CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most well-documented psychological phenomena. In general, anxiety appears in the human body as a response to a particular situation. Commonly anxiety can be identified as a feeling of being threatened, apprehension, tension, or worry. There are several definitions of anxiety that are found by the researcher. According to Carlson and Buskist in 1997, anxiety is a sense of apprehension or doom that is accompanied by certain physiological reactions, such as accelerated heart rate, sweaty palms, and tightness in the stomach. Furthermore, anxiety arises as a response to a particular situation.

Anxiety is a state of tension and apprehension as a natural response to a perceived threat. It means that people naturally feel anxious when they are threatened (Passer & Smith, 2009). According to Ormrod in 2011, anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness and apprehension concerning a situation with an uncertain outcome. Although anxiety and fear sound similar, both are actually different. While anxiety is more future-focused, a sense of anticipation and unease about the potential that something terrible might happen, fear is a natural alarm response to a dangerous circumstance. (Raja, 2017).

Anxiety, there are two types of anxiety that are most well-known; trait anxiety and state anxiety. Generally, trait anxiety is a kind of anxiety where a subject is generally anxious about many things. Brown in 1991 revealed that trait anxiety is a more permanent predisposition to be anxious. In this case, someone

with trait anxiety experiences anxiety every time. In other words, Ormord in 2011 clarified trait anxiety may appear even in a non-threatening situation. He continued that his kind of anxiety can be a character of a person. Anxiety is also defined as a kind of anxiety that appears when a person accepts a condition as dangerous, harmful, and threatening him/her (Wilt, et al., 2011). It means that the person only experiences anxiety in a given situation. This kind of anxiety is also temporary. It is because the person only feels anxious in an event that can be dangerous for him/her.

Briefly, the trait and the state of anxiety are different by the situation and duration. Someone with trait anxiety may feel anxious in every condition for a long duration (Yasuda & Lisa, 2018). It can happen when other people feel relaxed. On the other hand, a person with state anxiety will only feel when they think that the situation will risk him/her. That is why this kind of anxiety happens temporarily. The anxious feeling will disappear when the person passes the dangerous event.

2.2.   Foreign Language Anxiety

There is a certain term for anxiety that is linked to language performance. The term Language Anxiety and Foreign language anxiety are commonly used interchangeably. In any language classroom, there are always students who express their disappointment and frustration because they cannot speak the language they are learning; they feel stressed, humiliated, and ashamed when they are unable to speak properly in front of their classmates. All of these negative feelings can be summed up in the phenomenon of foreign language speaking

anxiety. Foreign Language Anxiety is specific anxiety related to language learning and use. According to Arnold and Brown in 1999, foreign language anxiety is a feeling of intimidation and inadequacy over the prospect of learning a foreign language. It can also be described as an uncomfortable feeling, nervousness, or a kind of fear due to an individual's perception of learning or using a second language (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020). Furthermore, Horwitz and Cope in 1986, proposed conceptual foundations of foreign language anxiety. Based on them, foreign language anxiety appears in the form of anxiety such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by a fear of or anxiety about communication with people. According to Jason S. Wrench in 2014, communication apprehension is an individual's fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person. Communication apprehension plays a large role in foreign language anxiety since interpersonal interactions are the major emphasis in foreign language classes. In foreign language classes students are required to communicate in the target language might obtain students' communication apprehension. Communication apprehension exists because students think that they will have difficulty understanding others in listening and making themselves understood in speaking.

Since performance evaluation is frequent in most foreign language classes, test anxiety is also closely related to a discussion of foreign language anxiety. Based on Sarason, as cited in Oxford (1999), test anxiety is "the tendency to become alarmed about the consequences of inadequate performance on a test or

other evaluation." (p.64). It means this kind of anxiety might have an unpleasant experience on their previous test which makes them fear failing the upcoming test. These students may also have a false belief about foreign language learning. They put unrealistic demands that they should feel anything that an imperfect test is a failure.

Another anxiety related to foreign language learning is the fear of negative evaluation. Watson and Friend, as cited in Horwitz (1986), defined fear of negative evaluation as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively." (p.128). In a foreign language learning context, students are prone to have a fear of negative evaluation from both teachers as the only fluent speaker in the class and their peers.

