

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents (1) background, (2) research problem, (3) objective of the study, and (4) the significance of the study.

1.1 Background

Language has a role as the bridge for interaction. People need to use language to communicate. It is about constructing words to a meaningful sentence. Beside that language is essentially a means of communication in the world. Nowadays, in this globalization era, English also has become the most important language in the world used as the main tool of communication among people who do not own English as their native language. It is supported by Hammond (2014) that English is a language which has the most users in the world after Mandarin language. Harvard Business Review (2012) reported that the fastest-spreading language in human history, English is spoken at a useful level by some 1.75 billion people worldwide. In addition, a large percentage of the world's language learners study English in order to be able to communicate fluently. There are 101 countries and

10 organizations that use English as their formal language and the total of users are about 1000 million people. Indonesian's English proficiency stayed in low position in the 32nd from 72 non-speaking English countries (English First, 2016).

English skills are divided into four, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking is one of the four macro skills that is necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when speakers are not using their mother tongue (Boonkit, 2010, p. 1305). Furthermore, Lightbown and Spada (2006, p. 12) explain that speaking in the target language is requiring more than one mental task at one time like choosing words, pronouncing them, and stringing them together with the appropriate grammatical. Besides, speaking is one of the fundamental skills to master a foreign language (Rahman & Deviyanti, 2012, p. 1). Not only does it bear a highly communicative value, but also it is generally regarded as the parameter of one's proficiency in a foreign language. Speaking is the most important skill because speaking is the main parameter of English. It is also as the main goal in learning English.

People can deliver information, ideas, and manage social relationship in communicating with others by speaking (Kalanzedda, Mehnagar, Hassannejad, & Bakhtiarvand, 2013, p. 2). The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners (Richard, 2008, p. 19). Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language, so that the main purpose of language learning is to develop proficiency in speaking and communicative efficiency. They also regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire and assess the progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication (Kalanzedda et al. 2013). Moreover, if students have good mastery in speaking, it benefits them to get job in the future. It is supported by

Dino (2013) that English skill especially oral skill is a primary thing for those who want to work in multinational companies, not only that local companies have placed oral skill in English to be one of criteria in looking for employees.

For most people, speaking is the most difficult part when they learn a foreign language. Oral skills have hardly been neglected in EFL/ESL courses witness the huge number of conversation and other speaking course books in the market (Richard, 2008, p. 19). Some problems in speaking are still encountered by the students. They often face difficulties in using English when they are about to try to interact with others. In addition, students often complain that they cannot think of anything to say and they have no motivation to express themselves. Furthermore, Rivers (1968) believes that the learners have nothing to express maybe because the teacher had chosen a topic which is not suitable for him or about which he knows very little. Teachers mostly use traditional methods in teaching this skill and ignore the significance of individual differences (Mahdavi & Azimi, 2012). It is difficult for many students to respond when the teachers ask them to say something in a foreign language because they might have little ideas about what to utter, how to use the grammar correctly, or which vocabulary to be used (Baker & Westrup, 2003). Those factors include in individual difference factors of learning language especially in speaking. It is the same as Chen (2008), the cause of students' difficulty in speaking is influenced by individual-difference variables (e.g. students' self-concept and personality) and environmental factors (e.g. family and educational level).

One of the individual-difference factors that has drawn the attention of the researchers is thinking style. Sternberg (1997) and Zhang (2004, p. 234) proposed the theory of mental self-government describes 13 thinking styles that fall along 5 dimensions. There are three functions (legislative, executive, and judicial styles), four forms (hierarchical, oligarchic, monarchic, and anarchic styles), two levels (global and local styles), two scopes (internal and external styles), and two leanings (liberal and conservative styles) of the mental self-government.

Thinking styles frequently studied in educational concepts since thinking is the core of education and considered as being one of the components which shape the learning environment. Zhang (2004, p. 235) argued thinking styles are, in principle, value free, for the same thinking styles can result one person beautifully in one situation, but may fail the same person awfully in another situation. It shows that everybody has different thinking styles. Thinking styles are cognitive preferences, which affect how an individual behaves and feels, and selected as a cognition representative for this study. There is no successful learning without cognitive and affective aspect (Brown, 2007, p. 134). Also, every successes and achievements of humans depend on fruitful, dynamic and effective thoughts (Navan, 2015, p. 1699).

