

CHAPTER II

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STUDENTS' RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ENGLISH CLASS

A. Definition of Reluctance or Unwillingness

In English foreign language context, reluctance or unwillingness means to not take a part willingly to participate in English class, according to Abebe & Deneke (2015:1) in teaching and learning context, students' verbal participation or engagement is essentially important in the classrooms. It means the linkage between classroom participation and student's academic achievement is undeniable. Students who live in a country that English is not their mother tongue often seem passive and reticent in language classrooms. Students often do not respond to teacher's questions and they do not volunteer answers or initiate questions.

In the field of second language acquisition, reluctance has the closest meaning to reticence which the situation of students' reticence in class is the most frustrating one is that students will not or cannot actively participate in group discussion, based on Li & Liu (2011:962) reticence is not exclusively a problem for individuals who refuse or are unable to respond to direct questions; those silent students deprive their classmates of opportunities to benefit from their knowledge, insights, and thinking, in that lots of learning stems from idea and perception sharing.

It can be concluded that, reluctance or unwillingness to participate in English class is students who prefer to be passive and avoid to be

actively in asking question or sharing opinions in classroom because lack of engagement.

B. Reluctant Student

EFL learners' reluctance to participate in English classroom is a problem commonly found in EFL contexts, it can be serious problems, students can be hindered to participate in English classroom, and the impact of that students became passive. Some of reluctant students can be found in Asia, because English is not their first language and it is just their second language so that they might be shy to share their opinion using English. According to Protheroe (2004:46), reluctant student is student who avoid challenges, don't complete tasks and are satisfied to "just get by." They are reluctant learners, who often have the potential to excel but don't seem to care about achieving in school.

Many students are reluctant to contribute in English classroom activity because they thought it is enough just by listening and receiving the materials from the teacher and they do not need to ask or share opinion. The researcher teaching experience in SMPN 12 Pontianak shows that some Indonesian students also tended to be reluctant to contribute in English classroom activity. Some students tended to speak Indonesia whenever the teacher asked them some questions or opinions in class. There must be some reasons why the students were reluctant to use English in classroom activities.

Reluctant learners do not know how to study effectively, and little classroom time is spent helping them develop such skills. Sometime students afraid of negative comment and feedback from the teacher if they answer and share their opinion. If the teacher do so, it will make the students feel ashamed and afraid to share their opinion and they will prefer to keep silent.

Students who participate actively tend to have better academic achievement than students who do not participate, according to Abdullah, *et al.*, (2012:517), participation in the circumstances occurs when students influenced by factors, such as socio-cultural, cognitive, affective, linguistic, or the environment and these often lead to student participation and interaction with other students and instructors become less to speak out in the classroom. Unlike the students who actively participate in the classroom discussion, this category of students prefer to listen and take a notes than involved in the classroom discussion. Lastly, in silent observation, students tend to avoid oral participation in the classroom. They seem to receive materials delivered in the classroom by taking notes using various strategies such as writing.

Reluctant students is a big problem that can be found in every grade of school. As a stated in Protheroe, Hebb (2000:47) many reluctant students have received the message over time that they are poor students. As a result, they feel frustrated, inadequate, confused, or even ashamed. It could be they afraid to make mistake.

C. Factors Contributing to Students' Reluctance to Participate in English Class

Various factors may contribute to students' reluctance to participate in English classroom activities. For the purpose of this study the researcher will only discuss several factors, those factors are taken based on previous study that did by Hamouda (2002:21) was aimed at find out the problem students reluctant to participate in English classroom at University in Qassim, Saudi Arabia. Those factors are motivation, anxiety, fear of making mistake and lack of confidence.

1. Lack of Motivation

Some various factors of students' reluctance to participate in English class are related to motivation, motivation is the crucial thing for students to feel engage in teaching learning process, in other word to participate in classroom. According to Lai, R. Emily (2011:2) motivation is refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness and volition. Educational psychologist have long recognized the importance of motivation for supporting student learning. To motivate students is the most challenging task in education world especially for teachers.

