

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction of this study. It presents an explanation of the background of the study towards the phenomenon of foreign language reading anxiety. Subsequently, the background of the study is followed by the purpose, research question, significance, scope, methodology, and clarification of term of the study. At last, this chapter also presents the organization of this paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

This is an undeniable fact that, nowadays in Indonesia, the need of English mastery is on high demand. In attempt of facing globalization era with highly hard competition, the competency of mastering English as the most used international language is required more and more, hence English is taught formally from elementary school up to university level (National Education System, 2003, as cited in Febriani, 2011). In this case, English mastery is also being concern in Senior High School level. In relevance to reading skill, the standard competence of reading for eleventh grade is to understand the meaning of written text including short functional text and essay such as narrative text, spoof, hortatory exposition, report, descriptive text, and analytical exposition, which are related to the context of daily life (KTSP, 2006, as cited in Kurniawati, Susilawati, & Arifin, 2013). In other words, students have to know and comprehend those kinds of texts since later in twelfth grade they will be tested in national examination. The

students, who do not acquire good reading skill including comprehension of the various genres of text, may face difficulties to achieve the passing grade of the national examination. In this sense, the students are required to achieve English reading proficiency before they face the national examination.

In fact, teaching students to read English is not an easy thing. Based on the researcher's observation during PPL (Field Experience Program) at a senior high school in Bandung, there were some problems experienced by students in reading activities at classroom, for instance, during reading activity, students lost their focus and consequently they talked to their friends for other businesses and considered reading a text was not interesting activity in learning English. Moreover, some students asked permission to the teacher to go to toilet, but they did not come back to the class anymore and missed the reading class. The other problems are the students refused to convey their own idea regarding the text and to read aloud the text in front of their friends. In addition, when the students did not know the meaning of words in their reading text, only a few students looked up their dictionary or asked the teacher. Due to the cases above, it is likely that some anxieties affect students' motivation and they find serious difficulties in reading academic English texts. Some students avoid activities in English reading class, cutting the class, or at least, they are not enthusiastic toward reading in English and in some cases they avoid reading English materials (Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010). These manifestations are symptoms of foreign language anxiety in classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). In most cases, language anxiety has a detrimental effect on language performance (Bailey & Daley, 1999; MacIntyre,

Noels, & Clement, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2006; as cited in Liu, 2011), and particularly for foreign language reading anxiety has negative effect on reading comprehension and reading process (Saito, Horwitz, & Garza, 1999; Sellers, 2000). This matter triggers researcher's curiosity to conduct an inquiry towards anxiety in foreign language reading.

Zbornik (2001) defines reading anxiety as an unpleasant emotional reaction toward reading that results when the student's intellectual drives of curiosity, aggression, and independence become associated either singularly or in combination with *significant other* disapproval and the reading process. *Significant other* is defined as a person or people who have a significant emotional influence over the student's behavior or belief system. In this context, the forms of disapproval are in the form of peers or teacher pressure as the significant others, for example students have made mistakes in reading and getting laughed by their peers and the teacher's manner in correcting their mistakes. Furthermore, students start to feel unpleasant as they encounter any English text, and also underestimate their ability. As a result, lack of self-confidence is one of the symptoms they suffer as had been found in the researcher's observation during PPL (Field Experience Program). Hence, a further investigation is needed to verify such an issue.

