

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains six sections. The study is organized into sections: background, research questions, purpose, delimitation, significance, and key term definitions.

A. Background of the study

Indonesian education regards English as a foreign language (EFL). The application of English in our education system is significant, starting from primary school to higher education. Nonetheless, significant challenges remain within the educational process. This is mostly due to the variations in learning English and Indonesian. When learning English, students concentrate on four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Speaking is one of the most important skills for EFL learners to improve. Setianing Wahyu et al. (2023) emphasize that speaking is an essential capability that English language learners must cultivate. Rao (2019) also claims that speaking is the primary skill for acquiring a language, particularly a foreign one. In short, speaking skills are the most important for EFL students.

Speaking is a crucial competency and one of the main goals for EFL learners in acquiring a new language. Inside and outside the classroom, people acknowledge speaking skills as fundamental critical skills for communication both. By developing speaking abilities, learners can convey ideas during discussions, deliver presentations in front of the class, participate in speech

competitions, etcetera. Mastery of speaking skills is essential for everyone, as it enables individuals to communicate their thoughts to others effectively (Manda & Irawati, 2021a). Students who have good speaking competence are often better positioned to pursue study or work abroad opportunities compared to those who lack it. Assessing student's proficiency in English speaking is a useful ability. When a learner can conduct a conversation in the target language, they have successfully acquired the language. However, this skill seems challenging because learners must convey and express their ideas through oral communication.

Verbal communication is the most challenging skill for learners of English as a Foreign Language Learners (EFL). According to Rosana Putri et al. (2020), although it is difficult to master, speaking is an essential skill that students must develop because this is a fundamental goal in acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL). For us Indonesians, English is a foreign language, making it more challenging to achieve fluency compared to individuals who speak English as their first language; additionally, students often experience a certain level of fear or anxiety regarding language learning. They typically rely on their native language for daily communication, but they must utilize a foreign language for effective interaction at times. Furthermore, according to Indrianty (2016); Nety & Purnomo (2023), speaking is one of the most challenging activities for students because it requires interaction while demanding an understanding of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and several other areas of study. Consequently, this complexity can heighten

students' feelings of difficulty and anxiety during speaking sessions, an occurrence referred to as speaking anxiety.

Speaking anxiety denotes the nervousness, fright, and embarrassment that individuals experience when speaking, particularly in front of a group or classroom. According to Rosana Putri et al. (2020), students often feel anxious when they need to answer questions or engage in conversation in English. Januariza & Hendriani (2016) support this view by noting that such anxiety can hinder students' ability to learn to speak effectively in English, preventing them from fully utilizing their skills. There are underlying reasons for this anxiety, and since English is a foreign language for many, it becomes imperative for teachers to assist students in overcoming these challenges. If these negative feelings are allowed to persist among EFL learners, it can hinder their ability to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and emotions in the new language they are acquiring.

Research on speaking and anxiety has identified various causes of speaking anxiety experienced by EFL learners. It includes fear of mistakes, ridicule, lack of ability, lack of preparation, practice, vocabulary, motivation, shyness, dislike of speaking subjects, teacher methods, and teacher habits. Sinaga et al. (2020) identify that the primary factor contributing to speaking anxiousness is the apprehension of negative assessment. Anxiety experienced in language learning is a complex psychological construct, as it is considered an affective variable. This means that anxiety experienced during language learning is one of the factors that can affect success.

Nevertheless, there are strategies to address the issue, since additional study identifies methods to alleviate the anxiety experienced by EFL learners. Research undertaken by Martiningsih et al. (2024) indicate that the most frequently selected method to assist students with speaking anxiety is the relaxation strategy. The defining feature of this method is its ability to alleviate bodily tension linked to emotional arousal. The relaxation strategy also helps the students to improve physiological responses to stress and anxiety. Other strategies that can minimize speaking anxiety are preparation strategy, peer seeking, and positive thinking strategy.

