

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains the introduction of the research divided into several sub-chapters, those are background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, limitation and scope of the research, and significance of the research.

1.1 Background of The Study

Communication is a necessity for humans to relate to each other because in essence humans are social creatures. It means that humans cannot live alone and need to interact with other people around them. Therefore language is needed to connect each other, both between individuals and groups. Sapir (2011) stated that a method for communicating ideas, emotions, and desires through a system that voluntarily generated symbols which is purely human and non-instinctive is called language. However, every region of the world has its language to speak in daily life and that has been a problem in the past. Every country or even every region uses a different language, so we cannot communicate with a person or group of other countries. Over time, people around the world can communicate easily using the universal language, namely English.

Nowadays wherever people come from, English will always be their International language. Therefore, several people come to other countries to learn English because it is more effective than just living in their own country to learn another language. It is the answer to 'why some Thai students learn English at Muhammadiyah University

Surabaya' even though Indonesia is a non-English speaking country. According to a study conducted by Ahmad et al (2017), by studying abroad, students will not only be able to develop their language skills, but they will also gain international experience that would not get if they only stayed on their own country. English is very universal, almost everyone in the world knows English even though they can't speak English. Although English is the language used by everyone in the world, one person cannot pronounce it the same as the native speaker. People who were not born and grew up in an English-speaking country have their style of speech or what is commonly known as an accent. Accents serve as signals and make speech more difficult to process, for that reason most of the accents which are non-native speakers have can cause them to appear less credible (Dixon; Mahoney & Cocks, 2002).

Indeed, a person who comes from one area with someone from others has a different accent in speaking English. Some studies support the statement before, considering the different accents and speaking skills. In a study by Nurul Wahidah Darwis entitled *The Influence of Regional Accent in Speaking English at the Muhammadiyah University of Makassar*, we can recognize that regional accents impact speaking English. This study discusses how regional accents affect speaking English and what are the impacts caused by regional accents. Cultural factors can also be one of the factors that make it difficult for students to speak English fluently. In speaking English, the regional dialect or local dialect from the region is still used by some students (Darwis, 2018). In this study, the researcher only examined regional accents in general. Meanwhile, another study entitled *The Causal Factors of Using Buginese Accent in Speaking English at Third Semester Students of English Education Department of FKIP Unismuh Makassar*, written

by Sulastris Dian Pratiwi (2019) focused more on using a Buginese accent as the object of research. In that study, it was found that the accent of the first language can be a disruption that affects their English pronunciation in conversation.

When we discuss accents and their impact, it cannot be separated from something that becomes the background influencing the existence of regional accents. Sociocultural is one of the backgrounds of this phenomenon, where the relationship between culture and language is continuous. According to Larson and Smalley (1972), a blueprint that guides human behavior in a society and is hatched in family life is a sociocultural picture. Sociocultural can be interpreted as an idea, habit, skills, art, and tool that characterizes a certain group of people, or simply sociocultural is defined as a container or process that involves the relationship between culture and humans (Nisak, 2016). Human existence in this case is symbolized by language which interacts with the culture and social environment that differs from one region to another, therefore different regional accents are created.

Speaking is one aspect of language that is mainly used to communicate something with other people orally. Speaking itself can be defined as an action or a person's ability to convey ideas or thoughts that they have verbally and can be heard by others. Although birds and babies make sounds to communicate, it doesn't mean they speak because speaking isn't just about making sounds (Cornbleet & Carter, 2002). In addition, learning a second language is a complicated process, it involves all aspects of language like speaking, reading, writing, grammar, lexicon, etc. (Ozfidan; Machtmes & Demir, 2014).

In this study, researcher focused more on speaking skills. Previously, there had been some research on English speaking skills, but most discussed speaking skills in teaching. Even in the linguistics field, not many studies link English speaking skills with several backgrounds that influence them. Research conducted by Nurul Huda (2018) entitled *Background Factors of Thai Students' Speaking Achievement in English Learning*. It analyzes the background factors of Thai students' speaking achievement and the different background factors between students' high and low scores of speaking achievement. However, this research only discusses the background factors of Thai students' speaking performance in general. Thus, the researcher wants to recognize the deeper background factors of Thai students' speaking performance: socio-cultural factors.

Three other previous studies discuss socio-cultural factors, but they relate to different things. The first previous study was conducted by Kiran Maria (2019) entitled *Impact of Socio-cultural Factors on Academic Performance of Students in District Multan, Pakistan*. It discusses the influence of socio-cultural factors on students' academic achievement. Then, Ferney Cruz Arcila (2013) conducted research entitled *Socio-cultural Factors Involved In The Teaching Of English As Foreign Language In Rural Areas Of Colombia: An Analysis Of The Impact On Teachers' Professional Development*. It discusses that the development of teachers in rural areas is very different from that in urban areas because the appropriate situations and conditions for learning a second language are not provided in the context of rural languages. The last research was written by To Thi Le (2019) entitled *Identifying The Effect Of Socio-Cultural Factors On Pre-Intermediate Students' Reticence In Speaking English*. This research showed the

various factors that provide to reticence, such as passive learning style, fear of public speaking, or differences between English and native language.

From all of the previous studies, the researcher finds no research linking speaking skills with the involvement of socio-cultural factors. Furthermore, the researcher found that some Thai students around her had different English speaking skills, which made her curious about how this could happen even though they were from the same country. Therefore, the researcher conducted this study which focused on the socio-cultural background factors towards Thailand students' speaking skills.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

This research will discuss speaking skills and the involvement of socio-cultural background factors in the students' perspectives. It will discover how socio-cultural background may be implicated in someone's English speaking ability. Here is the research problem statement: "What is the participants' perspectives about the impact of socio-cultural background factors towards their speaking skills?"

1.3 Objectives of The Research

Considering the problem statement above, the objectives of the research is to identify the participants' perspectives about the impact of socio-cultural background factors towards their speaking skills.

1.4 Limitation and Scope of the Research

The scope of this research is the linguistic field, particularly in the sociolinguistic field. This study more focused on the English speaking

skills of Thailand students and the involvement of socio-cultural background factors. It is also limited to the students' perspectives in English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This research provides some information for readers about the involvement of socio-cultural background on English speaking skills of Thailand students in the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya. Moreover, this research can assist to augment the lecturer's awareness in highlighting the essence of speaking skills between the learners of English and fitting a new instructional paradigm.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1.6.1 Socio-culture

Socio-culture is a part of sociolinguistics which is learning how is the relation between language, social, and culture. According to Larson and Smalley (1972), a blueprint that guides human behavior in a society and is hatched in family life is a sociocultural picture. Socioculture can be interpreted as an idea, habit, skills, art, and tool that characterizes a certain group of people, or simply socioculture is defined as a container or process that involves the relationship between culture and humans (Nisak, 2016).

1.6.2 Speaking skills

The most substantial skills in language learning to master is speaking, because by mastering it people can interact, have

conversations, and exchange information or ideas with other people. Speaking itself can be defined as an action or a person's ability to convey ideas or thoughts that they have verbally and can be heard by others. In addition, although birds and babies make sounds to communicate, it doesn't mean they speak because speaking isn't just about making sounds (Cornbleet & Carter, 2002).