Then, how is the existence of foreign language reading anxiety particularly in Indonesian context? Researcher has noted that most study in FL anxiety has been conducted mainly on speaking, since speaking has long been viewed as the most anxiety-provoking skill for foreign language learners to acquire (Horwitz et

al., 1986). As a result, a small number of studies have been conducted on foreign language reading anxiety in Indonesian context, as can be observed from the prevalent use of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCS) in FL anxiety studies conducted in Indonesia. Developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), the FLCAS was found to assess primarily speaking or listening anxieties: 20 out of 33 items are related to speaking or listening (Saito et al., 1999). There is a need to investigate foreign language reading anxiety, particularly in Indonesian context because the acquisition of foreign language is not only limited to the speaking skill. The acquisition of foreign language reading skill is important as well, especially in academic contexts, where the successful learning is preliminarily determined by one's ability to read (Grabe, 2009, as cited in Liu, 2011). In addition, this study is in response to Brantmeier (2005, as cited in Ghonsooly & Loghmani, 2012) has called that: "To date, the database of studies concerning anxiety and L2 reading is not complete and therefore no generalization specific to reading can be formulated." In view of that, reading anxiety (RA) will be the heart of the present investigation.

Furthermore, from a review of studies on foreign language reading anxiety shows that most of previous studies concerning on examining the correlation between reading anxiety and reading performance (Brantmeier, 2005; Kuru-Gonen, 2007; Saito, et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000). In other words, previous studies on foreign language reading anxiety have been predominantly correlation research design. Although correlation research designs have yielded certain results and shed some light on foreign language reading anxiety, there seems to be a need

to make a shift toward survey research design as a possible avenue for future studies on foreign language reading anxiety. In addition, how anxiety affects foreign language performance is only an issue to consider when discussing anxiety and language learning. There are other important issues that need to be considered for a better understanding towards the phenomenon of foreign language reading anxiety such as investigating different level of reading anxiety among students, potential factors that cause reading anxiety and reading strategies which are used by students to reduce their anxiety. Those are related to the scope of this present study and to what extent this study is conducted.

Next, with respect to the selection of participants, the majority of participants recruited in the previous reading anxiety studies were actually from university level. To understand how high school students perceive foreign language reading anxiety, the recruitment of participants from high school context, is therefore necessary. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill the gap and explore this kind of phenomenon in senior high school level, especially in Indonesian setting, where English is considered as a foreign language and is learned and used primarily in classroom context. There are three notions that are being explored by using survey research design. The first is the level of reading anxiety perceived by senior high school students. The second is the potential factors that cause reading anxiety. The last one is the reading strategies used by students to reduce their reading anxiety.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

In relation to the background and the statement of the problem above, this study has three purposes. The first is to know the level of reading anxiety perceived by Indonesian Senior High School Students in English reading classroom. The second is to identify the potential factors that make them feel anxious or uneasy when they read English text. The third is to reveal the most reading strategies used by students to reduce their reading anxiety.

1.3 Research Questions

Several issues regarding language reading anxiety have been identified in the background and research purpose section. The research questions for the present study are as follows:

1. What is the level of reading anxiety perceived by most of the students in English reading class?
2. What are the potential factors that cause anxiety among the students in English reading class?
3. What reading strategies are mostly used by the senior high school students to reduce their anxiety in reading?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on three parts of discussion concerning students' reading anxiety in Senior High School level. It is limited only to investigate students' foreign language reading anxiety level, the potential factors that cause

students' reading anxiety, and the most reading strategies which are used by students to reduce their reading anxiety.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to make more contribution towards the gap filling concerning foreign language anxiety studies in Indonesia which mostly concern on speaking than the other language skills, especially reading. On the other hand, reading anxiety studies have been exist now since reading experts have considered the influence of affect in L2 or FL reading (Bernhardt, 2000, 2003, as cited in Zoghi & Alivandivafa, 2012), and especially for foreign language reading anxiety, as they contend, influences understanding of reading and process (Saito et al., 1999; Sellers, 2000). Therefore, language anxiety in reading should not be ignored, since it can impede reading achievement of students.

Furthermore, this study is hopefully could give some benefits both in theory and practice. In term of theoretical benefits, the results of study are expected to enrich the literature and also give beneficial references for future study in term of foreign language reading anxiety, especially in providing the information about different level of reading anxiety, potential factors that cause reading anxiety and also reading strategies mostly used by students to reduce their reading anxiety.