2.3. Possible Factors Contributing to Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is intense worry and fear that a person experiences when delivering or preparing to speak (Nimat, 2013). Some researchers have investigated factors contributing to speaking anxiety. According to Shu Feng Tseng in 2012, there are several important causes of speaking anxiety. First is pressure from parents and teachers to get good grades at school in English. Second is the lack of preparation in speaking English and lack of confidence in their ability to learn English. The third is fear of making mistakes and subsequent punishment or ostracism, fear of losing face for not being perfect. Fourth is the fear of foreigners and their behavior. Because of the importance of English on tests for advancement in education and in society, parents and teachers press

students not only to attain their potential but actually produce results beyond their ability and the last is conditioning in childhood to believe that English is an extremely difficult language to learn. Moreover, recent research carried out by Rafada & Madini in 2017, investigated the main causes of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) among female university students in Saudi Arabia. The qualitative part of the research finds that the main causes of speaking anxiety among Saudi female students are due to their lack of vocabulary, teachers' role in raising or reducing anxiety, peer anxiety, test anxiety, and the weak educational system in Saudi schools.

Language anxiety can arise from; personal and interpersonal anxieties, learners' beliefs about language learning, instructors' beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedures, and language testing (Ohata, 2005). Commonly personal and interpersonal are the most sources of anxiety, it was investigated in correlation with other social and psychological constructs. For example, people with low self-esteem may worry about what their friends think, they are afraid to get a negative response, result, or evaluation. Thus, some of the performance anxieties mentioned earlier might be categorized largely into one psychological construct, those phenomena, accompanied by low self-esteem and competitiveness, can become the place for student language anxiety, as often directly in the form of performance anxieties.

Learners' beliefs about language learning also contribute to students' tension and frustration in class (Sabbah, 2018). Various kinds of learners' beliefs; suggest that some of them are taken from the learners' unrealistic and sometimes

erroneous conceptions about language learning. Instructors' beliefs about language teaching can also become a source of creating language anxiety among learners. The teacher's assumption of the role of language teachers may not always correspond to the student's needs or expectations toward the teacher.

There is an interaction between learning and the environmental components in which the student grew up, and both negative and positive experiences have a strong impact on the success of language learning. The process of interaction between the instructor (teacher) and learner (student) is regarded as a factor causing anxiety for the students. If the learner does not understand the teacher's corrections or explanations, this can be a cause of anxiety.

Many learners feel some error correction is necessary; the manner of error correction is often said as provoking anxiety (Ohata, 2005). Those studies that investigated anxieties about instructor-learner interactions show that students are more concerned about how their mistakes are corrected rather than whether error correction should be done in the classroom in front of classmates.

Language testing is one of the factors which contribute to anxiety in students (Ohata, 2005). It would lead to other psychological stresses, such as the fear of losing self-confidence or feeling inferior to others. In addition, sometimes students felt pressured to think that they had to organize their ideas in a short period of time while caring about grammar errors at the same time.

2.4. Strategies to Conquer Anxiety

There are five strategies that can be used by students for reducing their anxiety to perform in front of the class, namely; preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation (Kondo, 2004). The first strategy is preparation. In this strategy, students attempt to control themselves by improving learning and study strategies (examples: studying hard, and trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes). Using these strategies would be expected to increase students' subjectively estimated mastery of the subject matter and reduce the anxiety associated with the language class. The second strategy is relaxation, the goal of this strategy for reducing somatic anxiety symptoms. It relaxes the body by doing something (for example: taking a deep breath and trying to calm down). The more one relaxes, the more anxiety loses. The third strategy is positive thinking, it is characterized by cooling down problematic cognitive processes that underlie students' anxiety, thinking that everything can be well. These strategies are intended to divert attention from the stressful situation to positive and pleasant cues and bring relief to the anxious student (for example: imagining oneself giving a great performance, trying to enjoy the tension). The fourth strategy is peer seeking, this strategy is distinguished by students' willingness to look for other students who seem to have trouble understanding the class and/ or controlling their anxiety.

For anxious students, the realization that others are having the same problem may serve as a source of emotional regulation by social comparison. The last strategy is resignation. This is characterized by students running from the

problem and they do not want to belong to the activity because they minimize the impact of anxiety by refusing to face the problem. Some of the actions in these strategies are giving up, and sleeping in class.

Moreover, there are three approaches to conquering anxiety (Hembree, 1988). The first one is the cognitive approach which implies that the origin of anxiety is thinking disturbances that take place in the classroom. This approach suggests rational emotive therapy and cognitive restructuring to cope with anxiety problems. The second approach is the effective approach which tries to reduce the negative relationship between the classroom and anxiety. In order to achieve this goal, this approach suggests biofeedback training, relaxation training, and systematic desensitization. Finally, the behavioral approach implies that the origin of anxiety is poor academic skills (Hembree, 1988).