CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the general outline of this study. It covers background of the study, statement of the problem, hypothesis, purpose of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definitions of the key terms.

1.1 Research Background

Learning English has become a demand for the students in different countries of the world, whether where English is the medium of instruction or is only taught as a subject, because English has been acknowledged as the language of international communication. Over the four fundamental skills of English, speaking is considered to be the most important skill to be mastered when it comes to communication. Therefore, Mahmoodzadeh (2012) suggests that one of the indispensable and crucial aspects of learning English for non-native speakers is the development of a good speaking ability.

Speaking has been considered as an important way to help people sharing their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and emotions to others by means of spoken form. It is also important to transfer the idea and message orally, so that the receiver can understand what the speaker means. Besides, Khamkhien (2010) stated that the development of learners’ language learning usually assessed through the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Yet, speaking seems to be intuitively the
most essential of all skills because it can show the correctness and language errors that language learners make.

In spite of the fact that the mastery of speaking, either as a skill in language learning or in general communication, is kindly crucial, there are still some happening issues; one of them is students’ speaking anxiety. Brown (2007) stated that one of the major obstacles learners have to overcome in learning to speak is the anxiety generated over the risk of blurting things out that are wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible. Moreover, Woodrow (2006) has revealed that the analysis indicated second language speaking anxiety to be a significant predictor of oral achievement. The research conducted by Wahyuni (2014) revealed that (1) a considerable number of students experienced anxiety when they were speaking English in class; (2) the students reported that they were mostly anxious when they had a speaking test; (3) the learners’ characteristics and the classroom procedures were the cause of students’ speaking anxiety; and (4) speaking anxiety had a significant impact on students’ speaking achievement.

The researcher is interested in conducting a study to find out the correlation between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability of VIII Grade students of SMP Tahfidzul Qur’an of An-Najah Cindai Alus Islamic Bording School because of some reasons. SMP Tahfidzul Qur’an is one of education units integrated to An-Najah Cindai Alus Islamic Boarding School for Girls which embrace one elementary school, two junior high schools, and one senior high school. The regulation of this institution is that students (of high schools) are to speak either in English or Arabic alternately in their daily
communication along the schedule determined by its central language department. Besides, there are a lot of activities that kindly promote students language learning such as public speaking practice, daily conversation practice, and etc. Additionally, in term of test, students are not only tested in written form but also tested orally, so that they have both oral and written result of tests. However, the preliminary study showed that some students are kindly hesitant of the oral test that sometimes they cannot answer or perform the task properly. On account of the lack of performance, their oral test score might be lower than other students.

On account of the stated reasons above, she is interested in conducting a study in order to investigate the correlation between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability.

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background that has been explained above, the researcher formulates the research problem as follows: “What is the correlation between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability?”

1.3 Hypothesis

Based on statement of the problem, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

H0 : There is no significant correlation between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability.

H1 : There is significant correlation between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability.
1.4 Research Objective

In relation to the statement of the problem, this study aims to investigate the relationship between students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability.

1.5 Research Significance

The result of this study is hopefully advantageous as a worthy resource for any party in the future. It is also expected to be beneficial for particular parties such as teachers/lecturers, students, and future researchers. For the teachers/lecturers, the result of this study will provide the information about students’ speaking anxiety and its relationship with their speaking ability and will draw a better understanding about it. Therefore, it is considered that teachers/lecturers will take the information into consideration for a better quality of teaching and learning. For the students, this study results can help them overcome the issue by considering better learning strategies in the future. Meanwhile, for the next researchers who may conduct the similar study, the result of this investigation might be their reference in developing their own study.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The present study covers the correlation between speaking anxiety and speaking ability. The study conducted in the level of junior high school. This study is only limited to students’ speaking anxiety and their speaking ability, and VIII Grade students of SMP Tahfidzul Qur’an of An-Najah Cindai Alus Islamic Bording School.
1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

To avoid possible misunderstanding in this study, the researcher would like to clarify four terms used in this study.

a) *Speaking* is an important skill that helps people express their ideas, thoughts, feelings and/or emotions to others that talking the same language (Salem & Dyiar, 2014). Speaking in this study is defined as a skill that students need to acquire as they are learning English language.

b) *Anxiety* is a strong desire sometimes mixed with doubt, fear, or uneasiness (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Anxiety here is a feeling of insecurity under certain circumstances or conditions.

c) *Ability* is the physical or mental power or skill needed to do something (Cambridge Dictionary). Ability by definition in this study is the necessary competence that students have to obtain in language learning.

d) *Speaking anxiety* is a major complain of EFL learners about having an irritating feeling and is commonly considered to be one of factors that has a debilitating effect on oral performance of EFL learners (Sharifi & Lashkarian, 2015). In this study, speaking anxiety is the anxiety suffered by students over the risk of blurting things out that are wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible during speaking class so that they tend to avoid the class attention and stay silent even though they have many ideas to deliver in speech.