CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents and discusses the review of related literature which includes the description about second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language anxiety (FLA).

2.1. Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

Second language acquisition (SLA) is an autonomous discipline. It was emerged from linguistics and psychology that has been developed to a larger scope and correlates itself to other fields, which are notably psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and second language teaching (Gass and Selinker, 2008; Larsen, Freeman and Long, 2014). According to Orega (2008), SLA constitutes a study explores on human ability to learn other languages after their first language (L1) is being acquired in the late childhood, adolescence or adulthood.

Anxiety is considered as one of the most cited affective factors in SLA research. It is defined generally as an intense feeling of apprehension, tension and fear as a respond to particular situation. Spielberger as cited in (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012) depicts anxiety as a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with the arousal of the nervous system. The types of anxiety fall within three categories. Those are trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Each of categories will be explained as follows;
1. Trait anxiety constitutes one’s permanent characteristic to be anxious in all kinds of situation and happens in a long period of time. (e.g.; A person who is suffered from panic disorder)

2. State anxiety constitutes an anxious feeling that is not consistent and is experienced only in “that moment” as a respond to particular event or situation. (e.g.; Someone who is about to give a speech in a conference).

3. Situation-specific anxiety constitutes a similar behavior pattern to be anxious in one single moment that occurs continuously or a stable disposition to experience anxiety caused by one single moment. (e.g.; Students who always experience tense feeling and choose to remain in silence whenever they attend L2 classes).

Despite the three categories, not all kinds of anxieties refer to second language learning. Trait anxiety has no relation with second language learning as it emerges from heredity factors or experience from childhood. (Eysenck, 1992; Tavakoli, 2012). On the other hand, situation-specific anxiety emerged as a respond to a specific event is much correlated with classroom activities, such as second or foreign language classroom.

Situation-specific anxiety that happens as a result of the uniqueness of the formal learning of a foreign language is defined as foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Trang, 2012; Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). MacIntyre as cited inTrang (2012) explicate why does foreign language class is more potential to produce anxiety. He
states that foreign language course will challenge students’ self-esteem and sense of identity by using language they are unfamiliar with.

2.2. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a situation-specific anxiety that relates with two psychological components: a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986); or emotional arousal and negative self-related cognition (MacIntyre as cited in Kondo and Ying-Ling, 2004); or In sum, FLA constitutes a set of uneasy feelings that merely happen on the situation specific of foreign language learning.

Students with high level of anxiety will face difficulties in learning the new language. For examples; difficulties in concentrating and grasping the content of the material, often “freezing up” whenever they are asked to say something in the target language. Ortega (2009) insists that students with FLA often go blank and do not knowing the right answer even they have studied hard on the days before joining the class. Moreover, in some extreme cases, students are unable to answer questions right away even when they have already got the right answer in their mind. It indicates that FLA has become one of major obstacles for students to be proficient in L2.
2.2.1 Common Problems in Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

The domains of FLA were initially introduced by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and become the ground of every FLA studies. The domains of FLA are described as the most common types of FLA happen to students which is then categorized as; 1) Communication apprehension, 2) Fear of negative evaluation, and 3) Test anxiety. Those domains of FLA is also considered as common problems happened in foreign language classroom. Each of them will be explained as following;

1. Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension is a type of diffidence characterized by fear or anxiety when communicating with people or the difficulty in speaking in front of groups. Communication apprehension arises when students are lacking of mature communication skills although they have mature ideas and thoughts (Aydin, 2008). In other words, people with communication apprehension are the people who are afraid when they involve in real communication with others.

Students with communication apprehension will think that they are incompetent and become hesitate to speak in foreign language class. Subaşi (2010) reports Turkish students with communication apprehension and their difficulties in class;
“I wish I could speak English fluently. But, it seems impossible. I cannot even combine two or three words together to form a sentence, it takes along time for me to choose the right words.”

“I feel anxious, especially in the speaking classes because I cannot speak. Even though I know the answer, I hesitate to speak.”

The extracts above depict that students are overwhelmed by anxious feelings and they tend to underestimate their capability when using L2. In fact, they knew the right answer in their mind but they choose to keep silent. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) point out that communication apprehension will let one understood, therefore a talk active person may choose remain in silence and being passive in a foreign language class.

2. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as an apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and expectation that others have negative evaluation toward oneself (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Students are afraid of the incapability of making others impressed about their performance in L2, for example using native-like pronunciation and proper grammar, so that teacher will consider the student as a competent communicator in L2. Gkonou (2014) reports the extracts of her interview with EFL Greek students.

