

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

In view of the significant roles English plays in the Indonesian education system, there are four skills to be mastered by the learners. Those are speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Speaking is one of the most important language-learning skills. According to Brown and Yuke (1983), "Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations". It makes speaking a crucial part of learning and teaching a second language. Therefore, students should be able to communicate with one another in order to obtain or exchange knowledge or express their feelings.

Reticence has always been regarded as a problematic phenomenon among students in the EFL speaking classrooms. Whenever such students do not engage in the classroom discourse, they are usually regarded as not having the desire to learn or lacking in cooperation. Thus, reticence can be a major problem if students want to increase their speaking skills. Reticence and anxiety are firmly interrelated. Reticence often masks strong emotions. This is also accompanied by anxiety which could hinder both performance and instructional receptivity. Moreover, the level of language capability, self-viability, character, inspiration, eagerness to communicate in the objective language, and different elements that may communicate with another determine whether a learner is passive, active, confident, or nervous in the classroom. (Ely, 1986; Jackson,2002).

Limited observation in the English Education Department of a state Islamic university in Bandung shows that some students had a problem with reticence, especially in speaking class. The lack of confidence and the fear of making mistakes are some of the reasons why students have a problem with reticence. Most of the students were afraid of making mistakes when they spoke English. Thus, the students are hesitant to make errors in front of their

classmates. It shows that the students are more worried about making mistakes in front of their classmates than worried about making mistakes because it will affect their performance.

Usually, the more talented students seemed to be more relaxed, less nervous in the lessons in oral English, and more involved in reacting to their teachers. On the other hand, the less talented students often became worried and anxious when they spoke English in class, especially when they had a lack of vocabulary and insufficient grammar knowledge. Students chose not to participate; they did not know what to say during the class discussions. This study of students' reticence in the EFL speaking classroom will give useful benefits that can help students understand more about reticence and can improve the ability of speaking skills because the students know the reasons for their reticence and how to effectively deal the reticence in the class. This research also aims to find out more information regarding the difficulties of EFL students face when experiencing reticence and the causes that arise from reticence in the speaking learning process.

There is some research related to students' reticence in EFL classrooms. First, research conducted by Marissa (2019) found some cases that caused students to be reticent in speaking and lecturer strategies to cope with students' reticence in the EFL classroom of the State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang. Second, research by Liu (2005) also found cases of students' reticence at Chinese university. Third, research by Chalak & Baktash (2015) analyzed some causes and revealed that language lecturers' awareness of learners' reticence can help them choose more appropriate activities and provide a friendly environment enhancing hopefully more effective participation of EFL learners. While the previous researches focus on the lecturer strategies to cope with the students' reticence in EFL classroom, the current research centers on finding the students' difficulties dealing with reticence and the cause of students' reticence in EFL Speaking performance through a case study method.

## **B. Research Questions**

From the description above, this research is intended to answer the two following questions:

1. What are the difficulties that students face dealing with reticence in Indonesian EFL Speaking Performance?
2. What are the causes of students' reticence in Indonesian EFL Speaking Performance?

## **C. Research Purposes**

From the research questions above, this study is aimed at obtaining the two following purposes:

1. To find out the difficulties that students face dealing with reticence in Indonesian EFL Speaking Performance
2. To explore the causes of students' reticence in Indonesian EFL Speaking Performance

## **D. The Significances of the Research**

This study is expected to become a source of information about students' reticence in EFL Speaking performance. Furthermore, this study is also expected to give an understanding of the causes of students' reticence and give valuable information about the solution to reduce students' reticence based on their own experience dealing with reticence.

Theoretically, this research will reveal the difficulties of students' dealing with reticence and the causes of students' reticence that may be beneficial for students to improve their speaking skills, especially in dealing with reticence in speaking performance. Practically, this research will contribute to helping teachers to solve the problem of why students lack of confidence and have a major problem with reticence.

## **E. Research Framework**

According to July (2013), students' participation and engagement is very crucial in the classroom. When the students make an oral

communication with the teacher or among peers, they will automatically build up their abilities. Nevertheless, when they are passive, the progress will be slower.

Delima (2015), defined reticence as a performance that happens when someone avoids communication with other people. The reticence persons trust that it is better to be quiet rather than take a threat. It occurs because they are too worried to utter some talk and scared to losing face.

Carter and Henrichsen (2015) explain the characteristics of students' reticence. They seem to drop behind and seldom communicate. They naturally take a seat in the back and see, displaying to changing degrees, a nervous, uncommunicative, or quiet attitude. These two statements commonly conceptualize reticence in the form of non-participation. They related reticence with anxiety, that is, students' lack of verbal participation.

According to Witayarat (2015), the reticence of students in class is as follows: have a lack of confidence when speaking, not participating, not questioning, passivity, and too dependent on the lecturer. Moreover, Izadi and Zare (2016) state that reticence students can be described when they are silent in communication, do not willingly contribute in the language classroom every time, and are more worried and anxious when asked to be involved in a conversation. They claimed that the students of reticence tend to be silent or sit down in the back row of the classroom in order to avoid being noticed and called to participate. The reticent persons trust that it is better to be quiet rather than take a threat. It happens because they are too worried to utter some talk and scared of losing face.

There are five reasons for students' reticence, according to Irwanti (2017): affective factors, human factors, psychological factors, linguistic factors, and environmental factors. First, affective factors also have three aspects: personality factors (introversion and shyness), anxiety, and motivation (being lazy and not wanting to ask questions). Second, individual factors when students feel underprepared in the classroom were a major issue for the reticence of the students. Third, psychological factors include fear of errors, lack of confidence, comparison with peers, fear of being the

center of attention, and fear of being laughed at. Fourth, the linguistic factor that caused the reticence of the students was low English skills. Last, environmental factor influences the participation of students in the classroom

## **F. Previous Studies**

There are several previous studies related to students' reticence. First, the research was conducted by Marissa (2019). The objectives of this study were to find out the causes of students' reticence and to find out the lecturer's strategies to cope with the students' reticence in the EFL classroom of the State Islamic University of Raden Fatah Palembang. A case study with purposive sampling was used as a research methodology. The results showed that there were five strategies that were used by the lecturer. The strategies were teaching strategies, learning environment, instructional material, classroom management, and instructional media.

Second, research by Liu (2005) that also found more causes of students' reticence. The research was conducted by using journals, observations and interviews as a technique of collecting data. This paper reported the findings of a study of students' reticence in the Chinese EFL context. The result of this study indicated that more research needed to be done to help students become more active and proficient EFL learners.

Third, research by Chalak & Baktash (2015) investigated the extent in which students experience reticence in EFL classrooms and explored the underlying factors triggering reticence. They analyzed some causes and revealed that language lecturers' awareness of learners' reticence can help them choose more appropriate activities and provide a friendly environment hopefully enhancing more effective participation of EFL learners.

While the previous research has revealed the lecturer's strategies to cope with the students' reticence in EFL classrooms, this study aims to figure out the causes and solutions to reduce students' reticence from their own experience. This research will find out what is experienced by students dealing with reticence, their difficulties facing reticence itself, including if

this affects their grades in speaking class.

