

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains about context of the study, formulation of research question, purpose of the study, significance of the study scope limitation of the study and definition of key terms.

#### **A. Context of the Study**

Basic English language skills are a fundamental need in today's global context. In an increasingly connected world, English functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for the exchange of culture, knowledge, and technology. As an international language, English proficiency provides individuals with access to information and broader opportunities in educational, professional, and social domains. In the educational context, basic English skills are often a prerequisite for admission into higher education institutions, particularly in English-speaking countries. English learning curricula at various levels of education have been designed to facilitate the mastery of grammar, speaking, and skills in listening, reading, and writing. A lack of basic English skills poses significant challenges in the teaching and learning process and limits access to educational resources available in English.

Currently, education in Indonesia uses a new curriculum, namely the independent curriculum. Where with this curriculum, teachers and schools can determine the material freely and according to the abilities of students. However, even so, English is a compulsory subject, even at the elementary

school level. According to Fabela et al., the independent curriculum provides great flexibility for teachers and students in the process of learning English. Teachers can adjust the material according to the needs of students.<sup>1</sup>

According to Hamid et al., public speaking is the ability to communicate effectively in front of an audience.<sup>2</sup> In English education, public speaking skills are essential for students to acquire. These skills enable students to express their ideas, emotions, and understanding clearly and effectively to a larger audience. Mastering public speaking allows students to participate in various learning activities that foster critical thinking and boost their self-confidence. One of the key aspects of public speaking is its ability to deliver messages engagingly and persuasively to influence or inspire listeners. According to Dansieh et al. in Chu, public speaking is a process, an act, and an art of delivering a speech to an audience.<sup>3</sup> With these skills, speakers can build emotional connections with their listeners and gain active participation and support for the ideas being presented.

When entering college, difficulties in public speaking seem to be a common issue among students. Students majoring in English often face challenges when speaking publicly in English, even though they are enrolled in English-related programs. In class, students use English as a medium of

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<sup>1</sup> Fabela, P., Fera, Z., Febriani, H., *An Analysis of The Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in English Teaching Learning SMPN 14 Bengkulu*, Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan, Vol. 5 (2024), p. 180-188

<sup>2</sup> Hamid, M. S., Rahmawati, R., & Sari, S., *Improving Students' Public Speaking Skills through Project-Based Learning*, Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran, Vol. 56 No. 1 (2023), p. 12 <https://ejournal.undiksha.ac.id/index.php/JPP/article/view/57399/24677>

<sup>3</sup> Dansieh, S. A., Edward, O., Gordon, A. S., *Glossophobia: The Fear of Public Speaking in ESL Students in Ghana*, Language Teaching; Vol. 1 No. 1 (2021), p. 22-35 <https://doi.org/10.30560/lt.v1n1p22>

learning, but they struggle to communicate effectively in front of an audience. This issue can stem from various factors, such as a lack of confidence, underdeveloped public speaking skills, or limited experience in using English in public settings. Many students feel awkward and afraid to speak English in front of their peers. They worry that if they cannot articulate their ideas clearly and correctly, others will judge them and question their competence in pursuing an English education degree. Additionally, in high school, greater emphasis is often placed on writing and reading skills rather than public speaking. As a result, although students may have good English knowledge, they struggle to actively use it in public speaking contexts.

Moreover, issues in public speaking are not only related to the language skills themselves but also to psychological factors that affect students. Fear or anxiety when speaking in public is often a major barrier for many students. Sari, said that public speaking anxiety is a common problem faced by students, especially those who are not accustomed to speaking in English.<sup>4</sup> This anxiety can affect their ability to deliver ideas clearly and effectively. Many students fear making mistakes, and concerns about negative judgments from the audience often prevent them from speaking confidently. Therefore, the development of public speaking skills should involve an approach that not only focuses on technical aspects but also on building students' mental resilience and self-confidence.

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<sup>4</sup> Sari, D. S. heti, S. (2024). *Faktor-faktor penyebab kecemasan dalam berbicara Bahasa Inggris pada mata kuliah Speaking for Akademik Purposes*. Prosiding Seminar Nasional Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat. p. 44. <https://journal.ikipgripta.ac.id/index.php/snpp/index>

On the other hand, the importance of public speaking in academic and professional settings cannot be overlooked. This skill is highly needed in various fields, whether for academic presentations, group discussions, or when addressing audiences at conferences or seminars. In higher education, public speaking skills can enhance students' opportunities to stand out and gain recognition for their critical thinking. In the professional world, the ability to speak in front of an audience can open many doors, from career opportunities to influencing policies and decisions in the workplace. Thus, mastering public speaking is essential, both in academic and professional contexts.

