1880	1.2243	-.164	-.900
4	1.00	5.00	2.6325	1.1492	.340	-.651
5	1.00	5.00	2.9573	1.1700	.116	-.846
6	1.00	5.00	2.7265	1.1419	.270	-.653
7	1.00	5.00	3.3932	1.2315	-.337	-.812
8	1.00	5.00	3.7009	1.2475	.623	-.614
9	1.00	5.00	3.1368	1.2028	-.175	-.062
10	1.00	5.00	3.0598	1.1318	-118	-.652
11	1.00	5.00	2.8974	1.0618	.032	-.030
12	1.00	5.00	3.8120	1.1958	-.667	-.576
13	1.00	5.00	2.4274	1.0530	.548	.012
14	1.00	5.00	3.6154	1.2652	-.633	-.614
15	1.00	5.00	2.4615	1.1710	.561	-.362
16	1.00	5.00	3.7692	1.2621	-.722	-.542
17	1.00	5.00	2.2308	.9134	.142	-.572
18	1.00	5.00	3.2479	1.2656	-.166	-.089
19	1.00	5.00	4.0684	1.1798	-1.018	-.069

Reliability .682

Table 2. Language Class Risk-taking Scale (N = 117)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
20	1.00	5.00	2.4872	1.0797	.343	-.602
21	1.00	5.00	3.4188	1.2542	-.434	-.816
22	1.00	5.00	2.8803	1.1308	.092	-.677

23	1.00	5.00	2.7350	1.2063	-.013	-.993
24	1.00	5.00	2.1624	1.0167	.056	-.329
25	1.00	5.00	2.4274	1.0530	.237	-.609

Reliability .445

Table 3. Language Class Sociability Scale (N = 117)

Items	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
26	1.00	5.00	2.2564	1.1829	.654	-.459
27	1.00	5.00	2.4957	1.0877	.455	-.184
28	1.00	5.00	1.973	1.1773	1.133	.510

Reliability .756

Table 4. Percentages of Respondents' Perception of Unwillingness to Communicate

Items	Students' Perception	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1	I'm afraid to speak up in conversations.	9	18	31	21	21
2	I talk less because I'm shy.	13	23	24	25	15
3	I talk a lot because I'm not shy.	10	20	27	26	16
4	I like to get involved in group discussions.	17	32	27	16	7
5	I feel nervous when I have to speak to my friends.	10	28	28	22	11
6	I have no fears about expressing myself in a group discussion.	15	31	30	17	8
7	I'm afraid to express myself in a group discussion.	9	15	26	27	22
8	I avoid group discussions.	7	11	22	25	35
9	During a conversation, I prefer to talk rather than listen.	13	12	39	21	15
10	I find it easy to make conversation with my friends.	10	20	34	26	10

11	I don't think my friends are honest in their communication with me.	11	21	44	17	8
12	My friends don't listen to my ideas and suggestions.	4	12	21	25	38
13	I think my friends are truthful with me.	20	36	32	8	5
14	I don't ask for advice from my friends when I have to make decisions.	9	12	19	31	30
15	I believe my friends understand my feelings.	23	32	27	9	8
16	My friends don't enjoy discussing my interests and activities with me.	7	11	19	25	38
17	My friends seek my opinions and advice.	26	32	38	4	1
18	My friends are friendly only because they want something out of me.	11	15	32	20	21
19	Talking to friends is just a waste of time.	3	10	15	20	52

Frequency of Responses to Unwillingness to Communicate Foreign Language Scale

This study examines the influencing factors and looks at the most frequent responses in the unwillingness to communicate a foreign language during blended learning in senior high school or vocational high school students. This study uses 5 choices on a Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree) which is described in Table 4 until Table 6. The perception of respondents who stated "strongly agree" is shown in item 28 (I think it's important to have a strong group spirit in the English classroom) with a presentation of 49%, seen in table 6. Item 26 became the second highest "strongly agree" response (I think learning English in a group is more fun than learning on my own) with a percentage of 33% and continued with 31% on item 24 (In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it).

Table 4 shows the specific percentages of students' opinions of the factors causing students' unwillingness to communicate in a foreign language class during blended learning. The highest percentage of item 1 "I'm afraid to speak up in conversations" is 31% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 2 "I talk less because I'm shy" is 25% which disagrees. The highest percentage of item 3 "I talk a lot because I'm not shy" is 27% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 4 "I like to get involved in group discussions" is 32% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 5 "I feel nervous when I have to speak to my friends" is 28% which is agreed and neutral. The highest percentage of item 6 "I have no fears about expressing myself in a group discussion" is 31% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 7 "I'm afraid to express myself in a group discussion" is 27% which disagrees. The highest percentage of item 8 "I avoid group discussions" is 35% which strongly disagrees. The highest percentage of item 9 "During a conversation, I prefer to talk rather than listen" is 39% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 10 "I find it easy to make conversation with my friends" is 34% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 11 "I don't think my friends are honest in their communication with me" is 44% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 12 "My friends don't listen to my ideas and suggestions" is 38% which strongly disagrees. The highest percentage of item 13 "I think my friends are truthful with me" is 36% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 14 "I don't ask for advice from my friends when I have to make decisions" is 31% which disagrees. The highest percentage of item 15 "I believe my friends understand my feelings" is 32% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 16 "My friends don't enjoy discussing my interest and activities with me" is 38% which strongly disagrees. The highest percentage of item 17 "My friends seek my opinions and advice" is 38% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 18 "My friends are friendly only because they want something out of me" is 32% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 19 "Talking to friends is just a waste of time" is 52% which strongly disagrees.

