

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Language learning is affected by both domains which are the mental and emotional sides of human behaviors (Andres, 2002). In line with that, Branden (1994) stated that those facets can be motivation, attitudes, anxiety or self-esteem. They can be positive or negative factors. Self-esteem is an emotional factor which influences the students when they learn about language. Brown (2014) stated that self-esteem is probably the most pervasive aspect of any human behavior. It could easily be claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem.

Accordingly, Graham (1997) stated that in order to be an advanced language learner, students need both cognitive and affective aspects. The cognitive deals with the ability to adapt to new demands and approaches involve new learning strategies and patterns of working to adjust the situation. Further, she also emphasizes the influence of affective factors on how well a foreign language is acquired. Practically, English teaching process is aimed at improving the personality with the road trying to get a new understanding, new values, and new skills. Success or failure of a person to run a learning process associated with the act. The act is defined as the result of a learning process that is made possible by a state of physical, spiritual, social and environmental.

According to Gardner and McIntyre (1992), affective factors are those emotionally relevant characteristics of the individual that influence how she/he will respond to any situation. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior and involves a variety of personal factors and feelings (Brown, 2014). Affective factors which may have impacts on foreign language learning have been researched since around the late 1980s (Takahashi & Takahashi, 2013). These factors include motivation, anxiety, attitudes, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking tendencies, and so forth.

Speaking a foreign language requires thinking and involving affective factors; one of which is self-esteem. Self-esteem is one factor that triggers the students' achievement in speaking English. Self-esteem deals with feelings; how they feel that they are capable of doing something well. Previous experiences like success and failures are the examples that can lead the students to how they value themselves. This understanding is symmetrical with Brown's viewpoint (1994 & 2000), that self-esteem is one of the personality variables that contributes to the oral production achievement because the students will achieve their success in learning a foreign language if they feel confident and believe in themselves.

Moreover, self-esteem often has a connection with mentally health, learning successfully, living effectively, and even the good life (Murk, 2006). Self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of his or her value or worth. It can be considered a sort of measure of how much a person "values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself" (Adler & Stewart, 2004). This viewpoint is related to the empirical findings which is about the correlation

between foreign language production is related to various personality variables. Frequently explored traits include sociability, extroversion, field dependence/independence, empathy, and anxiety (Gardner & Clement, 1990).

Smelser (1989) identified that there are three elements affected by self-esteem, namely cognitive, affective, and evaluative elements. These elements have great roles in determine the successful of learning foreign language. The first element (self-esteem) which means characterizing some parts of one self in power, confidence, and agency has a relation with English language proficiency. This researcher thinks that the three aspects determine the students' language proficiency, including with speaking English.

Researches on English language proficiency and self-esteem have been conducted by many researchers around the globe. Andres (2002) argued that in recent years, the importance of affective factors such as anxiety, inhibition, motivation and self-esteem has been of interest in the field of language learning because of their high effects on learning a foreign or a second language. The researcher thinks that the finding reflects the needs for English teacher to work together with relevant teacher to enhance the students' self-esteem due to its significant contribution in improving the students' performance in speaking English.

Another different study was conducted by Kaniuka (2010) who stated that there seems to be little evidence that increasing a student's level of self-esteem will raise their level of achievement. But this empirical study seems to be contrary with one which was resulted by Suharmanto (2006) through his study. He

investigated that the patterns of relationships among some selected affective factors affecting students' EFL reading comprehension. The study reveals some finding which verified patterns of path relationship among some selected factors which are covered as the cognitive aspects and EFL reading comprehension.

Further, Cahya (2015) investigated selected affective factors and EFL proficiency of college students. This study reveals some findings that the only significant path with a direct contribution to EFL proficiency is from attitude. The significant path is initiated by motivation and self-esteem significantly contributes to attitude. In contrast, this present research tries to focus on the affective factors and their contribution to the reading aspect. Based on this previous study, this study tries to analyze the correlation of self-esteem to students reading comprehension, and it is to detect the effect of affective factor on reading comprehension to student's reading comprehension.

The elaboration mentioned earlier is relevant with a finding that said self-esteem affects different aspects of learning language skills not only reading but also writing and oral communicative proficiency as has been studied by some researchers (Shumin, 1997; Timothy et al., 2001). Self-esteem impacts on the students' comprehension or proficiency. It can be identified that students with high self-esteem usually set higher goals for themselves and become more willing to continue in spite of failure. Furthermore, high self-esteem may also help students have the confidence to challenge difficult situations as well as see satisfaction from their progress and success (Murk, 2006).

Fahim et al. (2012), Hisken (2011), and Bagheri et al. (2012) that focused on self-esteem and paragraph writing, but they include English language proficiency as their unseen variables in the study. They found that there is a relationship between English language proficiency and self-esteem of Iranian EFL language learners. This study used *Nashre Ebteda* version of TOEFL proficiency test (structure and reading sections) and Cooper smith self-esteem questionnaire.