Based on Denzine and Brown (2015:20), motivation as described by Schunk and Mullen (2013) is a process where goals directed activities begin and then eventually are sustained. When students are motivated, they will try as hard as they can to achieve the

goals but it can be opposite if they are unmotivated. Students will contribute to participate in English class even though their English is not good, at least they try, and motivation is crucial key to get better academic achievement for students. Type of motivation that students should have is intrinsic motivation, according to Lai, R. Emily (2011:2) intrinsic motivation is motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure. Students will happy to contribute in classroom such as doing the task, asking a question, giving their opinion and etc. without any forced to do it. Students should realize, motivation is influence part that students should have.

a. Causes of Lack of Motivation

Motivation is the key term of language learning. According to Dislen (2013:36) Motivation is a process not an aim, like a product it like a tools that helps us to reach our aim. First, we feel an interest and set a goal and decide to take an action accordingly. Then we try to maintain our interest and struggle to realize our purpose. This process plays a big role especially in language learning since it makes language learning more meaningful.

Wright in six reasons why students are motivated (and what teachers can do) (2012:2), mention six reasons or causes why students feeling unmotivated, they are:

- 1) The student is unmotivated because he or she cannot do the assigned work

- 2) The student is unmotivated because the 'response' effort needed to complete the assigned work seems too great.
- 3) The student is unmotivated because classroom instruction does not engage
- 4) The student is unmotivated because he or she fails to see an adequate pay-off doing the assigned work
- 5) The student is unmotivated because of low self-efficacy—lack of confidence that he or she can do the assigned work
- 6) The student is unmotivated because he or she lacks a positive relationship with the teacher

Besides that Gardner in Nunan (1999:469) elaborates the causes of the students' lack of motivation e.g. uninspired teaching, boredom, lack of perceived relevance of materials and lack of knowledge about the goals of the instructional program. These four, as he further says, very often become source of students' motivation. To motivate students' participate actively, teacher should have passion, creativity and interest in their students. In other words, students' motivation is really influenced by the teachers' teaching performance.

2. Anxiety

Anxiety may appear as a factor contribute students' reluctance to participate in English class According to Horwitz *et al.*, (1986) Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, nervousness, and worry

associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Students feel more anxious because they try to use foreign language but they don't master it yet. Some students claim to have mental block against learning a foreign language.

Anxiety is not uncommon in learning, anxiety is a widespread concept, a phenomenon which affects people universally, no matter what age, gender or race. As cited in Zhao (2007:30) high anxiety can make learners get discouraged, lose faith in their abilities, escape from participating in classroom activities, and even give up the effort to learn a language well. Therefore, the learners with high anxiety often get low achievement. And low achievement makes them more anxious about learning.

When anxiety is disruptive, it is associated with a host of cognitive, behavioral, and emotional problems. The important aspects of anxiety is the way in which an individual processes a threatening situation. The level of anxiety depends on the individual's assessment of the situation which they believe to be threatening and their way dealing with this situation.

Language anxiety is one of the negative factors in second language acquisition, anxiety is also one of the internal factors of second language learners that might hinder the success in second language acquisition. Inside foreign language acquisition there is one

of type called communication anxiety which is also related to this research.

a. Causes of Anxiety

Anxiety is one of characteristic of classes in any subject, but foreign language classes are especially often related to anxiety. As learners have to fulfil tasks and communicate in a language which is not their mother tongue. Moreover, anxiety has been found the alarming factor causing debilitating effects on foreign language learning process. Anxiety may affect an individual's willingness to communicate and produce.

