

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates vocational students' anxiety in one of vocational schools in Sukabumi. The topics of this chapter are the background of the study, the research problems, the purpose of the study, the limitation of the study, the significance of the study, the research method, the clarifications of terms, and the thesis organization.

1.1 Background of the study

Since test functions as a tool for checking students' competencies, it becomes an important part of evaluation at schools. It can be proved that test is used for students of primary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, vocational schools, and universities. The significance of test as one of the instruments in measuring competences at schools is evident in *Permendikbud* No. 104 in 2014. Test is given to first graders of primary school to further levels of study.

Teachers use many strategies in testing their students. The students are expected to have good marks. However, when taking a test, some students may feel anxious. This phenomenon may make the test an inaccurate measure of students' competence. Some experts try to find out appropriate methods to measure the construct by considering the impact of test anxiety to reveal the phenomena (Cassady, 2001).

Test anxiety gives effects in increasing physical and psychological problems. The physical and psychological problems influence the academic performance. Test anxiety can disturb enthusiasm and focus of the students, add failure in doing the test, and cause difficulties in remembering the material which already learned (Trifoni & Shahini, 2011). To fill the gap in study of test anxiety

done by experts, researcher deals with test anxiety, its sources, and the strategies to reduce the anxiety.

Some students may feel high anxious when dealing with evaluative situation. Their anxiety is rarely appear that influence their academic performance. Students' anxieties occasionally are so too much which disturbs their learning and daily performances (Miri et al., 2013).

It is important to know the sources of this anxiety. Hopefully, after knowing the sources of anxiety, teachers and students can work together to overcome the anxiety. It is expected that the anxiety can be controlled and the test that has function as benchmark of students' competence can be more optimal in checking and detecting their skills. Based on the explanation above, the researcher determines to carry a study about "Students' Test Anxiety: Its Sources and Their Coping Strategies (A Study in One of Vocational Schools in Sukabumi)".

1.2 The Research Problems

Based on the problem identified above, this study has attempted to find answers to the following questions.

1. What are the anxiety levels experienced by the students?
2. What are the sources of students' anxiety?
3. What are the strategies used to reduce the anxiety?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

Departing from the problems mentioned above, this study aims at:

1. Investigating the anxiety levels experienced by the students.
2. Investigating the sources of students' anxiety
3. Finding out the strategies to reduce students' anxiety

1.4 Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on investigating the anxiety faced by the students in one of the vocational schools in Sukabumi. This study concerns with the anxiety levels experienced by the students, the sources of the students' anxiety, and the strategies to reduce the students' anxiety.

1.5 Significance of the Study

With regard to the significance of the study, this research has potential contribution to the theory, education and professional practices. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on students' anxiety. Practically, this study provides information related to students' anxiety in facing test. Professionally, this investigation of students' anxiety in facing English test hopefully can broaden the insight into the issue of language anxiety.

After knowing the sources of anxiety, teachers and students can work together to overcome the anxiety. Hence, the anxiety can hopefully be controlled and the test that has the function as the benchmark of students' competence can be more optimal in checking and detecting students' skills.

1.6 The Research Method

This research is mainly qualitative with some descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics can be defined as a way of a group presented on the interval scale measures by numerical representations accurately (Brown, 1988). This study is conducted in a class of first graders in a vocational school in Sukabumi, West Java.

This study employs some data collection techniques, using two questionnaires as instruments, interview, classroom observation, and document analysis as triangulation. The data analysis in this study is conducted over the course. All the data gained from the data collections are analyzed gradually. The data from questionnaires are transcribed and subsequently categorized, then

interpreted to answer the research questions. The triangulations from interview, classroom observation, and document analysis are also interpreted descriptively.

1.7 Clarifications of Terms

There are some operational terms which are used in this study: anxiety, language anxiety, test anxiety, anxiety level, sources of anxiety, and coping strategies. Each term is defined as follows:

a. Anxiety

“An emotional component of human beings that manifests itself in life endeavors in form of worry and restlessness “(Olatoye, 2009).

b. Language Anxiety

“The feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

c. Test Anxiety

“An experience which expresses itself in candidate’s mind and behavior in form of fear of failure, negative self evaluation in relation to one’s previously established standard, self-blame for perceived shortcomings, social evaluation in relation to one’s estimate of how others are doing and negative prediction of what will be the outcome of a test” (Olatoye, 2009).

d. Anxiety level

“The degree of arousal in relation to one’s adaptation level will determine or not there will be a positive or negative affective experience” (Spielberger and Sarason, 1985 cited in Nemati, 2012).

“At the deepest or global level, anxiety is viewed as a permanent trait, as some people are predisposed to be anxious. At a more local or situational level, anxiety can be experienced in response to a particular situation or act” (Brown, 1994 cited in Ohata, 2005).

e. Sources of Anxiety

“Some potential sources of language anxiety which are associated with the learner, some with the teacher, and some with the instructional practice” (Young, 1991).

f. Coping

“The process of executing the response to the threat” (Carver, et al., 1989). The anxiety level and the sources of students’ anxiety are measured by an instrument adapted from A Test Anxiety Inventory of Academic Success Center, University of Iowa. The strategies to reduce students’ anxiety are measured by an instrument adapted from COPE Scale which is a theoretically based approach by C. Carver, M. Scheier, and J. Weintraub. Those are supported by interview, class observation, and document analysis as triangulation.

1.8 Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 gives a general description of the introduction to the topic of the research. This chapter introduces the background of the study, the research questions, the purpose of the study, the limitation of the study, significance of the study, the research method, the clarifications of the term, and the thesis organization.

Chapter 2 describes the theories which support the study. It covers the theories relevant to the purpose of the study. It includes the discussion of the

nature of anxiety, strategy to deal with anxiety, test, relevant studies, and concluding remark.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the research that include research questions, research design, research setting and participants, data collection and data analysis. The samples of the instruments are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4 elaborates the findings of the research and their discussion from questionnaires as instruments, and interview, classroom observation, and document analysis as triangulation.

Chapter 5 illustrates conclusion of the research, the implication and the recommendations for further research.