As a step to address this issue, many universities have started implementing more intensive and structured public speaking training in their curricula. For instance, some prestigious universities require students to attend courses or seminars on public speaking skills. Additionally, activities such as debates, project presentations, and public speeches can serve as effective means of practicing these skills. Furthermore, practice-based teaching that involves simulations and speaking exercises in front of an audience can help students overcome their fears and increase their confidence when speaking in public. These training programs are expected to reduce the barriers students face in mastering public speaking and prepare them for greater challenges in the future.

Several previous researchers have researched the challenges English students face in mastering public speaking at the college level. Tuyen et. al.,

the aim was to clarify the obstacles in the public speaking skills of students majoring in English studies, at the Department of English Language and Culture, School of Foreign Languages.<sup>5</sup> The result found that the obstacles mainly came from the lack of an English speaking environment, limited vocabulary knowledge, and low-self confidence. The solutions were proposed to pose some pedagogical implications for students, classroom teachers, school administration and educators as well. A study of the challenges English students face in mastering public speaking was also carried out by Kanakri, F. M., the aims was to explore the difficulties facing Jordanian EFL Learners in speaking skills and attempts to identify the significant factors of the low performance of the Learners in speaking skills and the result of this research was researcher found that there were linguistic, psychological and pedagogical problems that constituted real challenges for the students and stood behind the students' low performance in speaking.<sup>6</sup> It was also noticed that poor teaching methods, lack of enough practice, and inhibition stood as further obstacles that negatively impacted students' performance. Another study about challenges English students face in mastering public speaking was carried out by Riadil, I. G.<sup>7</sup>, this study

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<sup>5</sup> Tuyen, N. T. M and Thai, C. D., *Obstacles and Solutions to English Public Speaking from EFL Students' Voices: A Case at Can Tho University, Vietnam*, The First International Conference on Government Education Management and Tourism (ICoGEMENT) 1, no 1 (2021): 389-401 <https://conference.loupiasconference.org/index.php/ICoGEMENT/article/view/189/177>

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Fadil Majeed Kanakri, *Difficulties of Mastering Speaking Skills for Jordanian EFL Learners*, An International Peer-Reviewed Journal 4, (2022): 170-183, <http://DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2022.4.4.24>

<sup>7</sup> Riadil, I. G. *A Study of Students' Perception: Identifying EFL Learners' Problem in Speaking Skill*, IJELR: International Journal of Education, Language and Religion 2, no 1 (2020): 31-38, <http://doi.org/10.35308/ijelr.v2i1.2256>

aims to identify the speaking problems experienced by EFL learners in speaking English. The result of the study is that the students have problems learning to speak English. The most problematic for the students is mother tongue use, 77% of students use their other tongue in English class and 83% agree that their mother tongue is easier than English. A study from Putra, the aim of this study is to extend the strategies of engaging an audience through the concept of logic (logos), emotion (pathos), and credibility (ethos).<sup>8</sup> And the results show that to engage the audience, a public speaker should give evidence in arguments, involve the audience in activities, and present their credibility with their profile and research.

Previous studies have identified various challenges faced by EFL students in mastering public speaking skills. Tuyen et al., found that the main obstacles faced by students were the lack of an English-speaking environment, limited knowledge of language skills, and low self-confidence.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, Kanakri, revealed that linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical problems, including ineffective teaching methods and minimal speaking practice, were significant factors influencing students' low speaking performance.<sup>10</sup> Research by RiadiL, also highlighted the problem of the dominant use of the mother tongue, which hinders students from developing their English speaking skills.<sup>11</sup> Putra, then offered a new

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<sup>8</sup> Putra, B. (2024). *Unveiling Audience Engagement in Public Speaking: The Strategies*. *Journal of English Studies and Business Communication*, 1(1), 13–20. Retrieved from <https://jesscom.upnjatim.ac.id/index.php/jesscom/article/view/1>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid...,390

<sup>10</sup> Ibid...,173

<sup>11</sup> Ibid...,33

perspective by emphasizing the importance of using strategies based on logos, pathos, and ethos to increase audience engagement during public speaking.<sup>12</sup>

However, although Putra, has explored the rhetorical elements to engage an audience, the study focused more on the general strategies used by speakers.<sup>13</sup> This study has not specifically examined the difficulties faced by students in implementing these strategies, especially in terms of how they deal with psychological and technical barriers in attracting audience attention. In addition, previous studies have not explored how factors such as anxiety, lack of understanding of audience needs, and inability to read audience responses affect students' ability to maintain audience engagement.

The research gap lies in the lack of an in-depth study on the specific difficulties experienced by EFL students in attracting and maintaining audience attention, and how these factors affect public speaking success. Therefore, this study will focus on exploring the challenges faced by students in engaging an audience, in order to provide a more holistic understanding and develop relevant recommendations to help them improve their public speaking skills.