According to Ahmed (2017:100) journal entitled "Exploring the Causes of English Language Speaking Anxiety among Postgraduate Students' of University of Balochistan, Pakistan mention the causes of anxiety as follows:

- 1) Students' communication apprehension may stem from previous negative experience
- 2) Shyness or reticence
- 3) Attitudes of classmates and cultural stereotypes, and foreign teacher etc
- 4) They preferred remaining silent because they feared losing face in front of their peers when their speaking mistakes were highlighted by the teachers

- 5) The fear of not getting or misunderstanding the teacher's queries or tasks. The findings reported that the students also complained that English language teachers speak too fast and use many difficult words
- 6) Majority of the learners become anxious when they are asked to perform in the foreign language in front of their class

For additional, there was also research from Demir (2015:11), shows anxiety from low to high anxiety. Based on the literature analysis, look like this:

- 1) Cause low anxiety
 - a) Matching & gap-filling (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills)
 - b) Multiple choice (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills, also reading and listening comprehension)
 - c) Ordinary or modified true/false (to assess vocabulary and grammar skills)
- 2) Cause average anxiety
 - a) Short answers (to get assess reading and listening comprehension, writing skills)
 - b) Oral dialogue between 2-3 examinees (to assess speaking skills)
 - c) Writing a short paragraph (to assess writing skills)
 - d) Oral presentation with slides (to assess speaking skills)

- 3) Cause anxiety high
 - a) Oral interview (teacher-student) (to assess listening and speaking skills
 - b) Prepared monologue with no visual support (to assess speaking skills
 - c) Essays (to assess writing skills, including their lexical and grammatical components).

According to Harmer (2007:153) says classroom teachers do everything they can to make sure that their lessons are success. Teachers need to be pay attention about student's weakness, so they can find method to solve problem in classroom related to this study, students' reluctance to participate in English Class, anxiety is one of factor of it.

3. Fear of Making Mistake

Dealing with students who prefer to take the back seat and avoid classroom participation can be teacher's nightmare. The other factor contribute to students' reluctance to participate in English class is fear of making mistake. According to Jannah & Fitriati (2016:69) students often feel afraid of making mistakes when they are speaking English. In addition, this is also much influenced by the students' fear of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher.

Participate in English class is stressful for students especially when they need to perform something using English and listening to

teacher explanation using English, some of students chose to be passive because they just avoid to making mistake in front of their classmates and teacher.

Teacher need to pay attention about students, although they making mistake, teacher and classmates need to support the reluctant students, and give a chance and encourage them to participate, because they can learn from their mistake.

a. Causes of Fear of Making Mistake

In order to do not want to make mistake students sometime choose to keep silent according to Kurtus (2001:1) the primary reason is that they are afraid of looking foolish in front of other people. Other people here means teacher and classmates. Another cause stated by Madill (2016:2) there are many causes for this fear of making mistakes, with how their peers perceive them in the classroom being a major cause. Student often feel that other students are judging their speaking skills, thus they do not want to speak and make mistakes in front of them. Furthermore, in many language classrooms, students are often comparing their English levels to others. A mistake would show that they are not as advanced as other students.

In some other cases, they also worry about how they will sound, lack of vocabulary, grammar error, pronunciation, etc. especially Asian students. They just do not want to look foolish in

front of the class and avoid the judgment, from that we can conclude the causes of fear making mistake, at the end they choose to keep silent.

4. Lack of Confidence

Lack of confidence is one of psychological factor which has been found as one of the greatest barriers that affects the oral performance. According to Juhana (2012:102) it is commonly understood that students' lack of confidence usually occurs when students realize that their conversation partner have not understood them or when they do not understand other speaker. In this situation, they would rather keep silent while others do talking showing that the students are lack of confidence to communicate.

As states in Ni (2012:2) self-confidence is considered to be another significant factor, which profoundly influences and learners' language performance. The students who lack of confidence are usually found to be extremely fearful and timid, reluctant to express their opinions and even unable to utter a complete meaningful sentence in class. It make teaching and learning in class is less effective and affecting to their academic achievement.

It can be concluded that lack of confidence is really headache for both teacher and learner. Unwillingness to participate in English classroom even though sometime the students are forced by teachers. It

is very common to see that only a few students are brave and competent to answer teachers' questions confidently.

a. Causes of Lack of Confidence

The main cause of students' confidence is their low ability in English, it make learner feeling reluctance to participate in English classroom. The other cause is also goes to teacher who lack of encouragement. Jamila (2014:157) state that learners with low motivation, little self-confidence and with a high level of anxiety hold high filters and ultimately, they become unsuccessful.