CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents background of the study, statement of the problems, purposes of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and the definition of the key terms. All of them are explained as follows.

1.1 Research Background

Learning English as a foreign language has become quite challenging yet indispensable for most students, either in language or general major. Horwitz (2000) stated that current foreign language classroom settings which aim to prepare the ground for a real-world interaction with second language (L2) speakers and directly engage students in spontaneous communication in the L2 become a stressful task for most learners. Many students were reported to experience worries, frights, anxiety, shyness, and remain in silence during their foreign language class. Many Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers considered these affective variables as an influential factor to foreign language learning impede students’ ability. Studies in this field are considered important in language learning, therefore it draws more SLA researcher’s attention to the continuing investigation (see e.g.; Ortega, 2009; Kondo and Ying-Ling, 2004; Aida, 1994).

Anxiety constitutes a feeling of being pressured, afraid, nervous and worried associated with the arousal of nervous system (Spielberger as cited in
Mahmoodzadeh, 2012); or a negative effect related to fear that happens in any situation (Batiha, Noor, and Mustaffa, 2014). Anxiety happens mostly to those who lack of self-esteem, for example people who are about to give speech in a community can be out of words, blank in a sudden, sweating, dreadful for they are worried about what other people think of them. Anxiety which occurred in foreign language classroom is considered as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA).

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) constitutes uneasy feelings of tension, apprehension and fear which students encountered when they are in a foreign language class. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) tried to draw the domain of FLA as follows; communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety. MacIntyre (as cited in Kondo and Yang Ling-Ling 2004) defines FLA as a situation-specific personality trait that creates negative self-related cognition. In addition, Zhang and Zhong (2012) stated that FLA constitutes the fear that happens to students while performing the language which they are not proficient with.

Speaking is considered as the most challenging English skill for common students. Linh (2011) revealed the same notion that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking skill for learners. This is also relevant to the researcher’s experience while taking speaking class. The researcher confessed that she often made unrealistic belief of foreign language class that caused her to experience FLA, such as if teacher points a question, students should answer it correctly without making any mistakes or otherwise your teacher and other students will notice your incapability of using L2. Thus, students tend to be in their comfort zone and feel
safe if they have prepared presentation rather than spontaneously speaking up in front of the class. It clearly implies that the students are afraid of small things that will make them look “dumb” in front of their friends because of pronouncing word incorrectly. The students will start to think that they are not doing a good job on their speaking class and try to make themselves work harder. However, when the result does not match with the effort as they have expected, then it will make the students get into deeper frustration with their foreign language class.

A previous study done by Tanveer (2007) found out that students blame a strict classroom environment as a significant cause of anxiety. Pribadi (2014) also revealed that 1st-year students of English Language Education Department in University of Muhammadiyah Malang experience trait anxiety and state anxiety. Most of the students are reported to have anxieties caused by lack of communication skill and fear of negative evaluation. Regarding those issues, the controversy and intricacy of FLA will be taken into account by other SLA researchers. The writer realize that conducting this research will be beneficial for not only EFL students but also for the research of SLA itself.

In addition, as a multicultural university, University of Muhammadiyah Malang has several foreign students coming from different country such as Thailand, specifically in English Department. Although the amount of Thailand Students is just a few, it does not mean that they can be just abandoned. Based on the researcher’s experience, most of the Thailand Students face more complex anxiety. It happens because they are not only learn about second language, but also find themselves difficult to socialize and communicate with the local students.
considering that they have to put themselves in the environment as a new adaptation. This is why the researcher takes into account the problem faced by Thailand Student in order to help them easier to learn English, specifically speaking, considering their amount that intended to be neglected. The researcher is interested to take the problems to be analyzed under the tittle of “Common Problems Dealing With Foreign Language Anxiety Faced By Thailand Students In Speaking Class Of English Department In University Of Muhammadiyah Malang”.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher, furthermore, formulates the statement of problems as follows:

1. What are the common problems dealing with anxiety faced by 8th-semester Thailand students in Speaking Class taught in University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

2. How to cope the anxiety problems faced by 8th-semester Thailand students in Speaking Class taught in University of Muhammadiyah Malang?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the background of the study above, purposes of the study are formulated as follows:
1. To know the common problems dealing with anxiety faced by 8\textsuperscript{th}-semester Thailand students in Speaking Class taught in University of Muhammadiyah Malang;

2. To know how to cope the anxiety problems faced by 8\textsuperscript{th}-semester Thailand students in Speaking Class taught in University of Muhammadiyah Malang;

1.4 Research Significance

In a theoretical viewpoint, this study is intended to:

1. Justify that FLA as one of the affective variables in language learning correlates with the 1st year students’ psychology while acquiring L2 (psycholinguistics study).
2. Justify that foreign language anxiety (FLA) hinder the 1st year students’ ability in acquiring the second or foreign language (Second Language Acquisition (SLA) study).

In terms of practical application, this study is intended to:

1. Both teachers and lecturers in general, and specifically to all English lecturers of University of Muhammadiyah Malang by providing information concerning with anxiety problems of Thailand students as a foreign learners in Speaking Class in University of Muhammadiyah Malang and how they cope those problems.
2. Inform what possible factors that are triggering and reducing anxiety so teachers will be able to help their students cope with anxiety, allowing Thailand students in speaking Class in University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
3. Enable other SLA researchers to use the findings as a reference in conducting similar or further research.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is confined on foreign language anxiety issues in speaking classes. The researcher limits the study to the 8th semester Thailand students in Speaking Class of English Department in University of Muhammadiyah Malang since the Thailand students are likely to experience FLA. In addition, considering that they are already in 8th semester, it means that they have experienced several anxiety moments when studying Speaking for eight semesters, and faced various problems compared to the juniors.

1.6 Definition of the key terms

To misunderstanding of the key terms used in this study, it is necessary for the researcher to define them as follows:

1. Second language acquisition (SLA) is a field of study which focuses on understanding the processes of learning another language after the L1 has been acquired, regardless of the fact that it is a second, third or fourth language (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

2. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a form of complex affective variables such as self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behavior that create negative cognition about one self competence and occurs merely in foreign language learning situation (Ortega, 2009; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1994; Kondo and Ying-Ling, 2004; Aida, 1994, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986).
3. First language (L1) refers to a language that a child learns from parents. Second language (L2) refers to additional languages that are being learned after the L1 (Ortega, 2008).