

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the present research. It consists of some sub-chapters, such as the basic consideration, the research questions, and objectives, as well as the scope and significance of research. In the basic consideration, the topic of the research is elaborated by focusing on some theories, facts, and problems related to the topic. The problems are stated in the research questions and objectives. The research also has scope and limitation in order to draw out the research solution and conclusion. This chapter ends with the research implications.

1.1 Basic Consideration

The ultimate goal of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners is to use English efficiently and accurately in communication. There are various reasons why language learners decide on learning speaking such as learners' expectations, aims, and purposes. However, all students of foreign language, regardless of their age, social and cultural background, or profession, share the same desire, to be able to speak the language (Hemerka, 2009). Moreover, in academic world, many students are interested in learning speaking because they intend to use English in communication. Considering that common people in Indonesia often put their measurements on English proficiency merely whether people can speak the language or not; thus, to speak English fluently is generally assumed as the highest expectation that learners should meet in mastering the language (Rini, 2013; Kormos & Denes, 2003).

From the argument above, the researcher believes that Department of English Education at the State University of Gorontalo is the appropriate place where students can learn how to speak English and English sub-components intensively and efficiently because of the professional lecturers available in the department. Therefore, as the member of the Department of English Education and for a future career as English language teachers, the students in the department expected to be able to become competent speakers of the language when they graduate.

However, it seems that the expectation is not connected to the reality. The facts shown that in the State University of Gorontalo, especially in the Department of English Education, the researcher (who is studying in the department) has witnessed that many of the senior students have difficulties to speak English in various situation. For example, when interacting with their peers, class project presentation, even in thesis examination where English is compulsory to be used. It seems that although most of the senior students have passed their English courses from speaking I to III, there are merely a few students who can speak English fluently. These students are known as the best students in their class while the rest of them still hesitant to express some of sentences in English because may be afraid of making mistakes or afraid of a negative evaluation of their peers and lectures. That phenomenon obviously approves that speaking in the second language can cause high anxiety level because teachers often expect beginner students to perform beyond their acquire competence and this condition is often occurred in the classroom (Wang, 2010).

Alsamani and Hassan (2013) studied EFL teaching in Arab Saudi which has similar problems with the case above. In their study, they found that many students in the University of Buraydah still being hesitant, anxiety, and lack to speak English, although they have been taught for not a simple of short period in rolling the subject. Moreover, they also found

seven aspects which mainly become the obstacles such as the lack of vocabulary, lack of practice, communication environment, native language influence, pronunciation, teaching method and teaching aids which become the challenges that hinder them from speaking English fluently. Thus, as the response to the case which occurred in our major study of English Department, the researcher intended to see and to reveal the problems and also to find out what are the students' problem on fluency in the Department of English Education at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

1.2 Research Question

This research addresses a key question 'What are students' obstacles when speaking English?'

1.3 Research objectives

In accordance with the problem's formulation, the objective of the recent research is to identify what are the obstacles of students in Department of English Education 2013 when speaking English, especially what obstacles which hinder them from becoming a fluent speaker of English language.

1.4 Scope of study

In the present research, the researcher intends to conduct the study based on the previous study regarding the case of fluency obstacles. In Alsamani & Hassan (2013) study, they were intended to see the students and lecturer's reaction against the problems to gather the contrast result of fluency challenges at Buraydah Community College and offer the recommendations. Thus, the present research focuses only on the students' side about the obstacles in fluency and attempts to find the biggest problem and its factors, which hinder

them from the fluency mastery. In addition, the researcher uses the techniques of collecting data in two ways, such as questionnaires and depth interviews.

1.5 Significance of the research

Investigating the obstacles of students' speaking skill to achieve fluency in foreign language context is significant for the following reason. Firstly, this study expects the lecturers to find out the effective strategy to reduce even to remove certain obstacles in developing students' speaking skill by finding out the most problematic obstacles that students have when attempting to become fluent speakers of English. Secondly, the researcher expects that the findings of this study will provide some important information to the beginner students related to their speaking development for achieving the fluency mastery. The result of study will help students able to know well their shortages, thus they can overcome and treat themselves better to speak English in the earlier moment they study in the college. At last, this study expects interested readers or researchers to discover more problems about fluency in the English language for a better English teaching and learning by doing further research regarding the issue of fluency development in the foreign language (FL) context.