

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, there are several sections discussed by researcher related to the main problems of the research. This chapter consists of background of the research, statement of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research questions, the objectives of the study and, significance of the study.

Background of the Research

One of the problems in the world of education especially in teaching and learning in schools is many students have difficulty in learning English, this has an impact on the low academic achievement of students. One of the causes of difficulty and low academic achievement is anxiety. According to Abin (2009), a student who has difficulty in learning tends to find it difficult to absorb the subject matter delivered by the teacher; thus, this has an impact on decreasing the value of learning achievement.

Anxiety can be experienced anywhere by anyone, one of which is in schools where the teaching and learning process occurs. Before doing the research the researcher conducted observations on how the teaching system of English was carried out in one of the vocational schools in Yogyakarta and the results showed that the learning materials used were all reading-oriented where students were required to memorize and understand the materials provided by the teacher through reading. Moreover, reading habits are applied in the school. This intrigued researcher to examine whether reading anxiety occurs in vocational

school. According to Ahmad et al. (2013), there are two types of factors causing students' anxiety in reading a foreign language; the first factor is fear of making mistakes and the impact when reading while the second one is the topic, foreign vocabulary, and foreign cultural features inside the text (p. 90).

Anxiety is a psychic process that is not visible to the surface; thus, in order to determine students' experience of anxiety, a careful analysis is needed by trying to identify the symptoms along with the factors that underlie and influence them. Based on a research conducted by Gunarsa (2008), anxiety sufferers often experience symptoms such as excessive sweating despite the normal temperature, rapid heart beating, cold in the hands or feet, problems with digestion, dry mouth, dry throat, paleness, easily tired, feeling of uneasiness, easily startled, and spontaneous facial or limb movements with excessive intensity and frequency; for example, continuous legs shaking, neck stretching, and frowning while sitting. These characteristics can be used as a reference to analyze whether a student has reading anxiety. According Jalongo and Hirsh (2010), reading in a foreign language with unconditional anxiety stimulus brings negative reactions to the reading activity (p. 433).

This implies that reading anxiety needs to be the main concern because it can impact on students' academic achievement and the teaching and learning processes in classroom. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting a research on the correlation between reading anxiety and students' academic achievement. In addition, the researcher conducted this study in one of the vocational high schools in Yogyakarta.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher found problems related to reading anxiety based on the observation and the characteristic of anxiety. The first problem is that most of the students thought that they were unable to understand the contents of the reading in the books or text. They thought that the reading topic was unusual or unfamiliar; thus, they could not understand the meaning of the vocabulary in the text. For example, the problem arose when students learned about narrative text. When teacher asked students to write material in books based on their reading comprehension, many students were continuously shaking their legs, stretching their necks, and frowning while writing because they did not understand the vocabulary and contents of the reading text.

The second problem is when teacher asked students to read in front of their classmates. Many students looked nervous, pale, and shaky. The students were afraid they were unable to read correctly, unable to understand the reading, and also afraid of mispronouncing words when reading.

The third problem is when teacher asked students to repeat ideas or their understanding. Many students forgot what they have read and they were afraid to make mistakes in explaining their ideas. Anxiety arose when they were asked during and after the reading assignments. This may affect students' reading comprehension and performance at the same time.

Delimitations of the Problem

In conducting this study, the researcher limited the investigated problem to focus on find out the correlation between students' reading anxiety and students'

academic achievement. In addition, the researcher also analyzing the level of students' reading anxiety and the level of students' academic achievement.

Research Questions

There are three research questions examined by the researcher in this study.

They are:

1. How is the level of students' reading anxiety?
2. How is the level of students' academic achievement?
3. How is the correlation between students' reading anxiety and their academic achievement?

The Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions, the objectives of this research are presented below:

1. To find out the level of students' reading anxiety
2. To find out the level of students' academic achievement
3. To find out the correlation between students' reading anxiety and their academic achievement

Significance of the Study

Teachers

By knowing the correlation between students' reading anxiety and their academic achievement, teachers are expected to help in reducing students' reading anxiety by modifying the learning material as creatively as possible so that the students can feel comfortable during the learning process in class without feeling anxious anymore. Thus, students can achieve good academic achievements.

Students

After reading this research, students are expected to understand the correlation between students' anxiety in reading class and their academic achievement. Students who realize that they suffer reading anxiety are implied to learn to control their anxiety during learning by memorizing more vocabulary in English and reading English texts, such as poetry or novels with their friends. Therefore, the level of reading anxiety is expected to decrease.

Future Researchers

The next researcher can understand the correlation between students' reading anxiety and their academic achievement. This research can be used as a reference for other researchers who plan to investigate similar issues.