

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers background of the study, purpose of the study, the research questions, definition of key terms, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning a foreign language in many countries is considered important due to its social function and benefit. The global era and the development of science and technology at present are influencing people to improve their abilities in every aspect, including language. Language as a means of communication has its social function to connect people in a more modern society. Therefore, becoming part of this modern society needs to break the boundaries that might appear in communication. The importance of learning foreign language also leads people to the acceptance of culture that enables them to develop attitude toward the language itself and the community.

In relation to the importance of learning a foreign language, English which is spoken worldwide either as a foreign language or second language, plays important role to the building and bridging a more modern society among people from different countries. English is vital for communicating with others in school and in the wider world, and is fundamental to learning in all curriculum subjects (QCA in Evans et al, 2009, p.1).

Considering the importance of English language in this competitive era, nowadays many students are exposed to employ English as a means of communication by which its purpose is to have them ready to engage in a broader relationship among people from many different countries.

However, most of students in non-English speaker countries, such as Indonesia, are encountering some problems and difficulties in performing their English in or outside the classroom due to several factors. Mostly, in EFL Classroom, students get nervous easily and shy to communicate in English or they feel anxious when they meet English test, and also they feel

anxious to use English for communication because they are afraid of making mistakes which will contribute to the negative evaluation or feedback from their peers or surroundings. Therefore, anxiety can pose a serious problem for students. As it is stated by Horwitz *et al.* (1986, p.125), language anxiety is considered to be a factor affecting language learning and acquisition

Mbato (2013) points out, most of Indonesian students have limited exposure to natural communicative English and that the only source of learning English is their teacher and classroom learning. This factor also influences students to encounter anxiety in using English for communication.

Second language researchers and theorists have long been aware that anxiety is often associated with language learning. Teachers and students generally feel strongly that anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125).

On the other hand, most of the English teachers do not put more attention to the possible condition of how anxious the students are when they learn English. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is one element that many English as Foreign Language teachers do not focus much on. The idea of teaching the four basic skills of English, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, was somewhat bound by the effort of transferring the knowledge and disregarding the students' anxieties in using English in the class (Anandari, 2015, p.2). The main reason is because anxiety itself is a complex matter since it involved psychological condition of the learners

The symptoms and consequences of foreign language anxiety should thus become readily identifiable to those concerned with language learning and teaching (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125). Since anxiety can have profound effects on many aspects of foreign language learning, it is important to be able to identify foreign language anxiety among secondary school students in English as Foreign Language classroom.

Research on foreign language anxiety has been conducted by many scholars and experts. Most of previous studies regarding Foreign Language Anxiety have been conducted in the university and involved university students as the participants. A study on Foreign Language Anxiety among

Chinese Senior Middle School Students was conducted by Landstrom (2015). The study focuses on somewhat younger learners: a class of 59 senior middle school students in a private school in a large city in north-western China was examined for anxiety with the help of the FLCAS. Younger students may perceive anxiety differently than their older counterparts and therefore group interviews were used to gain some insight into their thoughts on anxiety and their English subject.

Regarding the issues and previous related research, therefore this present study will attempt to investigate foreign language anxiety in EFL classroom. This study will focus on investigating the types of anxiety, possible causes and learning activities to overcome the anxiety in junior high school.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This present study will be conducted to:

- a. Investigate types of anxiety that occur among junior high school students in an EFL classroom.
- b. Investigate the possible causes of foreign language anxiety among junior high school students in an EFL classroom.
- c. Investigate the learning activities that can help junior high school students to overcome the anxiety in an EFL classroom.

1.3 The Research Questions

In line with the purpose of the study above, this study attempts to meet these following questions:

- a. What types of anxiety that occur among junior high school students in an EFL classroom?
- b. What are possible causes of foreign-language anxiety among junior high school students in an EFL classroom?
- c. What sorts of learning activities that can help junior high school students overcome the anxiety in an EFL classroom?

