

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

English today is believed to be the most influential way in bridging the global communication. A large proportion of learners in the world study English hard in order to communicate with native speakers or speakers of other languages. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are all necessary when learning a new language. Speaking is considered to be the most direct method of communication out of the four abilities.

Speaking is defined as an activity by Ladouse (1991:55) as the ability to express oneself in a situation, or the ability to report an action or situation with the right words, or the ability to speak or express a process of ideas fluently. It is one of the four fundamental skills that students have to be master. Students can express and convey their meanings, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and opinions orally to other people in a dialogue form, whether it is a formal or informal dialogue inside or outside the school by speaking. As is well known, speaking is the most commonly used tool in the communication process. Furthermore, Richards (2008:19) states many second or foreign language learners prioritize mastery of English speaking skills.

On the other hand, Ur (1996) states that speaking as the most crucial skill among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because knowing a language is referred to as speakers of that language. In addition, Freeman (2001)

remarks speaking ability more complicated and difficult than people expect. Speaking is a difficult factor for students to learn because they do not have proper exposure to English, and they are timid and lazy to study English. Although speaking is the most difficult skills, learners must be able to acquire this ability. Nevertheless, making mistakes is unavoidable in such language learning. A language learner must be aware of potential errors and issues with language, particularly speaking ability.

Bird (1996) defines difficulty as anything tough to perform or comprehend. In other terms, difficulty is something that is tough to comprehend or perform. Speaking English can be difficult due to a variety of factors, such as lack of general knowledge, lack of speaking practice, fear of mistakes, and low motivation. Additionally, speaking usually requires combining multiple skills, which can be challenging for learners. Furthermore, colloquial speech and contracted forms can make it difficult to understand native speakers. Finally, fear of communication and lack of training environment can also contribute to difficulty in speaking English. To sum up, many students experience various issues while trying to speak English in front of the class or when interacting with others.

Sadtono (1997) identifies two issues with language learning. These are the linguistics and non-linguistics factors. Regarding this linguistic problems, students are likely to find it challenging to express themselves verbally. They are unable to express themselves because of issues in some ways. They are frequently hesitant to talk related to issues such as re stricted vocabularies, pronunciation, and grammar. While non-linguistic problems makes some students are unable to speak well

because of factors such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, nervousness, and feelings of anxiety when speaking English. It is possible to conclude that each student has a unique psychological condition when it comes to speaking English.

In reality, anxiousness is the most common difficulty that most EFL students faced.

Anxiety refers to subjective experiences associated with a stimulation of the nervous autonomic system, such as tension, apprehension, uneasiness, and worry (Spielberger, 1983). Anxious EFL students believe that they are terrified of creating something and would feel embarrassed if they make a mistake. When the teacher asks students a question, they will lack confidence and afraid if their response is incorrect. They are afraid that if they are incorrect, the other learners would laugh at them. They have an idea in their heads, but since they are nervous, they remain mute and do not react or respond. Based on this fact, a strategy to overcome speaking anxiety is required. As a result, the significance of learning skills might help to minimize anxiety.

Students' learning strategies are measures they take to improve their own learning (Oxford, 1990:1). Seeking out discussion partners, asking for feedback, and practicing out loud are some of the learning tactics used by students to improve their speaking abilities. Language learning techniques are a valuable tool kit for active and aware learning, and they lead the road to improved language learning competency (Dörnyei, 2005). Furthermore, according to Oxford (1990:8), the use of suitable language acquisition procedures is a significant contribution to the development of communicative competence. It may be concluded that using

incorrect strategy would not result in significant increase in communication competence. Hence, learning strategy are one of the most important aspects that influence in language learning.

From the explanation above, one of problems the students face is whenever they try to speak English, they feel nervous. Most of them know how to form sentence, understand information from material they listen to and read, and write sentences in good order. But when it comes to speaking, they do not want to perform. And although they perform their speaking skill, they appear nervous and fear of their skill. These conditions are called anxiety. Because of that, the reason to conduct this research is to find out about student anxiety and what strategies are used by students to overcome these anxiety. Because anxiety can have a big effect on learning, it is important to find out more about student anxiety. Because of a variety of issues, the majority of them are unable to communicate effectively in English.

After researcher did pre-observing students at SMK Negeri 7 Medan, in the second grade, Tourism Major, the researcher discovered that the majority of the learners was unable to use English in the English language classroom. The majority of them was unable to speak English, even in very short phrases or sentences.

Well, that was logical enough because the teacher primarily use Indonesian. One of the evidence of the teacher use Indonesian when teaching English in language classroom can be seen as it follows;

Teacher: *“Kalian pernah gak menulis surat? Surat untuk teman misalnya, atau untuk orang-orang terdekat? Nah, kalau pernah, surat yang kalian tulis itu disebut dengan personal letter atau surat pribadi. Jadi biasanya ya, personal letter*

dibuat untuk menceritakan apa yang mau kita ceritakan pada orang yang kita kenal melalui surat....”

The researcher observed the teacher started the class and taught personal letter as material at that time. From the beginning until the end of the class, the teacher use Indonesian dominantly instead of speak in English as the tools to deliver the lesson. The researcher feels that the teacher just wants the learners to understand what she is delivering, thus she picked Indonesian as the greatest tools to accomplish. Yet, the teacher has attempted to guide and challenge them to communicate in English. And it was demonstrated when learner needed to use the restroom; they had to obtain permission in English. However, once again, that was ineffective.

According to a study conducted by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), higher proficiency level students use a greater variety of strategies and use them in ways that help the student complete language tasks successfully, while low proficiency level students not only have fewer strategies but also frequently use strategies that are inappropriate to the task or do not lead to successful task completion. O'Malley and Chamot (1989) and Gu and Johnson (1996) studies show that effective learners used a variety of methods. This is corroborated by a study done by Gharbavi and Mousavi (2012), which found that the higher the level of learners, the more methods they apply.

As a result from the preliminary data above, the students still have a lack of ability to speak in English although the try some learning strategies to overcome their speaking problem. The present research aims to examine further into the language learning strategies employed by students with high and low speaking

performance to overcome speaking anxiety. It is predicted that understanding more about language learning strategies would help both teachers and learners discover better solutions to the students' problems with increasing their speaking abilities.

From those phenomenal situation, the researcher is interested to conduct a research about learning strategies used by students to overcome speaking anxiety.

1.2. Problems of the Study

The problems of this study as it follows:

1. What learning strategies are used by students to overcome their anxiety to speak English in classroom?
2. How are the learning strategies used by the students?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study attempts can be seen as it follows:

1. To describe the strategies used by students to overcome their anxiety to speak English in classroom.
2. To elaborate the learning strategies used by the students.

1.4. Scope of the Study

To figure out the specific objective of the research, the study establishes scope of the study. The scope of the study will aim to determine the limitation of issues that will be observed. The researcher focuses on the causes that trigger

students' anxiety and the solutions they employ to overcome anxiety during their speaking performances.

1.5. Significances of the Study

The significance of this study will be categorized into two, theoretically and practically.

1.5.1. Theoretically

The aim of this research is to gain further information on students' strategies to overcoming speaking anxiety in an English language classroom.

1.5.2. Practically

For learners:

Hopefully this research expected can be helpful guidance for students facing speaking anxiety, enabling them to effectively overcome the problem and enhance their speaking skills.

For teachers:

Furthermore, this study expected to give a beneficial contribution for teachers, especially for those who teach English. It is expected to give the teacher reference in the way of their teaching.

For the next researcher:

The researcher hope this study can be as reference for other researchers interested in doing a study on the skill of speaking.