“I am afraid of being laughed at. Also I don’t like being judged by myclassmates. And that’s the reason why I never speak in class unless I am absolutely certain that what I am going to say is correct.” (Student 1)
The extract made by Student 1 indicates that derision coming from peers is a main source of fear of negative evaluation that may influence how often learners will choose to communicate in English in class. Another example is depicted on following extract;

“I know that, if I make a mistake, they will laugh at me. So, I try to study harder to prove myself. I don’t like being laughed at.” (Student 2)

Furthermore, fear of appearing foolish and attempts to impress others will make certain students study harder. Whenever the effort they have earned does not match with the results they have expected, will lead students to greater frustration in foreign language class.

3. Test Anxiety

Test anxiety refers to a type of anxiety that arises from one’s fear of failure or a type of anxiety that contains of apprehension towards one’s academic apprehension during their grammar quizzes, becomes anxious and unable to think about the correct answer because they are too afraid of getting poor grade in their class. It shows that, students with test anxiety will put their focus on the course grade as a measure to pass the foreign language class instead of focusing on their ability to accomplish the test.

In regards to the interview done by Batiha, Noor, and Mustaffa (2014) with Arabian EFL students about what factors that can lead them to FLA, students agree that test-anxiety is one of the most common type of FLA happen to them. The
following interview transcripts portray how test-anxiety affects the students in foreign language class;

“I also feel a lot of judge because of failing the.. I’m afraid of failing the exam” (Participant E)

“Yes, the exam in English I think is a big challenge of anxiety, I feel very tense…hhh…and I felt myself it’s a very big anxiety.” (Participant D)

The statements made by the students might indicate that test anxiety is stemming from the demand for students to pass English exams successfully otherwise they need to redo the course again. Therefore, students’ worries of failing in foreign language class and cause their anxiety.

2.2.1. Factors Triggering Students’ FLA

Young (1991) offers six potential factors that cause FLA to students mostly and also consider able to reduce FLA in different ways, those factors are; 1) Personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) Students’ beliefs about language learning; 3) Teachers’ beliefs about language teaching; 4) Teacher-Learner interaction; 5) Classroom tasks; and 6) Language testing.

1. Personal and Interpersonal Anxieties

Personal anxiety is an anxiety that concerns with one’s individual characteristics, while interpersonal anxiety is an anxiety relating with one’s relationship with others. Personal and interpersonal anxieties are mostly stemming
from students’ low self-esteem and competitiveness with other students. Students with low self-esteem are likely to be the candidate of FLA victims than those who are not. This statement is supported by Krashen (as cited in Young1991), he affirms that people with low self-esteem are worried about what their peers think. In addition, Bailey as cited in (Gkonou, 2014) concludes that anxiety may be caused or triggered by students’ competitiveness feeling when they find themselves to be less proficient than the object of comparison.

2. Students’ Beliefs about Language Learning

Students’ belief about language learning is defined as students’ subjective opinion about the ideal ways of learning a language. It could be in a form of unrealistic demands and misguided myths about language learning such as, one should be able to memorize many English vocabularies, that one should study grammar and speak without making mistakes and errors, or one should be able to have a native-like accent as an indicator of successful language learning, or that learning other language should be learned in a short time (Ortega, 2009). All these unrealistic perceptions will lead one to high level of frustration because when beliefs and reality clash, anxiety arises.

3. Teachers’ Beliefs about Language Teaching

Teachers’ belief about language teaching is defined as teachers’ subjective belief about their ideal role in teaching the language. Young (1991) explains that
teachers who believe their role are to judge students’ performance, that they believe working in pairs will not be effective and make the class uncontrolled, or teacher is the one who talks all the time will create intense and strict classroom settings which may contribute to a great FLA to students.

4. Teacher - Students Interaction

Teacher and students interaction is defined as teacher and students’ behavior in classroom that have effects on one another. Harsh manner of correcting students’ mistake in language classroom often provoke students’ anxiety. Cutrone (2009) asserts that students demand teachers’ good attitudes and personality in language learning. They like teachers who show their kindness, friendliness, and having a good sense of humor to bring less-tense classroom environment. It implies that teachers should be attentive to their behavior and personality they bring into the classroom. The way teacher treats the students will directly linked to students’ FLA in language classroom.

5. Classroom Task

A classroom task is defined as any exercises or assignments that directly engage the students in classroom. Classroom task that demands the students to speak up in front of the class is considered as the most anxiety-provoking situation. Tanveer (2007) finds out that students become more anxious when they are called upon to respond individually, rather than if they are given choice to respond voluntarily.
Similarly in Young (1991) reveals that more than 68% of her subjects are more comfortable when they do not have to speak in front of the class.

6. Language Testing

Language testing refers to evaluative activities which aimed to measure students’ competency, performance, and quality in learning L2. Daly (as cited in Young 1991) contends that students will be more apprehensive when the learning situation and materials they are in is unfamiliar, ambiguous, or highly evaluative.