

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides as an introduction of this study will cover a description of background of the study in students' speaking anxiety. Subsequently, the background of the study is followed by the purpose, research questions, scope, significance and clarification of terms. At last, this chapter also presents the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

As one of the productive skills in English language learning, English speaking skill is considered to be an important skill that has to be taken into account by the learners. The notion lies upon some components of speaking like that of conversational discourse, pronunciation, accuracy and fluency, affective factors also the interaction effect or negotiating meaning (Brown, 2001). 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, especially speaking. It becomes an obligatory subject to be taken by Junior High School students. In practice, it seems English becomes one of the subjects that is feared by students especially in Junior High School.

They face a great problem of acquiring the target language, especially when they have to speak in the target language. This emphasis on oral aspects of language means that the students have to learn to understand what people speak and try to speak out what they want to express in a foreign language class. Horwitz & Cope (1986) pointed out that speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning and the current emphasis on the development of communicative competence poses particularly great difficulties for the anxious students. Besides, Price (1991) investigates English subject by asking questions about what made students most anxious in a foreign language class. All of the subjects answered that having to speak a foreign language in front of other students resulted in the most anxiety.

Therefore, foreign language anxiety is a significant issue which cannot be ignored to ensure the success of English education in Junior High School.

English was taught throughout school levels in Indonesia. However, the competence of this foreign language among the students is still unsatisfying and generally low. Lie stated that there is no significant English ability achieved after many years of study, although they passed the National Examination (Lie 2007). Many factors which are cause this problem. One of the solution teachers should know how to make a good communication with students in the classroom in English learning process. In this case, speaking is considered to be the skill that is used to measure the success of English learning to some foreign language students (Mattarima & Hamdan, 2011). However, to have an English speaking ability is a very complex task, considering the nature of what is involved in speaking. That the students are reluctant to speak English has become a major factor that could influence their ability in language learning. In an EFL classroom, students tend to be silent when they are asked by their teacher to speak or participate in front of the class. Many times, they keep silent even if they understand the questions and could actually answer the questions from their teacher (Snell's, 1999). Togatorop (2009) stated that students tend to be silent in EFL classroom because they are unable to manage their emotion including nervousness, lack of motivation, shyness, lack of motivation and boredom.

Speaking becomes an anxious triggering activity that makes students feel get nervous easily when they are in the classroom. Many students are in 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) findings that showed EFL students are afraid speaking in English and making mistakes. They don't have the courage to speak in front of others because of their high self-consciousness (Krashen, 1982).

In fact, most of the students avoid speaking when he or she believes that one must speak in English correctly (Liu, 2007). Some students might prefer to keep quiet during the lesson

because they are reluctant to speak English. Anxious students tend to think about negative evaluations from other people. In order to manage this problem, teachers should find the ways to make the learning English process less stressful and create teaching creative the methods which help the students in reducing speaking anxiety in English foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Some studies of foreign language anxiety in Indonesia showed that there are negative effects of anxiety toward language learning process. Marwan (2007) in his experimental study reported a significant effect of anxiety to students' foreign language learning. He stated that the feeling of anxiety may discourage the student to take part in the foreign language learning activities. According to his survey, factors such as lack confidence, lack preparation and fear of making mistakes were the primary causes of anxiety.

Sugiharti (2007) showed that anxious students actually have prepared themselves for every speaking class. Many of them still experienced anxiety especially in front of other people. Moreover, both teacher and student still use their mother tongue in the classroom activities. Students feel uncomfortable when they speak English in front of other people. Hence, they do not understand what the subject is and lack of vocabularies. It could be seen their past experienced when they were speaking in front of the class.

Anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension or fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening. Spielberger (1966), in Chan & Wu (2004), defines anxiety as "subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system." It is a kind of troubled feeling in mind. Anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates learners to adopt an approach attitude and is willing to confront the new learning task. Debilitating anxiety motivates learners to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task (Scovel, 1978). The factor of task difficulty affects learners to develop a facilitating or a debilitating anxiety.