In term of practical benefits, the results of study are expected to give more insights for teacher and student in foreign language learning and teaching, especially in reading area. The information could help educators or teachers to

understand more the different levels of reading anxiety perceived by students when they read in English. They also can get more information about the potential factors that cause foreign language reading anxiety which is considered beneficial in helping the teachers to conduct appropriate treatment regarding the reading anxiety of their students. For students, the results can be a bridge for the students to find the proper reading strategy to reduce their reading anxiety.

1.6 Research Methodology

The introduction of the background, purposes, questions, scope, and significance of the study have been presented. The brief explanation of research methodology is described in the following sub-chapters.

1.6.1 Research Design

The study uses survey research design in order to answer the research questions. The survey design is coherent with the objectives of the study. It helps to describe the subjects' opinion regarding the level of foreign language reading anxiety, factors behind the students' reading anxiety and reading strategies used by students to reduce their anxiety in English reading class.

1.6.2 Participants

The participants for this study were eleventh grade students of a senior 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 goal that the students could attain the four language skills; reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

1.6.3 Data Collection

To collect the data, the study uses three different kinds of questionnaires and an interview. The first questionnaire is FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) which is developed by Saito et al. (1999). The FLRAS is used to identify students' reading anxiety level. The second questionnaire is SORS (Survey of Reading Strategies) which is proposed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). The SORS is used to investigate reading strategies used by students to reduce their reading anxiety. The third questionnaire is a developed questionnaire to measure the trend of potential factors of foreign language reading anxiety which is proposed by Ahmad et al. (2013). Afterward, some students were selected to be interviewed based on observation criteria such as students' classroom participation, attitude toward English class, English reading proficiency, English test score, and their length of study. Interview session was conducted to support the questionnaire results about the potential factors of reading anxiety and also reading strategies which are mostly used by students to reduce their reading anxiety.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

The data about reading anxiety level were collected from Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) questionnaire that were distributed to 32 respondents. Furthermore, the data were analyzed and put into percentages. The theory of Ahmad et al. (2013) used to analyze data of the potential factors of reading anxiety gained from the developed questionnaire to measure trend of reading anxiety factors. While, the theory proposed by Mokhtari and Sheorey

(2002) used to analyze data obtained from Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) questionnaire about reading strategies employed by students to reduce their reading anxiety. Afterward, the result of interview was analyzed and presented to support the data gained from the questionnaires.

1.7 Clarification of Terms

There are some terms used in this study. To clarify the meaning of those terms, this study includes the clarification of those terms as follows:

1. Anxiety is defined by Spielberger, (1983) as a “subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (cited in Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1991).
2. Foreign Language refers to any language other than the mother tongue and the Indonesian language learned.
3. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety is the condition when Foreign Language readers read Foreign Language texts they may get frustrated with reading, and experience anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013).
4. FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) is a questionnaire made by Saito et al. in 1999 to identify the level of reading anxiety perceived by foreign language learner. The questionnaire consists of 33 questions with scale started from 1-5.
5. SORS (Survey of Reading Strategies) is a questionnaire made by Mokhtari and Sheorey in 2002 to identify reading strategies used by

students to reduce their anxiety in reading English text. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions with scale started from 1-5.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

1. Chapter I: Introduction

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

2. Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter consists of related theories as the basis of investigating the research problems. Those are the nature of reading, reading and teaching reading, the potential factors that cause reading anxiety, the reading strategies, and the previous studies about foreign language reading anxiety.

3. Chapter III: Research methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting the study. It clarifies how the study was conducted. It covers research design, respondent, data collection, and data analysis.

4. Chapter IV: Findings and Discussions

This chapter consists of the results of the study and discussion. It shows the findings on the data collection and analyzes as well as the

discussion related to the underlying theories mentioned in chapter II,
literature review.

5. Chapter V: Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter presents those who expect to conduct the similar studies
with the conclusion and suggestion on the topic of the study according
to the research findings.