It is consistent with the context of instruction in English as a foreign language in secondary education at MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun. During pre-observation, the researcher notes that the tenth-grade students at MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun experience challenges in developing the four core skills of English. The most significant difficulty they faced is speaking. They can speak Indonesian fluently, but they struggle to communicate in English. When the teacher asks them questions, some of them are reluctant to answer the teacher's queries about their comprehension of the content in English. They are usually unable to speak, which clearly shows that most students still have problems and difficulties expressing their ideas orally. They also look shy, anxious, and uncomfortable and want to finish their performance quickly in order to get back to their seats.

There are several prior investigations aimed at exploring the connection between students' speaking performance and their anxiousness of speaking.

This research undertaken by Manda & Irawati (2021b) at Universitas PGRI Madiun examines “The Correlation Of Students’ Speaking Anxiety and Speaking Performance of MAN 2 Kota Madiun”. He finds the significant correlation between two variables. Also, a study conducted by Nety & Purnomo (2023) from Universitas Dayanu Ikhsanudin, South Sulawesi, investigates “The Correlation Between Students’ Speaking Anxiety and Speaking Ability at SMA Negeri 4 Baubau”. She identifies a substantial association between the speaking anxiety encountered by students and their speaking proficiency among the eleven individuals studied. A further investigation, undertaken by Kasim & Sukarno (2024) from Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta examines “The Correlation Between Students’ Anxiety and Their Speaking Ability in EFL Classroom”. She discovers that there is a connection between the abilities of the EFL students and how much they dread giving speeches in front of the audience.

The researcher is interested in conducting further research on the association between students’ levels of speaking anxiety and their performance when speaking in the tenth-grade at MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun. The particular school is selected as the subject of this investigation because, as far as the researcher is aware, no previous studies have examined the association between students’ level of anxiety about speaking and their success in speaking at this particular school. In addition, the purpose of this study is to provide evidence that supports hypotheses that there is a substantial connection between anxiousness and their performance in speaking exercises.

B. Scope of the Study

The study centers on tenth-grade students of MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun during the academic year 2024/2025. The study centers on the dimensions of speaking anxiety experienced by a student enrolled in an English language course. Brown & Abeywickrama (2019) design a scoring rubric, focusing on six aspects of speaking, to evaluate students' speaking performance. The research design employs a quantitative approach that includes performance evaluations and questionnaires based on Yaikhong & Usaha's (2012) measure of speaking anxiety, along with assessments of speaking abilities.

C. Problems of the Study

The researcher poses a question that requires addressing in this study. The research problem is, "Is there a correlation between students' speaking anxiety levels and the speaking performance of tenth-grade students at MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun?"

D. Objectives of the Study

The study examines the correlation between speaking anxiety and the speaking performance of tenth-grade students at MAN 4 Kabupaten Madiun.

E. Significance of the Study

This investigation has a big impact on the field of education. It provides advantages for students, educators, and upcoming studies.

1. For the students

It offers learners a more profound insight into the nature of anxiety impacts their ability to speak English effectively, encouraging to recognize

and address the root causing their nervousness. This awareness can lead to the implementation of strategies to reduce anxiety, build confidence, and enhance their drive to acquire English skills.

2. For the teacher

This investigation presents valuable insights into the emotional challenges students face when speaking a foreign language. This knowledge can guide teachers in creating a more supportive classroom environment, designing activities that gradually build students' confidence and motivation, and using techniques that can reduce anxiety.

3. For future research

The researcher considers that this study is not flawless. As a results, this thesis has a number of problems. This study has the potential to serve as a reference for researchers who investigate students' speaking anxiety when speaking English in the future.

F. Definition of Key Terms

The researcher used several operational variables in this study. The meaning of each operational variables will be explained below:

1. Speaking

Speaking is the vocal expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas, especially while learning English as a foreign language. It calls for confidence and a logical arrangement of ideas and incorporates vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. It can be a difficult to master this ability, particularly struggle with speaking anxiety.

2. Speaking anxiety

Speaking anxiety refers to the apprehension or unease pupils encounter when required to communicate in a classroom when English is taught as a foreign language.

3. Speaking performance

The speaking performance of a student's refers to their capacity to communicate effectively in English, encompassing fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and coherence. It is assessed using a rubric-based evaluation by an instructor, covering specific criteria like fluency, pronunciation, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary use. The scores are combined to provide a comprehensive score for each student, with higher scores indicating better English performance of speaking.