

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Language plays an important role in communication since it is used as a means to interact with other people. However, people from different communities are affected by social norms or rules characterizing their speech community. One of the experts states that language is used widely in communication between people who do not share the same first (or even second) language (Harmer, 2007). It indicates that language is very crucial to learn in human life.

Nowadays, English as an international language is used in many ways, such as business communication, technology, and academics. English is a worldwide phenomenon that is very necessary to communicate with people from various language and cultural backgrounds and also English has an important role in everyone's life where English is one that is used throughout the world. Ota (2018) stated that as a foreign language, English is used as a tool of communication among countries particularly in political, social, educational and economic development.

The use of English in non-native country can be divided into two: English as the second language and English as foreign language (EFL). One of the countries who applies English as foreign language is Indonesia. In EFL countries, English is used for some purposes such as education, business, etc. Related to the

education function, English is taught in the school started from elementary school until in university. Moreover, as Ota (2018) said that English is used as a tool of communication so speaking is a skill which is worthy of attention in both second language and foreign language. Learning the speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language and success is measured based on the ability to perform a conversation in the language (Nunan, 1995). Speaking is one of the most important skills of all the four language skills because individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speakers of that language (Ur, 1996).

Unfortunately, in the real condition, it is still difficult for Indonesian students to practice their English ability in daily conversation eventhough they have been studying English in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school and university due to they might get a good score of English in their report card but they cannot speak English fluently yet (Musthafa, 2001). It is the fact that many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers complain about their speaking classes in which a considerable number of students are not responding actively in speaking exercises (Abadi, 2015). Moreover, based on writer's experience when studying English started from elementary school to university facing difficulties in speaking skill even though she knows about reading, writing and listening skills. In addition, there are some factors affected in her speaking skill like shy to speak in English, afraid for making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, grammar error and afraid of getting criticism when speaking.

There are some previous studies conducted by some researchers such as Zaki (2021) who found out factors affecting English speaking of Turkish students,

Jahbel (2017) found factors affecting students' speaking performance at High schools in Malang, Afebri, et al (2019) found out factors affecting high school students difficulties in speaking performance, Humaerah (2018) found out students' speaking ability and factors influence their ability, Irwan, et al (2017) found out contributing factors to the students' speaking ability, and Illyin, et al (2019) who found out affective factors influencing students' speaking ability.

However, the previous studies above took senior high school students as participants where it is known that there is no speaking subject in high schools even though they have English subject but the frequency to practice communicating using English is not intense since they focus on reading. Therefore, the writer decided to take the fourth semester students of English department, based on the curriculum applied, have learned three speaking subjects. By having students with quite sufficient English speaking ability, then the writer will find how other factors really affect their speaking ability. This becomes the first reason this study differs from the previous ones.

The second reason this study differs from the previous ones is none of them applied the theory from Tuan and Mai (2015) who state that students' speaking ability can be affected by the factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors (such as motivation, confidence and anxiety), listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. The writer thinks the theory is quite complete to really find out the factors affecting students' speaking ability.

And the last reason is no previous researcher who conducts the similar study in English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University. The writer thinks the result of this study will become a beneficial input for this study program which aims to help prospective English teachers to have sufficient English Proficiency. By knowing factors affecting students speaking' ability, study program will find it easier to provide solutions.

Therefore, the writer would like to conduct a study to find out factors affecting speaking ability of the fourth semester students of English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University.

Moreover, it is important to conduct the study is because by knowing the factors; the learners are expected to be motivated to improve or increase their speaking ability.

1.2 Research Problems

In line with the background above, the writer would like to conduct a study to answer the questions:

1. What are the perceived factors affecting the speaking ability of the fourth semester students of English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University?
2. What is the most dominant perceived factors affecting the speaking ability of the fourth semester students of English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the perceived factors affecting the speaking ability of the fourth semester students of English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University.
2. To find out the most dominant perceived factors affecting the speaking ability of the fourth semester students of English education study program at Widya Mandira Catholic University.

1.4 Significance of the study

This research will have some contributions the details are explained in the following:

1. Theoretical Contributions

This study will enrich the studies on the perceived factors affecting EFL learners speaking ability. Besides, this study will also be another reference for other researchers who would like to conduct similar studies.

2. Practical Contributions

This study helps the writer to understand more about perceived factors affecting EFL learners speaking ability so that she can help her future students to increase or improve their speaking ability.

3. Pedagogical Contributions

This study will enrich the reading resources in learning for English study program especially about perceived factors affecting EFL learners speaking ability.