CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of study, statement of the problems, purposes of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, and definition of the key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

It has been known that English skill is a very important skill to communicate with people around the world. It is necessary for Indonesian students, especially for senior high school students to master English skill. Since the implementation of the 2013 curriculum states that English has been added to be an elective subject in the school, Indonesian students have been taught for at least 6 years; that is in junior high school and senior high school.

Since English in Indonesia is a foreign language, students in senior high school only have a chance to develop English ability in English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. As a result, they tend to be silent in the classroom and don’t use this chance to enhance their English ability. Wu (2010) said that anxiety has been a matter of considerable interest in language education setting for educators since it is a major obstacle to foreign language learning that the learners need to overcome (as cited in Elaldı, 2016).

Foreign language anxiety is an important factor that affects perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors of students in classroom. One of the reasons why this happens is that students are not comfortable to speak in front of people, or
they feel anxious. Nasir & Bhatti (2014) stated that English language anxiety and interest are considered as two important affective variables which are highly correlated to foreign language learning.

In current EFL pedagogic situations, it is known that many students exhibit fear of foreign language anxiety. In the Thai EFL context, addressing speaking skill has become a critical part of the processes of learning and teaching because it has been found to be extremely hard for Thai learners to master fluent speaking (Khamkhien, 2010 as cited in Yaikhong and Usaha, 2012). Awan et al. (2010) adds that learning English as a foreign language has always been a problematic area for Pakistani students where they are exposed to English only in a language class. Most of the learners express their fears and a feeling of uneasiness against learning English as a foreign language. This can be caused by the unnatural language use and the lack of natural interaction in the classroom.

EFL students will find difficulties in learning English if they feel anxious at the time when they are in the classroom. Woodrow (2009) stated that anxiety experienced in communication in English can be debilitating and can influence students’ adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals. Aydin (2008) also asserts that language anxiety is a significant factor which adversely affects the language learning process. Fear of evaluation has been found to be the major source of anxiety.

To solve the above problem, some researches have been conducted. Awan (2010) suggested the following things. Firstly, the classroom environment should be quite friendly, encouraging and motivating. The learners should know that
making a mistake is not a matter of life and death, and that they are not the only ones making mistakes in learning a foreign language. Secondly, it is important to deal with anxiety-provoking situations carefully. Although it is neither practical nor helpful to avoid all anxiety-provoking situations completely; the teachers and course designers should design such teaching activities that can help learners reduce their anxiety. Thirdly, the teachers should give more comprehensible input to their students. For this purpose, teachers can reduce their speed of speaking in the class. They may sometimes divert from the target language to the native language of the learners where they find it difficult to understand in the foreign language.

Meanwhile, to reduce language learning anxiety, Horwitz, et. al (1991) as cited in Tsai C.C. et, al (2013) noted that educators should help anxious students to deal with existing anxiety-provoking situations and endeavor to make the learning context less stressful. Creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere is clearly a vital prerequisite to language learning success. Language classrooms are an “inherently face-threatening environment”

Based upon the researches findings above, the researcher realizes how anxiety may affect language teaching and learning process in EFL classroom. Therefore, he would like to conduct an analysis on students’ anxiety in learning English. The researcher selects SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Malang as the setting of study, because, based on the preliminary; it was found that there were some students who experienced anxiety during English class. The students who experienced the situation tended to be silent and less active in classroom which
led them to have difficulties to improve their English ability. The researcher conceived that the anxiety problems need to be fixed in order to improve students’ quality in English ability.

1.2 Statement of the Problems

Based on the background of study above, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of anxiety experienced by the EFL students in learning English?
2. What factors trigger the EFL students’ anxiety in learning English?
3. What strategies do the EFL students apply to reduce their anxiety in learning English?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the problems above, the purposes of study are formulated as follows:

1. To describe the types of anxiety faced by the EFL students in learning English.
2. To describe the factors which trigger the EFL students’ anxiety in learning English.
3. To describe the EFL students’ strategies to reduce their anxiety in learning English.
1.4 Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to contribute both theoretical and practical value. Theoretically, this study is expected to acknowledge about EFL students’ anxiety in learning English. Practically, for English teachers, by understanding students’ anxiety experienced by EFL students in classroom, they can apply appropriate teaching techniques in order to make the learning environment friendlier for EFL students. For the next researches, this study is expected as preliminary study about anxiety which relates with language learners and another unexpected area.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study addresses the problems of anxiety related to the EFL students’ anxiety in learning English. This study is only focused on the types of anxiety, factors that trigger anxiety experienced by students and strategies that students apply to reduce their anxiety. This study is limited to the students of SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Malang.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

In order to avoid making mistakes and misunderstanding of the key terms used in this study, it is necessary to clarify several terms used as follows:

1. Foreign language anxiety is a feeling of intimidation and inadequacy over the prospect of learning a foreign language (Brown, 1991). Furthermore, Horwitz and Cope (1986) proposed that foreign language anxiety appears in the form
of anxiety such as: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

2. Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with the arousal of the nervous system. Anxiety helps the person to adapt to environmental dangers and threats. It does so in several ways. First, it orients the individual toward anticipating dangers so that it acts like a kind of early-warning radar for threat. Second, anxiety motivates the person to act in order to avoid events that might cause bodily harm or psychological distress (Zeidner and Matthews, 2010).

3. Types of anxiety are state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is temporary feeling of anxiety elicited by a threatening situation (Ormrod, 2011). It is a situational anxious feeling that disappears when threatening situation goes away. Trait anxiety is pattern of responding with anxiety even in nonthreatening situations (Ormrod, 2011). People with trait anxiety tend to worry more than most people and feel inappropriately threatened by several things in the environment.