

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

Students' emotions while learning in the class are significantly important. Brown (1991:73) stated that how students feel while learning will greatly influence the outcome at the end of the class. It is said to be essential because ones' emotions have huge impact towards how they perceive the material they study and how they feel the class atmosphere. For instance, when students are feeling relaxed and secured, their learning processes will be more successful and so will be their performances. These attitudes will lead them to be more engaged to the class. However, when they feel the opposite way of emotions –afraid and anxious-, they will likely to ignore the learning process and cannot absorb the material. This phenomenon, in the past two decades, has attracted number of researchers to study it because of how related and influencing emotions can be to language learners' performance (Chen, et. al, 2021:1). Therefore, students' emotion in the class need to be adjusted in positive way in order to attain the best result students could achieve.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class, English learners' emotions are diverse. There are discouraging and encouraging emotions. This discouraging emotion is known as anxiety or in language teaching field it is commonly called as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). The negative emotion such as feeling anxious will surely contribute the minus impacts to students' language learning process. This is proven by a significant amount of research regarding this topic that anxiety and students' performances are closely related (Inada, 2021:32). The consequences anxiety causes are students feel shy and fear of talking to others, worry about the feedback from their teacher, and afraid of not passing the language test (Hasan, 2021:87). When these thoughts are intervening in the mind of language learners during class, hardly will students gain understanding of what

is being studied and discussed. In brief, these apprehensions will absolutely hinder them from acquiring the target language.

The matters of what cause the apprehension of students have broadly discussed. Numerous findings of study have revealed that there are internal and external factors that provoke anxiety. The internal factors are from students themselves such as low self-esteem, negative beliefs about foreign language learning, fear of negative evaluation, and high expectations. On the other hand, the external factors that come from teacher are putting high expectation on students, lacking of affective side, and correcting students' mistakes harshly. (Trang, Balduf & Moni, 2013:711). In addition, Subekti (2018:222) explains that the students' internal factors such as having poor pronunciation and lack of vocabulary and external factors such as teacher-students interaction in which sometimes teacher unexpectedly ask students to speak in front of the class and correct their grammar in a such unfavourable way makes students jittery and put them in an embarrassment feeling and afraid of being looked dumb in front of their classmates. These studies have clearly explained the sources of the emotions that to some extent unquestionably damage the intended result of learning.

In line with the presented causes above, which are the cause of FLA in face-to-face learning, Nur, Baa, and Abduh (2021:18) examined factors that might cause FLA in distance learning. From their study, they also calssify the regarding matter into two, namely internal and external factor. They found out that on online learning, the internal factor includes students personality such as shy, lack of confidence, insecure and fear of making mistakes. Menwhile the external factor includes teacher's and classmates' characteristics.

From a subjective experience and an extensive literature review, the writer found that there was a large number of students who are hesitantly to participate. They stated that they were afraid in case they would make mistakes. Daley et al (2019:47) explain that having that sort of negative feeling such as anxious is human nature. It is something that we were born with and is impossible to clearly

get rid of it. However, in terms of language learning, Alrabai (2014:6) states that there is possibility to diminish the tension. In this case, student is not the only individual that have to deal with the regarding problem. On the other hand, the appropriate intervention from teacher is needed in order to be able to reduce apprehensiveness. In brief, anxiety in learning language(s) is a problem that most of language learners experience in which teacher ought to find ways to cope with this particular situation, otherwise the matter will keep increasing.

Speaking of overcoming FLA, many researchers have conducted study and offered strategies on how to overcome it. However, most of studies that had been carried out only focused on overcoming FLA in offline or face-to-face learning. Only few research that had examined how to overcome language anxiety on online or distance learning.

Referring to the problem presented above, teacher, as a creator in the class, whether in face-to-face or distace learning, has the responsibility to create an environment where students feel safe and are not afraid of making mistakes during learning (Podgorsek, 2019:185). This is in line with the command of prophet Muhammad SAW. regarding how teachers shoould conduct their classes.

وَعَنْ أَنَسٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: يَسُوا وَلَا تُعْزِرُوا وَسَكِّنُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا

Anas reported God's Messenger as saying, "Make things easy and do not make them difficult; make people calm and do not scare them." (Bukhari and Muslim)

From this hadith, the Prophet told us to ease and help students in their learning process. He also stated *"..make people calm and do not scare them"* which in terms of anxiety, teachers are asked to put effort to create unthreathening environment and avoid any source of anxiety-provoking so that students can learn in a calm condition.

Therefore, as a pre-service EFL teacher, the writer finds this topic essential to be researched in order to deepen the understanding on how to deal with

students' language anxiety in the future, especially on distance learning. Moreover, Arora (2017:33) explained in her study that online learning is associated with anxiety, fear, apprehension in which students feel frustration during learning. Thus, this research will be conducted by interviewing EFL teacher in Indonesia Teaching Community (ITC) regarding the strategies the teacher uses in coping with students' anxiety in learning English virtually. Moreover, it is an institution with cultural diversity students throughout Indonesia. Having different culture in the class might make students feel threatened and anxious for being dissimilar. Additionally, beside the provided factors of what cause language learners' anxiety in the earlier explanation, diverse culture is also considered to be anxiety-provoking. Thus, the writer would like to carry out research regarding the topic on ITC EFL teachers' online strategy in overcoming students' anxiety in learning English.

B. Identification of the Problem

The problem that can be identified from the background above are whether in face-to-face or distance learning, students still face the anxiety in language learning. There are number of students who feel anxious, afraid of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation from their teacher, and reluctantly to participate in the class. These apprehensions surely hinder language learners in acquiring the target language. However, the strategy on how to overcome FLA in distance learning is still rarely discussed. Thus, the researcher would like to carry a research regarding this matter.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research will focus on exploring how EFL teachers at ITC overcome the students' FLA in online learning and what strategy are used in coping with the emotions that the students experience during the class.

D. The Research Question

Based on the background presented above, the formulations of the problem in this study are:

1. What online strategies does the EFL teacher use to overcome the students' FLA?
2. How are the strategies realised by the EFL teacher?
3. Why are the strategies realised in the way they are?

E. Objective of the Study

Based on the background and formulation of the problem presented above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To find out what online strategy the EFL teacher use in overcoming the students' FLA;
2. To describe how the strategies are realised by the EFL teacher; and
3. To explain why the strategies are realised in the way they are.

F. The Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance

The result of this study is expected to enrich the theory of teaching English, especially on how EFL teacher can cope with students foreign language anxiety (FLA). Besides, it can also be used as reference for those who want to conduct a research in the field of English language teaching.

2. Practical Significance

The result of this study is expected to broaden the view of English education students, pre-service English teacher and in-service English teachers on how to cope with students' foreign language anxiety during teaching. Besides the result is also intended to enrich the knowlegde of the writer in particular and readers in general.