Table 5. Percentages of Respondents' Perception of Language Class Risk-taking

Items	Students' Perception	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
20	I like to wait until I know exactly how to use an English word before using it.	20	34	27	15	3
21	I don't like trying out difficult sentences in class.	9	15	21	32	22

22	At this point, I don't like trying to express complicated ideas in English in class.	12	26	33	21	9
23	I prefer to say what I want in English without worrying about the small details of grammar.	21	19	31	23	6
24	In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it.	31	34	25	9	2
25	I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language.	23	28	34	12	3

Frequency of Responses to Language Class Risk-taking

Table 5 shows the specific percentages of language class risk-taking during blended learning. The highest percentage of item 20 "I like to wait until I know exactly how to use an English word before using it" is 34% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 21 "I don't like trying out difficult sentences in class" is 32% which disagrees. The highest percentage of item 22 "At this point, I don't like trying to express complicated ideas in English in class" is 33% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 23 "I prefer to say what I want in English without worrying about the small details of grammar" is 31% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 24 "In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it" is 34% which is agreed. The highest percentage of item 25 "I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language" is 34% which is neutral.

Table 6. Percentages of Respondents' Perception of Language Class Sociability

Items	Students' Perception	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
26	I think learning English in a group is more fun than learning on my own.	33	29	21	11	5

27	I enjoy interacting with the other students in the English class.	20	32	34	9	6
28	I think it's important to have a strong group spirit in the English classroom.	49	23	18	4	6

Frequency of Responses to Language Class Sociability

Table 6 shows the specific percentages of language class sociability during blended learning. The highest percentage of item 26 "I think learning English in a group is more fun than learning on my own" is 33% which is strongly agreed. The highest percentage of item 27 "I enjoy interacting with the other students in the English class" is 34% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 28 "I think it's important to have a strong group spirit in the English classroom" is 49% which is strongly agreed.

Figure 3. Percentage of respondents aspects about what impacts respondents` Unwillingness to Communicate
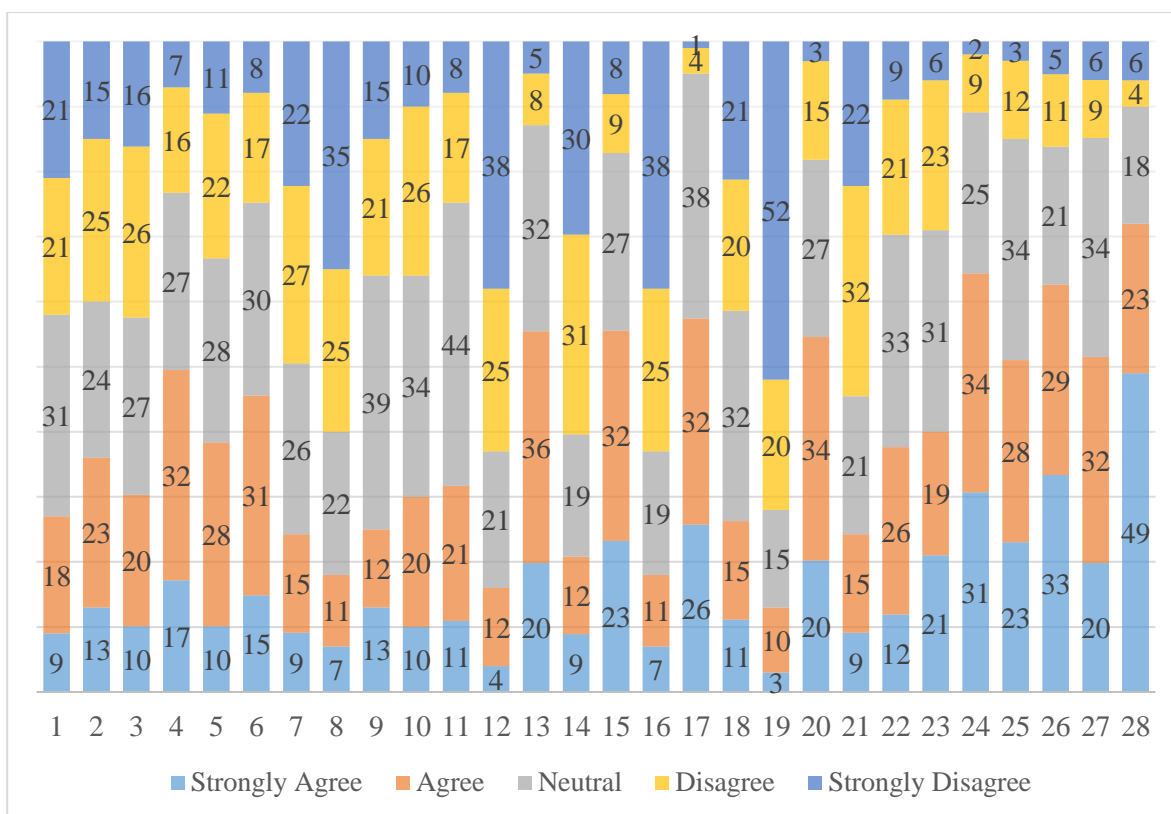
Figure. 3 it is clearly shown the percentage of respondents' aspects of what affects the respondent's unwillingness to communicate. The highest percentage of item 1 "I'm afraid to speak up in conversations" is 31% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 2 "I talk less because I'm shy" is 25% which disagrees. It means that respondents aren't ashamed to communicate in foreign languages in blended learning. The highest percentage of item 3 "I talk a lot because I'm not shy" is 27% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 4 "I like to get involved in group discussions" is 32% which is agreed. In this item, respondents enjoy participating in group discussions in foreign languages during blended learning. The highest percentage of item 5 "I feel nervous when I have to speak to my friends" is 28% which is agreed and neutral. It indicates that respondents often feel nervous when they have to speak a foreign language with their friends. The highest percentage of item 6 "I have no fears about expressing myself in a group discussion" is 31% which is agreed. It means that students are not hesitant to express themselves in group discussions during blended learning. The highest percentage of item 7 "I'm afraid to express myself in a group discussion" is 27% which disagrees. Respondents don't agree with the statement. The highest percentage of item 8 "I avoid group discussions" is 35% which strongly disagrees. This means that respondents like group discussions in blended learning. The highest percentage of item 9 "During a conversation, I prefer to talk rather than listen" is 39% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 10 "I find it easy to make conversation with my friends" is 34% which is neutral.

