



Chapter I
Introduction

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Foreign language mastery, especially English, is very important nowadays. This happens because English has emerged as the most-in-use international language in the 21st century. Especially in the global era, English has reached the point that no other languages have ever achieved before. It is spoken by 1,4 billion people, read by over 70% scientists all over the world, used in 85% of the world's mail writing as well as used to store 90% of all information in the world's retrieval electronic system (Hasman, 2000). Those facts shows the importance of English mastery nowadays.

Due to the fact, most countries, including Indonesia especially in Surabaya, introduce English to their youth as early as possible. In Surabaya, for example, it is a common sight to see many children learn English ever since their childhood and sometimes since they are in kindergarten age. More and more English courses are established as the demand increases. This also affects the universities, including Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya i.e. the English Department, to fulfill the need.

There is, however, an interesting phenomenon, which occurred during the learning processes in the English Department. The writer saw that his fellow students in his class got worried and sometimes hesitated when they

were about to come in front and use the target language (in this case, English) during the speaking class. In the writing class, he saw his fellow students got worried when they were about to make a composition in English. The same phenomenon also occurred in the classes that required presentations in front of the class. Even the most brilliant student in the class always got a difficulty when he/ she had to explain the subject in class.

The phenomenon above is not merely about the mastery of language, because the students who took the classes were the top-ranking students in the academic year of 1996 (the non-IC class of FKIP, 1996). They were all in the same class as the results of the placement test (FKIP, 1996). Therefore, it is likely that there is something beyond the mastery of English; something that affects foreign language learners in using the target language effectively.

Being curious, the writer wanted to know more about the phenomenon. In *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Krashen (1987) reviewed the Affective Filter hypothesis (proposed by Dulay and Burt, 1977). It is that those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will have a high or strong affective filter (one among them is the anxiety) that prevents them from acquiring the target language.

In their *Language Anxiety; From Theories and Research to Classroom Implications*, Horwitz and Young mentioned the anxiety as language anxiety. They presented several researches conducted by different researchers explaining the roles of language anxiety towards foreign

language learning processes. Scovel (1991) explained the roles by distinguishing the anxiety into facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety, said Scovel, “motivates the learner to ‘fight’ the new learning task”. In other words, facilitating anxiety made the student feel challenged to accomplish the learning task. On the other hand, Scovel said that “debilitating anxiety motivates the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task”. Meaning, this kind of anxiety tends to make the student give up learning the new learning task.

Daniel Goleman (1996) mentioned a conducive situation for students to learn related to anxiety, which is called *flow*. A person in the state of flow (explained further in Chapter II) may perform at the top form or even exceed the highest peak they have ever reached before, including in learning, without being over-fatigued. However, in order to experience *flow*, a person should not worry, fear or be anxious, but enjoy the job or what he is doing (Goleman, 1996). He found that students of low academic achievements were experiencing *flow* for about 16% from the entire time they used for studying, while in the same time span, those with high academic achievements experienced *flow* for about 40%! Another expert, Howard Gardner (1996), stated that this flow condition is the one of the healthiest ways in teaching and raising inner motivation of the students rather than expose them to threat or reward. He argued that if the students experience flow, they learn based on inner motivation. This kind of motivation, said

Howard, is far stronger compared to outer motivation such as threat or reward, which results in better learning achievements.

C From the above data, the writer may conclude that there is a correlation between students' anxiety and their learning achievement. From the data, the writer can also infer that both sides are correlating negatively, regarding that anxiety is generally known as negative feeling. Then, comparing these data and the phenomenon in his class, the writer got interested to know how strong the correlation between the two is. In other words, the question is "Does the students' anxiety have any significant negative correlation with their achievements in learning the target language, i.e. English?" Based on that, the writer decided to conduct this thesis.

In this thesis, the writer decided to choose the students of Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya at the even semester on the academic year of 1999/ 2000 as the subjects. Speaking B classes were taken by considering that *the students in this class were expected to express their thoughts, opinion, and feelings about their field and their immediate environment* (Pedoman Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Unika Widya Mandala Surabaya, 2000/ 2001, henceforth Pedoman FKIP UKWM, 2000/ 2001). By doing that, it is expected that the anxiousness of the students will be shown better which in turn contributes to better accuracy in scoring the anxiety rate.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the description above, the study attempts to find the answer to following question:

“Is there any significant negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their speaking achievements in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in the even semester on the academic year of 1999/ 2000”

1.3 The Objective of the Study

The study aims at determining whether there is a significant negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their speaking achievements in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in academic year of 1999/ 2000.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes that this study may give a clearer view on the language teaching and learning process, especially on the affective aspects and difficulties in the area faced by the learners. The writer also hopes that this thesis may benefit teachers or lecturers in terms of creating a conducive atmosphere for language learning and teaching. As for the learners, the writer hopes that this thesis may guide them to understand more about their affective aspect in learning the target language, so that if they do have similar problems, as they likely do, they can find ways to solve the problems by themselves.

1.5 The Hypothesis

In this study, the writer uses the following hypothesis:

1.5.1 Null Hypothesis

“There is no significant negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their achievements in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in the even semester on the academic year of 1999/ 2000”

1.5.2 Alternative Hypothesis

“There is a significant negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their achievements in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya in the even semester on the academic year of 1999/ 2000”

1.6 The Assumptions

Since the research question is about finding out whether there is a significant negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their achievements in Speaking B class, the writer assumes that the two variables can be correlated as can be found in previous studies (please see Chapter II). As for the population, since speaking is one of the compulsory subjects in the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, the writer assumes that the students of the Speaking B classes are taught by similar lecturers (in terms of quality and proficiency), using the same syllabus, materials, and teaching method. The writer also assumes that the students of Speaking B classes are of the same level.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Since the study attempted to prove the whether there is a significant negative correlation between the students' language anxiety and their achievements in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University in the academic year of 1999/ 2000, the writer based the research on the theory of language learning and theory on language anxiety. Further elaboration on the theory is in Chapter II.

1.8 The Scope and Limitation

The study is limited to the language anxiety and achievements of students in Speaking B classes of the English Department of Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya. The subject of the study is restricted to the students at the even semester in the academic year of 1999/ 2000.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding, it would be better to define key-terms concerning the topic of the study. The key-terms are 'Correlation', 'Language Anxiety', 'Speaking Class' and 'Achievements';

1.9.1 Correlation

Correlation here means the "co-relation", a relationship between the two variables (Reaves, 1992). In this study, the relationship is between the Speaking B students' language anxiety and their achievements.

1.9.2 Language Anxiety

Language anxiety means the fear or anxiety an individual feels about communicating, mostly found in oral communication (Daly, 1985)

1.9.3 Speaking B

Speaking B means the course where the students are expected to be “able to express their thoughts, opinion and feelings about their field and their immediate environment” (Pedoman FKIP UKWM, 2000/2001).

1.9.4 Achievements

Achievements here mean the students’ progress in speaking English. Here, the achievements refer to the academic achievements of the subjects.

1.10 The Organization of the Study

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I serves as the introduction. Chapter II elaborates the theories that back up this study. Chapter III presents the Research Method. Chapter IV deals with the findings and analysis. Chapter V presents the conclusion and suggestions.