Horwitz & Young (1991) explained that there are primarily two types of anxiety: facilitative and debilitating. Facilitative anxiety motivates the student to "fight" the new learning task and prepares the student emotionally to approach the learning task as a challenge. On the

other hand, debilitating anxiety motivates the student to “flee” the new learning task and stimulates the individual to adopt avoidance behavior. MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) found that those with high anxiety seemed to be in a viciously debilitating cycle, where high anxiety led to lower participation, which led to even greater anxiety, and hence even lower participation.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

Based on the background that has been stated formerly, the purpose of the research will be discussed in this section:

1. To identify the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by the students in English speaking class
2. To identify the major stressors reported by the students learning to speak English

1.3 Research Questions

Several issues regarding language speaking anxiety have been identified in the background and research purpose sections. The questions proposed for the study are as follow.

1. What are the levels of anxiety experienced by the students in the speaking class?
2. What are the major stressors reported by the students learning to speak English?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on two parts of discussion concerning students’ speaking anxiety in Junior High School. It investigates students’ foreign language classroom anxiety level and the major stressors by students in learning English in classroom.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Practical Perspective

This study is expected to give more contribution in students' ability in speaking area. The information could help educators or teachers to understand more the different levels of anxiety experienced by students when they speak using English. Through this study, it is hoped that educators could also understand how anxiety affect in students' English learning and developed classroom based instruction to facilitate students' anxiety.

1.5.2 Professional Perspective

Information what are the factors of students feel anxiety when they speak using English during learning in the classroom. Therefore it can help students and teachers to be more successful in teaching and learning process in the classrooms.

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 includes the clarification of those terms as following:

- 1.6.1 Anxiety is a state of uneasiness and apprehension or fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening. Anxiety in this study refers to speaking activity perceived by foreign language students. The students in this study mean the first grade of junior high school.
- 1.6.2 Speaking Anxiety in this study refers to a feeling of apprehension, nervousness, or worry that interrupts students' speaking performance. When teacher asked students to come forward and speak in English language, they feel nervous and worry about wrong grammar.
- 1.6.3 FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) in this study it is a questionnaire made by its pioneers Horwitz et al. in 1986 to identify the level of anxiety experienced by foreign language learners. The questionnaire consists of 33 questions with scale started from 1-5. This questionnaire used for students in the first grade of junior high school to gain the data.

- 1.6.4 Foreign Language in this study refers to any language other than the first language learned in classroom for students in the first grade of Junior High School.
- 1.6.5 Stressor is in the research paper the term refers of anything (physical or psychological) that produces stress (negative or positive) is considered a stressor. For example, getting a promotion is a positive event, but may also produce a great deal of stress with all the new responsibilities, work load, etc. (glossary definition). In this study it refers to students' thinking of being afraid in wrong pronunciation, laughed by their friends and they lack of mastering the English words.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The research paper was organized into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 Introduction

These sections contain introduction which discusses background; the purpose; the research questions those are: 1.What are the levels of anxiety experienced by the students in speaking class? 2. What are the major stressors reported by students learning English?; scope of the study; the significance of the study, which is to make the English teacher realize that there are so many reasons causing students speaking anxiety, clarification of terms and the organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundation

This chapter consists of related theories as the basis of investigating the research problems. Those are the definition of anxiety, speaking skill, students' speaking anxiety, the types of anxiety, the effects of anxiety in learning, the causes of Foreign Language Anxiety, the Ways for the learners to reduce speaking anxiety, foreign language anxiety and its components, the perceived levels of English proficiency, also the elaboration of previous studies on language anxiety.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

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This chapter discusses the methodology in conducting the research. It consisted of the research methodology that covers research design, participants, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

This chapter consists of the researcher's interpretation of the results of the research and discussion. It shows findings based on data and categorization as well as discussion related to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter consists of the research conclusion and suggestions to other researcher who want to continue the research.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

The present chapter has presented the background of the research which includes to the important of speaking skill, the anxiety in speaking, and the previous studies about students' speaking anxiety. This chapter also discovered purpose of the study, research questions, scope of the study, and significance of the study, clarification of the terms and organization of the paper.