According to Putra, the audience is considered an important aspect of public speaking because they can assess the credibility of the speaker

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<sup>12</sup> Putra, B. (2024). *Unveiling Audience Engagement in Public Speaking: The Strategies*. *Journal of English Studies and Business Communication*, 1(1), 13–20. Retrieved from <https://jesscom.upnjatim.ac.id/index.php/jesscom/article/view/1>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid...,17

based on their judgment.<sup>14</sup> This shows that effective audience involvement is not only to convey material, but also to create a harmonious relationship between the listener and the speaker. The credibility of the speaker can be seen from the speaker's ability to demonstrate their knowledge and sincerity. This credibility is one of the main keys to the success of public speaking, because the audience tends to trust and pay more attention to speakers who are considered to have expertise and integrity. In addition, the speaker's ability to understand the needs of the audience, use the right intonation, supportive body language, and provide emotional appeal are also important factors in attracting the audience's attention. Without strong audience involvement, the message the speaker wants to convey may not be fully received or may even be ignored by the listener.

Based on the discussion above, the researcher sees that audience involvement is a crucial aspect of successful public speaking, especially among EFL students. In this context, involving the audience goes beyond merely capturing attention; it requires actively inviting the audience to participate through questions, discussions, or interactive activities. Meanwhile, engaging the audience refers more to capturing and maintaining their interest, attention, and emotional connection through elements such as storytelling, persuasive language, and expressive delivery. The researcher specifically focuses on the concept of involving audience because, in public speaking, participation fosters a two-way communication process that not

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid...,19



only strengthens audience attention but also builds speaker confidence, an area where many EFL students struggle. Therefore, the researcher chose the title "Students' Difficulties to Involve Audience in Public Speaking on the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung". This study aims to identify the specific obstacles students face in involving the audience during public speaking and to explore strategies to overcome these challenges. The findings are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the difficulties experienced by EFL students and to contribute to improving the quality of public speaking instruction within English education programs.

## **B. Formulation of Research Question**

Based on the context of the study, the research question can be divided into several specific research questions, as follows:

1. What are the students' difficulties during public speaking in the class in the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung?
2. What are the strategies and techniques to involve an audience in the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung?

## **C. Purpose of the Study**

According to the research question above, the purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To know the students' difficulties during public speaking in the class in the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung
2. To know the strategies and techniques to involve an audience in the English Education Department at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung

#### **D. Significance of the Study**

The result of this study is expected to provide some significances to the following reasons:

1. Theoretically:

The authors hope that this study will contribute to further research and ideas for people working in the world of education. Hopefully, after reading this research, readers will understand the factors that can affect students' difficulties in speaking.

2. Practically:

- a. For researchers, this study can increase the knowledge of researchers about the analysis of factors that can affect students' difficulties in speaking.
- b. For students, the results of this study are expected to encourage students to learn English and motivate students to improve speaking ability.
- c. For teachers, this study is useful for English teachers in motivating students to improve their speaking ability. In addition, teachers can

improve their knowledge and experience in choosing learning methods and materials properly.

- d. For other researchers, this study is expected to provide valuable information for other English language researchers about the analytical factors that can affect students' difficulties in speaking. In addition, this study is also expected to help further researchers as a useful reference and can help writers of the next material to develop better material.

#### **E. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this study covers sixth and eighth semester students of the English Language Education Department of UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung who have taken public speaking and debate courses. The limitation focused on analyzing students' difficulties in involving the audience in public speaking.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

##### **1. Speaking**

Speaking is one of the language skills in the form of activities to convey messages, ideas or feelings orally from the speaker to the listener. This activity involves the ability to make sounds, choose the right words, and regulate intonation, speed and expression to convey meaning effectively. In the context of language learning, speaking is considered as one of the important skills that reflect students' abilities in real

communication. Speaking combines linguistic competence and communicative competence.

## **2. Public Speaking**

Public speaking is the activity of speaking in front of an audience with the aim of conveying ideas, influencing opinions or providing entertainment. This activity involves a speaker, a message being delivered, a group of listeners, and requires skills such as confidence, clarity, and the ability to engage an audience. In education, public speaking refers to the ability of students to express their ideas or opinions verbally in front of classmates and teachers. This can take the form of a class presentation, speech, or debate aimed at improving students' speaking and communication skills.

## **3. Involve Audience**

When speaking, especially in public, the speaker is not only tasked with conveying information but must also be able to build engagement with the audience. Engaging the audience is an active effort made by the speaker to attract attention, maintain interest, and encourage listener participation during the speaking process. Audience engagement is important to create effective two-way communication, increase understanding, and strengthen the impact of the message delivered.