Garcia (2010, p. 6) argues that thinking styles play a role in many important aspects of wellbeing and life success. Understanding diversity of their thinking and learning styles are indicators that can help poor students can be successful from their failure (Navan, 2015, p. 1699). Also, He argues understanding various thinking styles helps people to adjust their thoughts with different thinking styles

and simultaneously succeed in communications (2015, p. 1700). In line with Sharifi (2013, p. 4) one of the fundamental principles of contemporary educational psychology is the ways students' think as one of the most important predictors of perceived success in school. Thinking styles as one of important psychology area that affect students' achievement. Negahi (2015) describes some studies that thinking styles have relationship with problem-solving, decision-making, and academic achievement. It means that if student can identify their comfortable thinking styles, they have ability to solve problem and make right decision in their aspects of life.

People may think, thinking is a lazy activity. Especially for students. Negligence of thinking styles in different situations may lead to elimination of the most important valuable talents as well as big potential to achieve successfully (Navan, 2015, p. 1699). He indicated that teachers are not aware of diversity of the students' thinking styles. Moreover, Sharma (2011, p. 115) proposed If teachers are fail in caring the students' thinking styles, it will arise the serious consequences, because the teachers may tend to confuse styles of students mind. He adds the students who have the same thinking styles of the teachers are only benefited and rewarded, but others not. Meanwhile, successes and failures attributed to abilities often stem from styles. A teacher should know that the weak performance of a student is not always due to the lack of ability but because of the lack of proportion between thinking styles of students and teachers' expectations (Negahi, 2015, p. 1723). It is very important for teacher who will be one of the crucial stakeholders

of the education, to be aware of their thinking styles unexpected students' thinking styles (Esmer, 2016, p. 161).

The rationales of conducting this research are first, today's life has demanded people to be able to speak in English (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006, p. 1). Second, problem often occurs in the process of developing speaking skill, especially in the aspect of behavior (Sad, 2008, p. 34). Last, students' speaking skill in Asia Continent remains limited in speaking. In the term of thinking styles, the basic characteristic of human being is the ability of thinking. Everyone has different way or style in thinking. Fouladi, and Sahidi (2016, p. 1728) argue that Thinking styles are the mental frameworks that describe how process of information and ability to solve the problem in the special situations. Also, Mahmood, Hossein, and Sharooz (2013, p. 5) define thinking styles focus to the question on how one thinks which is different from how well one thinks. In short, thinking styles concern the question on how one thinks which is different from how well one thinks.

Based on the informal interview with some students of English Education Study Program of Islamic State University of Raden Fatah Palembang, the researcher found some problems. First, they did not join English course or other learning of English before. Another problems are when they were about to speak, they were not sure about what to say and which vocabulary to use. The fear of making mistakes and trouble with partner of speaking who had different style of thinking that stumbled them. Therefore, they have capability to speak with good vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, they still got trouble with different style

of thinking. Moreover, the researcher found that students are not slightly aware with their thinking styles performance.

Some researchers have previously explored those related variables. Ahmadi, Gorjian, and Pazhakh, (2016) found significant relationship between EFL learners' thinking styles on reading comprehension. On the contrary, Fatemi, and Heidarie, (2016) found no significant correlation among global, local, external, internal, liberal, and conservative thinking styles and academic achievement related to reading. Zhang (2010) studied the relationship between thinking styles and academic achievement related reading is negatively correlated with executive thinking styles.

Realizing the importance of thinking styles on student's speaking achievement and the fact that thinking styles contribute attention in education, and the studies about thinking styles and language skill is limited. It makes the researcher wants to explore more about the correlation between thinking styles and speaking achievement. So it is still crucial to concern on this issue.

1.2. Research Problems

Based on the background, the research problems are formulated in the following questions:

1. Is there any significant correlation between students' thinking styles and speaking achievement of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?
2. Do students' thinking styles significantly influence speaking achievement of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

1.3. Research Objectives

In accordance with the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. To find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between students' thinking styles and speaking achievement of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.
2. To know if students' thinking styles significantly influence speaking achievement of English Education Study Program of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang?

1.4. The Significance of the Study

From this study the researcher hopes that it will give some information in the development of language teaching and learning process. It is hoped that this study will give benefit to these following groups:

1. To the English Teachers of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang

This study hopefully can be useful for teachers in UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. The teachers can improve their teaching strategy when they are teaching in order to be understood by students, by understanding the concept of thinking styles as one factor that can influence students' success or failure in their study,

2. To the Students of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang

When students understand about their thinking styles, it will help them on how to improve their speaking ability effectively.

3. To the Course Designer and Material Developer

This study can be useful for course designer and material developer in designing and creating material related to students' thinking styles.

4. To the Researcher and Future Researchers

This study is hoped to give valuable experiences for the researcher and to develop his understanding in thinking styles. Therefore, researcher will get more awareness in teaching English as foreign language especially in term of speaking achievement. This research is also expected to be a good reference for the next researcher.

