

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section provides the background of the proposed study. It focuses on the brief description about the topic which was chosen for the research and why the researcher conducted the research on this field. It also specifies the aims of the research, describes the scope of the research, gives a brief overview about the research methodology, the clarification of the terms, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the four important skills in language learning. It helps students to be able to communicate with people around the world. Students should have a good command communication skill in English so as to prepare their future careers and lives. In reality, even though English has been taught for at least six years in school levels in Indonesia, which in Junior High School and Senior High School level and also in many Elementary Schools as local content subject, the students still have some difficulties in learning English whether it is productive or receptive skill, especially speaking. The fact that many of school graduates cannot communicate in English has become national problem in Indonesia (Alwasilah, 2000:62).

This could happen because of lack of speaking exposure (Ramesh, 2012). English in Indonesia is considered to be a foreign language. Most of time, students could only develop their speaking ability in EFL classroom, but they usually don't use this chance to enhance their speaking ability. It happens because of many factors, one of the reason is the students are not comfortable so speak in front of others. According to previous research, Sugiharti (2007) found out that students don't feel comfortable in front of the others. This research finding is almost the same as other research that show students are influenced by the other students when they have to speak in front of the class (Al-Saraj, 2011; Cheng, 2009; Aida, 1994).

The reluctance of many students to speak in class has become a major factor that could influence their ability in language learning. In an EFL classroom, students tend to be silent if they are asked by their teacher. Many times they keep questions from their teacher (Snell's 1999). In his research, Togatorop (2009) states that students tend to be silent in EFL classroom because they are unable to manage their emotion including nervousness, lack of self-confidence, shyness, lack of motivation and boredom.

According to Quying (2007:5) even many Chinese university students who are able to pass English examinations with high grades are actually weak at communicating with the language in real life situations orally. He also added that "some even lack the courage to open their mouth at all to try and speak, or stumble and stammer when they speak and considered as "mute" "listener". These learners have different perceptions of speaking using foreign language. One of the most common beliefs is that learners believe that nothing should be said until it can be said correctly (Horwitz et al., 1986; Krashen, 1982).

The phenomenon happens because of many factors and anxiety is one of the most influencing factors (Oxford, 1992 cited in Al-Saraj, 2011). As suggested by Horwitz et al (1986) teachers and students feel strongly that anxiety is the main factor of obstacle to speak another language.

Speaking is an anxious triggering activity that makes students anxious when they are in classroom, many learners are highly anxious because of participating in speaking activities (Keramida, 2009). In fact, it is often suggested that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking language skill in foreign language learning situation (Subasi, 2010; Oxford, 1992). They even become more anxious when given questions or asked to perform in front of the class (Liu, 2007). This finding has some similarities with Horwitz, et al (1986) finding that showed EFL students are afraid to speak in foreign language because they are afraid to make mistakes and thought as fewer competencies by the others. They are don't have bravery to speak in front of others because their high self-consciousness (Krashen, 1982).

This kind of problem could cause a lot of disadvantages to EFL students. They will lose their opportunities in using English in classroom context to enhance their speaking ability. That way, anxiety could be a block of students' mastery in English.

Krashen (1982) categorized anxiety as an affective filter that could impede students to gain their full ability in learning language. They also might develop other kinds of negative behaviors such as becoming passive learners in the class, sitting in the back of row and even skipping EFL classes.

There some previous researches on anxiety and its effects to speaking ability. The result shows that anxiety plays an important role in students' speaking ability. It shows that the higher students' anxiety in EFL, the more they tend to gain low speaking proficiency (Aida, 1994; Cheng, 2012). Many of previous researches on speaking anxiety focused on high school level, therefore, this research will investigate foreign language learner anxiety of Junior High School students in Indonesia and their strategies to overcome it.

1.2 Research Questions

The problems to be discussed in this research will be summarized in the following research questions:

- 1) What are the levels of anxiety experienced by the students in English speaking class?
- 2) What are the sources of students' speaking anxiety?
- 3) What are strategies do the students apply to reduce their anxiety?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

Based on the background that has been stated formerly, the purposes of the research will be discussed in this section. This research was aimed to investigate:

1. To identify the level of speaking anxiety experienced by the students' in English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in Junior High School
2. To identify the source of students' speaking anxiety English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom
3. To identify the strategies that students use to reduce their speaking anxiety in English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on three parts of discussion concerning students' speaking anxiety in Junior High School. It investigates the level of students' speaking anxiety, the sources of students' speaking anxiety and students' anxiety coping strategies.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical benefits, as follows:

a. Theoretical benefits

This research finding will be able to make at least one benefit or contribution to enrich the literature of foreign language classroom anxiety in Indonesia, especially in the area of students' speaking performance in Junior High School level.

b. Practical benefits

Firstly, this study is expected to give more contribution in students' ability in speaking. The information could help educators or teachers understand the different levels of anxiety experienced by students when they speak. They also get more information about factors that trigger students' anxiety and try to find strategy to help them in reducing students' speaking anxiety and creating more relax atmosphere in class.

Secondly, this study hopefully will give insights to professional teachers and practitioners of the existence of anxiety and its possibilities in English teaching and learning process. Therefore, it can help students and teacher to be more successful in teaching and learning process in the classroom.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There are some terms that will be used in this study. To clarify the meaning of those terms, this research included the clarification of those terms as following:

a. Language anxiety

Anxiety in this study is the subjective feeling of tension , apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Horwitz 2001:113).

- b. FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) is the 33 questionnaires item created by Horwitz, et al (1986) to measure foreign language learners' anxiety in classroom setting.
- c. English Speaking skill
English speaking skill refers to express arguments, ideas, and daily conversations through English as an oral communication (Brown, 2001).

1.7 Organization of Paper

This research paper will be organized as follows:

1. Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter comprises the background of the study, research questions, and aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, and clarification of the terms.

2. Chapter II : Theoretical Foundation

This chapter provides the theoretical related to the basis of investigating the research problem. Those are conceptualization of anxiety, foreign language anxiety and its components, students' speaking anxiety in foreign language, the effects of anxiety in learning, sources of foreign language anxiety and anxiety coping strategies.

3. Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting the research. It involves the research design, respondents, data collections techniques, as well as data analysis.

4. Chapter IV : Finding and Discussion

This chapter presents data analysis and discussion of the findings gained from questionnaire and interview. It covers students' speaking anxiety level, the sources of students' speaking anxiety, and students' anxiety coping strategies.

5. Chapter V : Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter consists of the research conclusion and suggestions on the topic of the research based on the research findings to other research who wish to conduct the research.

1.8 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the background of the research, purpose of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.