1.4 Assumptions

The assumptions for the research questions above are:

- a. Junior high school students encounter foreign language anxiety in an EFL classroom and there are several performance anxieties occurred.
- b. There are some possible causes of foreign-language anxiety among junior high school students in an EFL classroom.
- c. There are several learning activities that can help junior high school students overcoming the anxiety in an EFL classroom.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is conducted to junior high school students in a private junior high school in Bandung Barat, West Java, Indonesia. It is aimed to investigate types of anxiety that occur among junior high school students, some possible causes of foreign language anxiety, and the learning activities that can help junior high school students overcome the anxiety in an EFL classroom. Other discussion which is not related to this study is out of the researcher's concern.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following are the clarification of several terms used in this study:

a. Anxiety

Anxiety is defined by Spielberger (1983, p.15) as a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of autonomic nervous system. Gray (1982; Gray & McNaughton, 1996 cited in Barlow & Chorpita, 1998, p.3) defined anxiety as a state of the conceptual or central nervous system characterized by activity of the behavioral inhibition system (BIS). Anxiety itself is a complex matter since it involved psychological condition of the learners (Anandari, 2015, p.2).

b. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

It is defined as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the (foreign) language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.128).

c. English as a Foreign Language

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is studied by people who live in places where English is not a first language (Gebhard, 2009, p.39-40). Harmer (2007, p.12) argues that students of EFL tend to be learning so that they can use English when travelling or to communicate with other people, from whatever country who also speak English.

d. English Classroom

Foreign language classroom enables learners to learn and acquire new language. Harmer (2007, p.51) states that most current language teaching recognizes the value of language exposure through comprehensible input, while still believing that most people (apart from young children) find chances to concentrate on language forms and how they can be used extremely helpful.

e. Junior High School Students

Junior high school students are those who are in the age of early and middle adolescence according to the developmental stages proposed by the psychologists. Early adolescence covers the years from the beginning of puberty to about age 13 and includes most of the major physical changes of adolescence and accompanying changes in relationships with parents and peers. Meanwhile, middle adolescence (ages 14 to 16) is a time of increasing independence and preparation for adult occupations or further education. Some young people enter adult roles directly from middle adolescence (Grotevant, 1998 as cited in DeHart, Sroufe & Cooper, 2004, p.454).

1.7 Significance of the Study

Anxiety might hinder language learners to perform and achieve well in the classroom. Foreign language anxiety is considered as one of many factors that can cause learners to have rejection or mental block when learning language in the classroom. Many studies in this area of interest have shown that anxiety can pose serious problem among language learners. However, those previous studies mostly concern in investigating learners' level of foreign language anxiety and students' strategies to cope with the anxiety. Meanwhile, there are several methods and techniques that can be applied by teachers during teaching-learning process through some natural learning activities in the classroom that can help students overcome the anxiety.

This present study, therefore, is attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge already established in the field of interest both theoretically and practically.

- Theoretical benefit

This study is expected to shed a new light on the current issues and debate concerning the existence of language anxiety among language learners in an EFL classroom. The results of this study are expected to give contribution to the field of language anxiety, that this study may fill in the gap of the scant studies in foreign language anxiety, particularly mainly concern on its contribution to several teaching methods and techniques that can be applied through natural learning activities to reduce foreign language anxiety among junior high school students.

- Practical benefit

The findings of the research would inform English teachers, particularly secondary school teachers in Indonesia to consider on the existence of foreign language anxiety in EFL classroom and to identify students' foreign language anxiety in order to create the lessons appropriately by conducting teaching methods and techniques through natural learning activities that can help students to learn English more relax and comfortable. This study is expected to provide appropriate information regarding types of anxiety that occur among junior high school students,

possible causes of foreign language anxiety and the learning activities that can help students overcome the anxiety in EFL classroom.

- Policy benefit

The result of this study would provide stakeholders about the information of students' foreign language anxiety in EFL classroom. If the teachers know some possible causes of foreign language anxiety among students in EFL classroom and some learning activities that can help student overcome their anxiety, it is likely that students' anxiety in performing English might be reduced.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study will be organized into five chapters, as follows:

Chapter I : INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, definition of key terms, significance of the study, and organization of the study.

Chapter II : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter elaborates the theoretical foundation which is relevant to the investigated problem of the study, including explanation on anxiety, types of anxiety, foreign language anxiety, types of foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety and secondary school students, English language learning and previous related research.

Chapter III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents in detail the research methodology used in this study, including research design, research site and participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis.

Chapter IV : FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter provides a delineation of research findings and discussions based on the data obtained from the whole instruments employed.

Chapter V : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter draws conclusion of the whole research findings which have been obtained. This chapter also provides proposes recommendation for further study in the same area of interest.