

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

People inevitably need to communicate to build relationships with others. People usually employ language verbally or orally to serve many important roles. Those are sharing ideas, expressing feeling, transferring some information and so on. Basically, speaking becomes the common way of communication due to its simple requirements. Human being only needs their organs of speech. Moreover, they have natural capability in uttering words and sentences during their growth. It also takes no particular scientific knowledge to talk within communicative purpose. Therefore, speaking then becomes an integral part of human life.

Basically speaking is not a simple process, it is a highly dynamic, active and complex process in which several agents and components are involved. There are complicated processes behind the occurring speech. One influential point is the finding that human brain plays a very significant role in speech production. According to Dardjowidjojo (2003: 212), the brain is highly functionalized dealing with speech planning and execution. To enhance a successful execution of utterances, for example, the process involves input filtering, mind processing, execution, planning, and the control toward the execution itself. Then the quality of human brain can be influenced by the exact condition of the brain as well as the maintenance during the growth. Therefore, a good understanding on the brain's factual condition is a basic step before continuing into language learning and

development. Experts find out that normal people, namely defined as the people with no problems on the brain mechanism. They have very big chance to develop the language competence well. On the contrary, people with abnormal brain mechanism may have a greater difficulty, failure, or even nothing in their language development.

The abnormalities in using language are mostly related to a particular brain damage or brain dysfunction. Besides causing the abnormal brain mechanism, the damage also has a continuing effect related to speech plan and execution. That is why an individual with speech disorder usually has particular language features considered as “abnormal” compared to those of common people.

Wendy (2010: 9) defines that speech disorders affect the way a person talks. A person with a speech disorder usually knows exactly what he/she wants to say and what is appropriate for the situation, but he/she has trouble producing the sounds to communicate it effectively. Speech disorders include a variety of conditions that affect children and adults alike. They can range from trouble pronouncing a specific letter or sound to the inability to produce any understandable speech. Some are the results of a physical deformity. Others are the results of damage to the speech mechanism (larynx, lips, teeth, tongue, and palate) caused by injury or diseases, such as cancer. Often, however, the cause of a speech disorder is not known.

One of the types of speech disorder is stuttering. Stuttering (also called stammering) is a speech disorder in which fluency is disrupted by repetitions and prolongations in syllables, sounds, and words (Sleeper, 2007: 69). An individual

who stutters often has difficulty starting words. Normal speech production is a complicated process that requires the brain to coordinate a number of muscles in a precise manner, including those involved in respiration, vocalization, and articulation (involving the throat, palate, tongue, lips, and teeth). The brain regulates these muscles by processing sensory feedback that comes from hearing and touch. Although the causes of stuttering are not yet known, it is believed that stuttering occurs when there are disruptions in the way that the brain coordinates the various components necessary for the production of speech.

Prasse and Kikano (2003: 563) state that stuttering occurs in approximately 1.4 percent of children younger than 10 years old. Stuttering occurs in persons of all ages, but it is most common in young children who are developing and learning language and speech. Stuttering is resolved by adulthood in nearly 80 percent of children with developmental stuttering. Less than 1 percent of adults stutter; 80 percent of them are men. The prevalence of stuttering is similar across different social, economic, cultural, and ethnic groups. Many well-known orators, actors, and singers have outgrown childhood stuttering, including Winston Churchill, James Earl Jones, Marilyn Monroe, Jimmy Stewart, Bruce Willis, Carly Simon, and Mel Tillis.

The phenomenon of stuttering is also portrayed in films; one of them is *Rocket Science*. The writer of this film script, Jeffrey Blitz drew from many of his own experiences as a stutterer when writing the script of this film. This film tells about the story of a stuttering student named Hal Hefner who has a communication disorder because of his stuttering. Hal's life changes because of

his stuttering. He cannot communicate well with others because of this condition. Many people think that Hal is a strange boy who can speak well. Then he decides to join a debate team at school, where he tries to induce his fluency by using some stuttering treatments which helps him speak well although it needs time and process.

The movie clearly tells the phenomenon of stuttering, which includes the characteristics of a person who suffers from stuttering, how a person who suffers from stuttering faces his environment, and how his environment helps him successfully undergo stuttering treatments. Since the film tells about the phenomena of stuttering, a kind of a speech disorder, which is under the field of psycholinguistics, the researcher is interested to explore and analyze the phenomena of stuttering suffered by the main character in *Rocket Science* under a psycholinguistic study.

B. Focus of the Research

Stuttering is one of the kinds of language disorders experienced by many people in the world. According to Lanier (2010: 20), a person who stutters involuntarily repeats sounds and syllables. For example, he/she may say “b-b-b-ball” for “ball,” repeating the first letter several times before finishing the word. He/she may linger on one sound longer than is necessary, producing a voiced sound almost like a musical note. Or, he/she may interrupt the word that he/she wants to say with an involuntary pause by saying something like, “b...all.” People who stutter are usually self-conscious about their speech. They know very well that the sounds they are producing are not parts of a standard speech, but they are

unable to control the flow. Those who stutter will often blink or contort their faces from the tension caused by their disorder. These involuntary movements only serve to increase the speaker's discomfort and may lead to a more frequent stuttering.

This research focuses on the analysis of a movie entitled *Rocket Science* to find out the types of dysfluencies experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science*. The researcher also finds out the types of associated behaviors of stuttering experienced by Hal Heyner. At last, the researcher finds out the kinds of treatments that Hal Heyner underwent to overcome his stuttering.

Concerning the analysis of the types of dysfluencies experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science* and the types of associated behaviors that he experienced when stuttering, the researcher uses the theory of Patricia M Zebrowski and Conture. At last, in analyzing the kinds of treatments that Hal Heyner experienced to overcome his stuttering, the researcher uses the theory of Nathan Lavid, M.D.

C. Formulations of The Problems

The formulations of the problems of this research are:

1. What are the types of dysfluencies experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science*?
2. What are the types of associated behaviors experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science* when stuttering?
3. What kinds of treatments does Hal Hefner experience to overcome his stuttering?

D. Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

1. to present and explain the types of dysfluencies experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science*,
2. to present and explain the types of associated behaviors experienced by Hal Heyner, the stuttering character in *Rocket Science* when stuttering, and
3. to present and describe the kinds of treatments that Hal Heyner experiences in overcoming his stuttering.

E. Significance of the Research

Regarding the background and the objectives, this research is hopefully able to bring significances for:

1. Theoretically

The results of this research can enrich the development of psycholinguistics knowledge, especially on speech disorder of stuttering.

2. Practically, the result of the research is expected to give contribution to the following parties:

- a. The readers of this study

This research can give the knowledge and the information on speech disorder, especially on stuttering. It can indirectly open their mind on how to see and accept people with stuttering. Thus, they know what to do with stuttering.

b. The Students of English Department

This research hopefully can contribute more knowledge about psycholinguistics especially for those whose major is linguistics. Moreover, this research can be a reference of speech disorder especially stuttering for their study.