

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the research background that elaborates the reason why this study conducted. Then, this chapter also presents statement of the problem, followed by research question, objective of the research, significance of the research and research outline

The Background of the Research

A new learning environment is a foundation for freshmen students of a higher education. Gerungan (2006) stated that the new learning environment might become a stimulus for students but, at the same time, it became an inhibitor for them to be a part of the new environment. Learning environment refers to all aspect of physical, psychological and instructional atmosphere that affect learning process (Warger & Dobbin, 2009). To deal with the new learning environment, freshmen students have to fit in with themselves whatever the conditions are.

A new learning environment brings some impacts to the students experience in a higher education. According to Oberg (1960), a new environment in learning process can give students shocking experiences (as cited in Mukminin, 2012). Moreover, in higher education, students come from various background, which means that students should understand multicultural backgrounds in their new environment. According to Lizio, Wilson and Silmon (2001), a new environment will influence students' motivation, attitude, knowledge, commitment and skill individually. When they receive new condition, students

should solve their problems related to new environment in the learning process. Moreover, with different experience, students have to face more competition, deal with more academic load, and maintain interaction with other students along with the need to follow the different teaching style (Sharma, 2012). Therefore, freshmen students should adapt to new learning environment, in order to be familiar with learning environment. In a learning process, learning environment will help students build contribution in a classroom appropriate with their characters and values as well as their initiative of their actions in the classroom (Abdullah, Bakar, Mahbob, 2012).

For freshmen students of English Education Department, learning English in the higher education becomes new environment for them. It is because in their previous education, English was one of the compulsory subjects. In that time, the students learn English only to pass the minimum competency score. While in English Education Department, the students learn English as their major. It means English is a basic competence for all subjects; hence the students have to master it well. Those differences become demands transition from high school to college that present challenges as well as opportunities. According to Talebloo and Baki (2013), freshmen students face the challenges, such as problem related to facilities, social environment and academic system. Likewise, LaFontaine (1985) and Ewan (1991) argued that the transition provides opportunity for freshmen student to correct their performance in English academic as well as provides them a change of self and status (as cited in McPhail, Fisher, & McConachie, 2009)

Krashen (1981) stated that when the students learn English as foreign language, they need some factors to succeed their English mastery; those are aptitude factor and attitudinal factor. Aptitude factor relates with the students' cognitive in learning English. It means the students need have phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive ability (Carol, 1973), along with verbal intelligence (Pimsleur, 1966). Among students, those abilities are different each other related to their achievement in learning foreign language.

Then, for attitudinal factor, it will be influenced by learning environment. Here, attitudinal factors in second language acquisition encourage students to be able to interact with other speakers in order to obtain intake of the target language. There are two goals of attitudinal factor related to their learning style. First, freshmen students desire to be a part of a new environment in learning English. Second, they want to achieve proficiency of practicing English in their environment (Krashen, 1981).

In order to achieve these goals, adjustment is important for freshmen students to deal with a new environment and encourage students learning process in the college. According to Sharma (2012), adjustment to college concerns with social and emotional changes, where it becomes a major task for students to manage their moods and express them appropriately in social interaction of a college. Adjustment establishes students' identities in a classroom to fit in with uncommon environment. In line with that, students are supposed to be independent learners to adjust themselves with new academic demands. Therefore, students' adjustment requires students' personal response and society.

In humanistic approach, personal response to an activity of learning influences students' success or failure of English learning (Stevick in Harmer, 2001). Good personal response of students in a new environment will affect their adjustment to solve threatening environment. Freshmen students face more adjustment of their new environment in order to obtain learning motivation, fit in with their different cultures, needs and learning method, as well as interact with other students. Success of adjustment will encourage students to perform when they learn English in a classroom.

Adjustment process among freshmen students is different and many students do not well prepared for this process (Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio in Smith & Wertlieb, 2005). Students must simultaneously adjust to college academic strictness and new social responsibilities (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2002). For instance, academic strictness forces freshman students to catch levels same as others, whether they want or they do not, they direct or indirectly, they have new social responsibilities, namely at least they have to be in the same level with others.