Another research found that self-esteem also has positive correlation with English writing and reading achievement in general scope. It is revealed by Al-Hattab's study (2006) that showed that the positive correlation emerges from situation and task self-esteem with English writing achievement. In contrast, there was not significant correlation between the two variables. Whereas Bagheri et al. (2012) research focused not only on self-esteem for reading comprehension but also global, situational, task self-esteem and personality toward reading comprehension. They found that self-esteem is positively correlated with reading comprehension. The participants of their study were university students.

To sum up, in the successful learning, Smelser (1989) identified that there are three elements affected by self-esteem, namely cognitive, affective, and evaluative elements. The first element (self-esteem) which means characterizing some parts of oneself in power, confidence, and agency has a relation with English language proficiency. In addition, self-esteem is defined as the complication of feelings about us that guides our behavior, influences our attitudes, and drives our motivation. In hence, Rosenberg (1965) states that, self-esteem is important to a person's identity and awareness and that high and low

self-esteem would influence a behavior in positive and negative ways respectively.

Stern (1999) highlighted the role of affective factors such self-esteem in learning a foreign language. They put into words that the way people assess themselves would influence the process of foreign language learning, such as speaking. Further, a person should put a high value for his performance and be confident of his achievement because those judgments he makes are the drive for mastering proficiency. Low self-esteem can negatively affect language learning and they especially appear in oral communication. Hence, Snyder and Tice in Mruk (2006) stated that people with high self-esteem usually feel competent enough to take the risk and worthy enough to sustain a failure, should it occur, so they may set their sights high from the beginning.

The others, in contrast, are often just as concerned with avoiding the loss of worthiness as with gaining more, so they may use what is called a “self-handicapping strategy” even as they go about trying to be successful. In addition, Burns (2000) argues that, “A person who has high self-esteem is confident reveals that a person is in secure, lacking in confidence and self-critical. It can be identified that students with high self-esteem usually set higher goals for themselves and they have high confidence when they speak. On the other hand, the students have low self-esteem it could be influence their speaking skill such as they have no courage to speak up in front of class. It can be said that self-esteem has high contribution to students speaking skill.

Based on the researcher's interview at SMA Pertiwi Medan on October 2020, the researcher identified some problems, firstly the students still lack on vocabulary, and they had no enough confidence to speak because they awareness in grammar. Furthermore, they were also less in pronunciation because in English there were different forms between written and spoken form. On the other hand, some of them said that they enjoy the learning process of English especially when they learnt speaking, because they could express what they felt, share their opinion or asked when they did not understand the lesson when they learnt English without afraid with the pronunciation and grammar as long as their teacher and their friend understand what they said.

Based on the details above, researcher concludes that self-esteem is categorized as personality a factor that determines ones' performance in speaking English. Eventually, the elaboration above motivates the researcher to derive an empirical study in looking at the students' self-esteem in speaking English. In short, the study was conducted in Senior High School. The study entitles "Senior High School Students' Self-esteem in Speaking English".

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Relying on the stuff wrote earlier, the problems of study are formulated as follows:

1. What types of students' self-esteem are reflected in speaking English?
2. How are the students' self-esteems realized in speaking English?
3. Why are the students' self-esteems realized as the ways they are?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems formulated above, the objectives of the study are:

1. to analyze the students' self-esteem that are reflected in speaking English,
2. to describe the patterns of self-esteem realized in speaking English, and
3. to elaborate the reasons of owning such self-esteem in speaking English.

### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

It is best to avoid the bias or even misunderstanding within the readers. Therefore, the study covered the types of self-esteem of Senior High schools students' in speaking English. Further, the study also focused on the patterns of self-esteem realized in English spoken performance. Last, but not least, it concentrated to elaborate the reasons of owning any self-esteem related in speaking English.

### **1.5 The Significance of the Study**

The results of the study are expected to be very beneficial both for the readers or another further related study in the tie to come. In detail, all the significances are describes as follows:

1. Theoretical Significance



The results of the research are expected to give scientific evidences about the strong link between students' self-esteem in speaking English. In other words, there would be further theoretical development of self-esteem or language proficiency, especially speaking.

## 2. Practical Significance

### a. Institution

The researcher expects that the outcomes of the research may give positive input for the institution to improve the quality of students' self-esteem and their English speaking proficiencies in the institution can be increased.

### b. Teacher

The researcher hopes that the study can be beneficial for the teacher as one of the resources in teaching English which is can applied in the future.

### c. Students

The researcher believes that this study will also be valuable for students in improving their motivation to learn about attitude.

### d. Further research

The researcher finally hopes that the findings of the study could also be worthy; information and references for the next researcher who wants to conduct the similar areas of research.