

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction of this study. It presents a brief description of the background of the study in foreign language classroom anxiety. Subsequently, the background of the study is followed by the purpose, questions, significance, scope, methodology and clarification of terms of the study. At last, this chapter also presents the organization of this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

To be able to communicate with people around the world, English speaking skill is considered to be an important skill. Students should have a good command of communication skills 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 the 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 the 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 an 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 to speak in front of others. According to previous research, Sugiharti (2007) found out that students don't feel comfortable to speak 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 silence even if they understand the questions and could actually answer the 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 Qunying (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 mouths 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).

This 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. They also noted that counselors in LSC, (Learning Skills Center) in United States of America found that anxiety centers on two basic tasks; speaking and listening, especially the speaking one.

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) findings that showed EFL students are afraid to speak in foreign language because they are afraid to make mistakes and thought as less competent by the others. They also don't have bravery to speak in front of others because of their high self-consciousness (Krashen, 1982).

These kinds of problems 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 row and even skipping EFL classes.

There are some previous researches on anxiety and its effects to speaking ability. The results show 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 the 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 Purposes of the Research

The purpose of the research is mainly aimed at knowing the level of anxiety experienced by students in junior high school in Indonesia in English speaking classroom. The second purpose of this research is to identify the potential sources, factors or situations that make them feel anxious or uneasy when they speak English in English classroom. The third purpose is to reveal students' strategies to cope with their anxiety when they speak in 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 follows:

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

1.4 Significance of Research

This study is hoped to make more contribution towards the gap filling concerning FLSA research in Indonesia. This study is hopefully could give more insight and findings to the general understanding of foreign language learning and teaching.

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. They also can get more information about factors that trigger students' anxiety when they speak in English and try to find strategy to help them in reducing students' anxiety and creating more relax atmosphere in class. This study is also expected to help students to find out ways or strategies to overcome their anxiety problem when speaking using English in public. Through this study, it is hoped that educators could also understand how anxiety affect in students' English learning.

This study hopefully will give insights to professional teachers and practitioners of the existence of anxiety and its possibilities in English teaching and learning processes. Therefore it can help students and teachers to be more successful in teaching and learning process in the classrooms.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on three parts of discussion concerning students' speaking anxiety in junior high school. It investigates students' foreign language classroom anxiety level, the sources of students' speaking anxiety and students' anxiety coping strategies.

1.6 Research Methodology

The introduction of the background, purposes, questions and significance of the research have been presented. The brief explanation of research methodology is described in this sub-chapter.

1.6.1 Design

The proposed research uses descriptive qualitative method in order to answer the questions proposed. The qualitative descriptive method is coherent with the objectives of the study. It helps to describe the subjects' opinion on language speaking anxiety, factors behind their anxiety and strategies they use to reduce their anxiety in the classroom.

1.6.2 Respondents

The respondents for this study were second grade students of a junior high school in Bandung taking English subject as one of subjects taught in school. English in this context is taught as a foreign language with goals that the students could attain the four main skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking.

1.6.3 Data Collection

In collecting the data to meet the needs of the questions, the study uses two kind of questionnaires. The open-ended questionnaire used is FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) is developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) that embody the reflections of communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom. The FLCAS is used to identify students' anxiety level. The second instrument is an open-ended

questionnaire made to gain the sources of students' speaking anxiety and their coping strategies.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Students' anxiety level was gained from the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) questionnaire that was administered to 32 respondents. The data were analyzed and put into percentages. The theory of Young (1991) and Ohata (2005) was used to analyze data of the sources of anxiety which was gained from the second questionnaire. While, the theory proposed by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) was used to analyze data for the coping strategies students use to reduce their anxiety.

1.7. 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:

- a. Anxiety – According to Horwitz et al. (1986) Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.
- b. FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) 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.

1.8 Organization of Paper

The research paper will be organized as follows:

1. Chapter I Introduction

This chapter comprises the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, research methodology, and the organization of the paper.

2. Chapter II Theoretical Foundation

This chapter consists of related theories as the basis of investigating the research problems. Those are the 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 clarifies how the research was conducted. It covers research design, respondents, data collection and data analysis.

4. Chapter IV Findings and Discussion

This chapter consists of the results of the research and discussion. It shows the findings on the data collection and analyze as well as the discussion related to the theoretical framework.

5. Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestions

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.