

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of the terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

Foreign language learning can be a tough task for many language learners. One factor that makes the process difficult is their anxiety. Most language learners experience feelings of anxiety in the language learning process. Although the degree and severity of these feelings can vary from one person to another, cannot claim that it does not exist at all. The number of students who reported that they felt anxious while learning a second/foreign language.

Most learners feel anxious to learn and speak the foreign language in front of their classmates or native speakers. Some students may forget even easy words and others may be worried about making mistakes. Horwitz and Cope (2008) stated that “some language learners become anxious when they cannot be themselves when speaking in the new language”. They further stated that foreign language anxiety is fairly common among students. Understanding foreign language anxiety would give the researcher ideas for helping students cope with the difficulty of learning a new language.

Riasati (2011) found that a number of students who reported that they feel anxious while learning a second/foreign language experienced some degree of anxiety. It is also argued that language learning anxiety may pose potential problems for language learners (Kondo & Ling, 2004). In line with this, anxious learners feel less enjoyable in their study (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2005) and having performance difficulties. Moreover, Gregersen & Horwitz (2005) stated

that learners will experience it if they have low English proficiency. As a result, they may withdraw their participation in the classroom. Learners' anxiety mostly is caused by fear of negative evaluation, which tend to avoid any evaluative situations.

Furthermore, Riasati (2011) claimed that language teachers also recognize the existence of a foreign language anxiety in the classrooms and how it can influence learners' performance; however, they rarely take steps to attend to this important issue. Regarding this, William & Andrade (2008) states, "since anxiety is a factor that can hinder learners performance and achievement, it deserves continuing investigation". Many researchers think that anxiety can prevent students from achieving a high level of proficiency in a foreign language. Studies seem to indicate that anxiety has negative consequences in language performance. Although some researchers (e.g., Marcos-Llinás & Garau, 2009) argued that foreign language anxiety increase students' motivation to do well in the classroom.

Foreign language anxiety often occurs in adolescents. Early adolescents are a distinct period of human growth and development situated between childhood and adolescents. Foxman (2004) highlighted common fears in adolescents which are tested and school performance, especially in adolescents between the ages of 9-12. There are about 13% of American children and adolescent ages 9 to 17 experienced some kind of anxiety disorder (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (1999)). Chavira, Stein, Bailey & Stein (2004) point out that anxiety disorder of adolescence is viewed as a silent problem. Moreover, Sila (2011) claims that adolescents may not be able to describe anxious feelings, even though they are intensely anxious. This condition is often considered as a self-underestimation. Looking at this, adolescents who have high levels of anxiety tend to have such behavior like avoidance and retreat of language learning opportunities.

There are several research about foreign language anxiety which focus on different types of the students' age. For example the research on anxiety of University students by Vitasari, et al (2010). In their research, they found that

there are five potential anxiety sources among university students, there are exam, presentation, mathematics, language, and social anxiety. Another research done by Na (2007), she surveyed and analyzed 115 students from a high school in Shandong Province, China. The results showed that students did have a relatively high anxiety in learning English and they had more fear of negative evaluation. Male students have high anxiety in English class than female students. It was also found that the high anxiety plays a role in influencing high school students to learn the language and anxiety affects their achievement in learning English.

However study of foreign language anxiety in adolescents so far has not been conducted in Indonesia. Therefore, this study is conducted in Junior High School in Bandung to investigate levels of anxiety experienced by adolescent students, the factors of anxiety among those students, and how they cope with it. It is expected that by reducing those factors, teachers can create a more relaxing environment, so that more effective language learning would take place.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the research background the following research questions are revealed:

1. What are levels of anxiety experienced by adolescent students in foreign language anxiety?
2. What are the factors of their foreign language anxiety?
3. What are the coping strategies used by the students in foreign language anxiety?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Based on research questions the following purposes were drawn up as possible answers to the research questions presented.

1. To find out the levels of anxiety experienced by adolescent students in foreign language anxiety.
2. To identify the factors of their foreign language anxiety.

3. To investigate the coping strategies used by the students in foreign language anxiety.

1.4 Scope of the Study

Based on the research questions stated beforehand, the focus of this research is relied on three parts of the discussion concerning foreign language anxiety in adolescents. It investigates students' foreign language classroom anxiety level, the sources of students' anxiety and coping strategies of the students. This research tries to find out the level and sources of students' anxiety. However the research is limited in terms of site and participants, and classroom context. The participants come from one of the junior high schools in Bandung who are in the 9th grade. The classroom context is limited to an EFL classroom in Indonesia context.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical benefits

This study will enrich the literature about students' anxiety. It also can be used as the contribution to the research about student anxiety during teaching learning in the classroom.

2. Practical significance

The result of the study will give information about the exploration student anxiety in the classroom, so that they can be more prepared before teaching learning.

3. Professional significance

The research will contribute to professional development. By understanding student's Foreign Language Classroom, teachers can find out additional information on how to help student perform better. In practice, it is beneficial for learners understand what learners feel in the English classroom to help learners to reduce their language anxiety. Hence, as learners' language anxiety, the causes and resolution as well as the effects are identified, the

findings are expected to optimize the learners' learning experience in acquiring foreign language specifically in accomplishing their English skills

1.6 Clarification of Related 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 follows.

a. Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is the feeling of worry or nervousness and fear experienced when learning or using a second or foreign language.

b. Coping Strategies (Defense Mechanism)

Coping strategies (defense mechanism) is a behavior that helps us to function better in a given situation or a coping technique that reduces anxiety.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The research study is organized into five chapters. The chapters are arranged as follows:

1. Chapter I Introduction

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

2. Chapter II Literature Review

This chapter describes the theories which support the study. This covers the theories relevant to the purposes of the study. It includes anxiety, types of anxiety (trait, state and situation specific anxiety), foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety in adolescence, sources of language anxiety, coping strategies (flight behaviors, aggressive behaviors, group manipulation behaviors and compromise behaviors) and implications for teaching and learning.

3. Chapter III Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study that includes formulation of problems, research design, research site and research subject, data collection and data analysis (analyzing the data from interviews and questionnaires)

4. Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter elaborates findings and discussions of the data of the questionnaires and interviews.

5. Chapter V Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter illustrates conclusions of the research, implications and recommendations for further research.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has elaborated the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarification of related terms and organization of the paper. The following chapter will discuss methodology.