English Education Department (EED) students are supposed to master four skills of language especially speaking as well as possible. In learning English, speaking is one of the most important skills, which the students should master well. Brown & Yule (in Tuan & Mai, 2015) stated that spoken language production reflects as one of the complex aspect of language learning. Each student always tries to overcome their difficulty to express themselves in spoken language in the target language even though they also have to deal with the

learning environment. Littlewood (in Tuan & Mai, 2015) argued that students will feel anxious and inhibition to speak in target language in their foreign classroom. Zhao (in Yildirim, 2014) stated that poor language proficiency obstructs social interaction of students with lecturers and other students. In this case, it will infer students' academic achievement because of social and psychological problems and negative contribution.

Based on researcher's experience during studying at EED UMY from the first time entering college until now, the researcher found a phenomenon that not all the freshmen students mastered English well. Some of them just did not even have any basic knowledge of English from their high school. For students who had low ability, they had to adapt in the classroom so that they could be comparable with other students who had high proficiency.

The freshmen students in EED UMY came from various backgrounds; which mean some students mastered English well but some of them were not. Then, when it came to study in the classroom the English ability became a gap. Some students who mastered English well would speak confidently but for students who could not adapt the new environment and did not speak English well would keep their mouth closed and underestimated themselves.

In learning English, the students who did not practice English speaking well needed to adjust to the new environment faster, because if they did not, they would not achieve speaking ability as others. Whether they would or not to adjust they should have fit in. Moreover, they needed to keep closed with the curriculum. Measuring students' adjustment in the new learning environment related to the

students' speaking might be reference for the teacher in designing activity in the speaking class effectively along with for the senior students to encourage freshmen students feel comfort and easy to adjust new environment. Therefore, the researcher needed to investigate a correlation between student's adjustment to the learning environment and their English speaking ability.

The Statement and Limitation of the Problem

Students need to adjust a new learning environment in order that they can speak English confidently. Adjustment is main thing for the freshmen students need when they enter a new environment of higher education. The students of EED particularly, should adjust English learning environment that is different from their previous learning. English that they have to learn in EED's classroom includes four skills, namely, writing, reading, listening, and speaking. In this case, speaking becomes the most difficult to do because speaking is conducted in real time, here and now along with the person whom students are talking to is coming up to them to speak right then (Nunan, 2003). The research focused on the students' adjustment, students' speaking ability and the correlation of these two variables. The study was important to be conducted in the EED environment of UMY for the teacher and students. By knowing the students adjustment of the new environment, the teacher will know how to encourage students' improvement in English speaking classroom. Likewise, for the students who had been senior can help encourage the freshmen students to able to adjust the new learning environment as well as possible.

The Research Question

According to the background, the researcher formulated three research questions, those are:

First, how is the EED of UMY students' adjustment level toward the learning environment?

Second, how is the EED of UMY students' speaking ability?

Third, is there any correlation between the students' adjustment of the learning environment and their English speaking at EED of UMY?

The Objective of the Research

In relation to the research statements mentioned above the aims of the study are:

First, to investigate the EED of UMY students' adjustment toward the learning environment.

Second, to investigate the EED of UMY students' speaking ability.

Third, to find out the correlation between the students' adjustment of the learning environment and their English speaking at EED of UMY.

The Significance of the Research

The significances of the study are:

Theoretically. Result of the research can be used as an overview for the teachers in teaching English Speaking especially in helping the student adjust to their new environment. In addition, the result of the research can be used as a reference for those who want to conduct a research in teaching English speaking.

In addition, for further researchers, the researchers can conduct deeper research about college adjustment and speaking ability as well as exploring good method to teach speaking related with students' background.

Practically. By reading the result, teachers can build the class atmosphere and teaching method, which are suitable with students' character when teaching English speaking. This research is beneficial for senior students who will help freshmen students in adjusting themselves toward the new learning environment. In addition, freshmen students can take benefits from the research such as construct commitment in early stage of their college in order to they know what should they do during studying in college and achieving good performance in speaking.

The Outline of the Research

The researcher organized this research paper in order to make the readers easily to understand the paper. The following showed the content covered in this research. Chapter I is introduction. This chapter explains the background of the study, problem statement, research question, objective of the study, benefit of the study, and outline of the research. Chapter II presents review of related literature. It covers definition of adjustment, adjustment to the college, definition of speaking ability, review of previous studies and then discusses theoretical framework of the research. Chapter III presents research method. It covers type of the research, research procedure, subject of the study, object of the study, data and data source, method of collecting data, and technique for analyzing data. Chapter

IV presents the result of the study comprising of students' adjustment, students' speaking ability and the correlation between students' adjustment and their speaking ability as well as discussion. Chapter V deals with conclusion and suggestion.