The highest percentage of item 11 "I don't think my friends are honest in their communication with me" is 44% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 12 "My friends don't listen to my

ideas and suggestions" is 38% which strongly disagrees. It means that my friends always listen to my insights and advice. The highest percentage of item 13 "I think my friends are truthful with me" is 36% which is agreed. Respondents agree with this statement. The highest percentage of item 14 "I don't ask for advice from my friends when I have to make decisions" is 31% which disagrees. This indicates that most respondents always ask their friends for advice when they have to make decisions. The highest percentage of item 15 "I believe my friends understand my feelings" is 32% which is agreed. Respondents agree that their friends understand their feelings when speaking a foreign language in blended learning. The highest percentage of item 16 "My friends don't enjoy discussing my interest and activities with me" is 38% which strongly disagrees. It means that respondents are very happy to discuss their interests and activities with their friends. The highest percentage of item 17 "My friends seek my opinions and advice" is 38% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 18 "My friends are friendly only because they want something out of me" is 32% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 19 "Talking to friends is just a waste of time" is 52% which strongly disagrees. It indicates that talking to friends is fun and they don't feel they are wasting their time. They feel talking with friends can get new information or knowledge.

The highest percentage of item 20 "I like to wait until I know exactly how to use an English word before using it" is 34% which is agreed. This illustrates that respondents prefer to wait until they are fully aware of how to utilize English words. The highest percentage of item 21 "I don't like trying out difficult sentences in class" is 32% which disagrees. Many of the respondents didn't like to try difficult English sentences in the blended class. The highest percentage of item 22 "At this point, I don't like trying to express complicated ideas in English in class" is 33% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 23 "I prefer to say what I want in English without worrying about the small details of grammar" is 31% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 24 "In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it" is 34% which is agreed. It indicates that respondents prefer to say sentences to themselves before saying them in blended learning. The highest percentage of item 25 "I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language" is 34% which is neutral.

The highest percentage of item 26 "I think learning English in a group is more fun than learning on my own" is 33% which is strongly agreed. It means that learning English in groups is more enjoyable than learning alone in blended learning. The highest percentage of item 27 "I enjoy interacting with the other students in the English class" is 34% which is neutral. The highest percentage of item 28 "I think it's important to have a strong group spirit in the English classroom" is 49% which is strongly agreed. It is very essential to maintain a good spirit in the English class during blended learning. Because in the group they can share many things.

Conclusion

From the research above, it can be concluded about the unwillingness of Senior High School and Vocational High School students in Jakarta to communicate in English during blended learning. Some students feel ashamed to speak English, therefore they prefer to say it to themselves before speaking in English class. Students like to be involved in group discussions so, they feel happy to express themselves in group discussions in blended learning. It means that students feel more comfortable and have the willingness to speak English during group discussions. Students also tend to be afraid to try difficult sentences and they prefer must hold off until they are fully adept at using the difficult word. Students agree that it is more fun to study English in groups than to study alone and they think it is very important to have a group to be more enthusiastic about learning English as a foreign language.

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