

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The most commonly used language in the world today is English (Thatchakon 2014). English is also the key to a person's success in reaching the peak of their career and business (Thandarin, 2015). One country that implements English in their daily lives is Thailand, which can be seen through films, when surfing the internet, newspaper circulation, and advertisements watched on television and social media (Napamon, 2014). However, although English has been read very often, a person's ability to master it varies depending on the person's knowledge of English, their frame of reference, their attitude when using English, their environment, the frequency of using English, and anxiety when using English (Napamon, 2014; Thatchakon, 2014).

Currently, people living in a country need to develop their skills and knowledge related to English to be able to communicate in that language. Thai society has also acknowledged that English is currently an important language to learn and use. The importance of English for Thai society can be seen from the development of national education organizations that have required English to be studied at every level of school for a long time so that national society can communicate with the international community using English starting from writing, reading, speaking, even listening (Chiramanee et al., 2014).

When learning English, laypeople often experience obstacles in communicating or expressing their opinions using English with people around them. This certainly makes students not used to communicating using English and feel confident in using it. The absence of specific training in schools from teachers has made it difficult for students to communicate using English. As a result, students in Thailand are less effective in communicating using English because they are fixated on grammar. They are not ashamed of making mistakes, but they just want to make sure that what they have said is according to the teachings in the school where Thai teachers often focus on teaching grammar and sentence structure which makes students forget the natural flow of communication (Ritthirat, 2014).

English teaching in Thailand is only focused on understanding grammar and

sentence structure, making Thai people have difficulty speaking English fluently. Students in Thailand are taught to use English to take exams and get good grades. Foreign teachers make students feel anxious with the amount of grammar taught which makes students unable to communicate fluently in English.

The type of teaching conducted by foreign teachers makes children in Thailand only focus on vocabulary, sentence patterns, and grammar but there is no application. Foreigners do not pay attention to speech or grammar but only pay attention to clarity in the communication being carried out. This kind of teaching makes Thai people and students in Thailand feel anxious when speaking because they think about the appropriateness of each vocabulary used and its sentence patterns (Ritthirat, 2014).

Such problems need to be addressed by teachers in Thailand because currently, the world has become more open where people come abroad and foreigners come to Thailand so the role of English in communication is increasingly important to be developed and maximized. Seeing this development, many schools and universities offer international programs and student exchange programs. Every year, scholarships can even be easily provided by universities so that their students can study abroad. Higher education today has also changed towards internationalization which can be seen from the number of international students who study abroad either at their own expense or even using scholarships (Ngira et al., 2015). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2014) provides information that around four million undergraduate students have registered to study abroad.

In general, using a language that is not the mother tongue has its challenges, especially for Thai students, who speak it not fluently, which results in Thai students having poor English speaking skills. Although studying English in Thailand has been done in schools for twelve years and some training taken at universities, their confidence when speaking English is still very low. English in Thailand has been seen as an important language in the development of education, business, and technological progress, all of which are related to the ability to use English (Akkakoson, 2019). English in Thailand has also become a mandatory element to learn and has been included in the national curriculum since 1980. Furthermore, in 2001, the new Thai national curriculum stated that English has become a foreign subject that must be held and studied since the age of 6 or level 1 of elementary

education.

Thai students are also required to take English in their core and elective courses. There are four levels of English learning in Thai schools, namely level 1 (preparatory level) and level 2 (beginning level) in primary education, level 3 (expansion level) in junior secondary education, and level 4 (expansion level) in senior secondary education. English has even become a foreign language on par with Japanese, Chinese, German, and French. However, English has a higher status (Boonkit, 2002). English is even described as a skill that shows that Thai people are cultured and educated (Wongsothorn, 2000: 314).

From the researcher's experience teaching directly at the Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School, the researcher has 2 strong reasons for conducting this research. The first reason why the researcher chose the topic "anxiety" was because she felt interested in the physical characteristics that were visible when Thai students felt anxious in speaking English. For example, sweating, shaking hands, difficulty breathing, etc. The second reason why the researcher chose to study Thai students is because compared to students in Indonesia, Thai students require more attention in learning English. They do not even understand basic English in daily life. Then the difference between Thai and English accents makes them feel confused when learning English. From these reasons, the researcher created a research title entitled "*Anxiety in Speaking English in Thai Students: Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School*" for her research.

B. Research Questions

Based on the background above, the researcher has a problem to analyze.

1. What are the factors causing speaking anxiety in Thai students studying at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School?
2. What is the level of anxiety experienced by Thai students studying at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School?

C. Objective of The Study

Based on the research questions, there are objectives of the study, are as follows:

1. To describe the factors causing speaking anxiety in Thai students studying at

Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School.

2. To describe the level of anxiety experienced by Thai students studying at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School.

D. Limitation of Study

The researcher has limited this study to describe the factors causing speaking anxiety and the level of anxiety experienced by Thai grade 6th of Senior High School students studying at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School, Nakhon Nayok, Thailand.

E. Significance of the Study

This research has pedagogical and practical significance.

1. Pedagogical Significance

- a) It is hoped that the results of this research can provide ideas for developing and solving English language anxiety problems. This gives students an idea about the difficulties faced in speaking English anxiety and how to solve such problems such as understanding anxiety and correcting it to benefit yourself.
- b) It is hoped that this research can provide references to teachers on how to use teaching methods to get an idea of students' complications and the difficulties they face in speaking English.

2. Practical Significance

- a) The results of this research can provide information to teachers about teaching English speaking. Teachers can help students achieve the expected goals, including overcoming students' difficulties in speaking English. So, when teachers know how students experience speaking anxiety, they can address this problem as this is the key to turning complications into fluency.
- b) The results of this research can help students understand their weaknesses and increase the strength of anxiety that affects students in speaking English.
- c) It is hoped that this research can provide additional guidance for researchers in strategies to overcome anxiety difficulties when speaking English.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotion that is owned by someone who has a sign of unpleasant feelings and is often overwritten by nervous feelings and behavior. This feeling is a subjective feeling that will be felt very unpleasant and can be a fear of an event that is being watched out for (Davison GC, 2008).

2. Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the language skills where in this skill, a person will make a sound that has meaning so that other people or conversation partners can understand the sound they make to create good communication (Siahaan, 2008).