

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents several essential components of the research, including the background of the study, identification of the problems, limitation and scope of the study, formulation of the problems, objectives of the research, research hypothesis, significance of the research, and definition of key terms. Each section will be discussed in detail as follows:

A. The Background of The Study

Speaking is one of the language skills which play a very important role in human daily communication. With the rise of globalization, the ability to communicate in English is key to participating in the global socialization. For Indonesian students, it is common to express their feelings through language by speaking. Student can tell their ideas easily each other without difficulties. But there is a time where they should express their thought through speaking in foreign language such as English, The example is during English class. It will affect to their ability to deliver their thoughts and Ideas when the teacher instruct them to speak English each other, but English has it own rules and structures. Following to this statement, Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015) said that speaking is the interaction between two individuals when they meet. Both of them are as the communicators and recipient that use grammatical structures, lexical items, cohesive rules and phonological rules to speak each other to express their thoughts and

feelings.¹ Indonesian students must learn these rules and structures to express their ideas in a correct way in order to get better communication and understanding in English speaking. Zulkifli (2016) explains that speaking ability should be observed through empirical and direct listening. Speaking is an abstract concept that can only be understood when its content is coherent from one word to another. To be good in speaking students need to know many vocabularies and understand enough about the English structure. It means that students need more and more practice to improve their Speaking ability.

The anxiety experienced by students when speaking in public is a mental health issue that is receiving increasing attention. When the students get a learning activity at schools, commonly most students put into a class together. They have activities of learning together with their friends while the teacher stands up explaining in front of them, students are often trained to be in a circumstance where they could feel comfortable because they become the object of interaction, but when the students given an opportunity to become the focus of attention like speaking in front of class, some students will experience some anxiety signs like fear and excessive sweating. Brown (2006) says that anxiety comes from feelings of frustration, fear, discomfort, self-doubt or worry. In line with this statement, Tuan & Mai (2015) also state that feeling of anxiety, stress or nervousness

¹ Hammad, E. A., & Abu Ghali, E. M. (2015). Speaking Anxiety Level of Gaza EFL Pre-service Teachers: Reasons and Sources. *World Journal of English Language*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v5n3p52>

of students can affect their learning performance and even their ability. They also said that the higher anxiety affected students, the lower their ability will be.²

In the field of education, the ability to speak in English is becoming increasingly important, especially in countries where English is a foreign language. Research that examines the relationship between students' anxiety and their speaking abilities is highly relevant. Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) state that the main cause of Turkish students anxiety in learning Foreign Language is because the factor of language anxiety. The anxiety of language can be indicated as a distinct complex of beliefs, behaviors, self-perceptions and feelings related to language learning that happens in the classroom during the language learning process.³ Anxiety can be caused by speaking when someone feels being pushed and insisted to do so, especially when they have few understanding about the topic they should speak or even they don't know how to express their idea through foreign language which is not their mother language. For example, when the student thinks so hard about how to express their idea not only through their own utterance but also considering what is the right pronunciation as well, many students will become afraid to speak. They are afraid of accidentally making mistakes in the process of uttering what they think. In other words, the beliefs of the

² Tuan, N. H., & Mai, T. N. (2015). Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Performance At Le. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 3(2), 8–23.

³ Öztürk, G., & Gürbüz, N. (2014). JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES Speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners: The case at a state university 1. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* (Vol. 10, pp. 1–17).

students about their individual ability and the outcome of their efforts affect very much to their succession in learning speaking.

However, the researcher had been dealing with this problem for years during service period in Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School and the second time, the researcher finds that this problem also occurs in SMP Nurul Fikri. SMP Nurul Fikri is a junior high school that located at Dono Sub-village of Sendang Village in Karangrejo regency by the district of Tulungagung city in East Java of Indonesia. SMP Nurul Fikri as a formal education institution also presents the English subject to their students as a mandatory lesson. This school have a purpose to graduate the student with the ability of speaking two language after being graduated, those are English and Arabic. This means that have an ability to speak English fluently is necessary for them and should be the priority they could achieve in school. English subjects is taught three times a week with a duration of time 45 minutes for each meeting. These subjects divided into three different subjects which related to English skill, they are Grammar, English Lesson and Conversation. Conversation is the subject that requires the ability of students speaking ability. In this subject, especially in terms of speaking, the ninth-grade students of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School intended to achieve appointed standard competency, the students need to reach the passing grade of Conversation subject above (80), if the students cannot reach the passing grade, they will be given remedial by the teacher.

Based on researcher's first observation by visiting the school and have an interview with the English teacher that teaching in Nurul Fikri Junior high school. The students still have problems and difficulties in Conversation subject which is related to English speaking ability. Their ability is still far from what the criterion that expected. It can be seen from the values that students got which are under the limit of minimum criteria of Speaking mastery. In this school, English is practiced and learned every day which intended to achieve the cognitive aspect of speaking ability. The standard competence of Speaking ability is to make a good presentation, in the part to participate in discussion or direct presentation task. There are some factors that made students of SMP Nurul Fikri experience difficulties in speaking ability such as choosing the right vocabularies, spelling the right pronunciation, and fear in speaking English. Based on the researcher investigation during Conversation class, the researcher found that the teacher is still lack on understanding students' psychological factors, especially students' anxiety during conversation class. This lack of awareness leads teacher to focus primarily on cognitive aspects without considering students' emotional barriers, which hinders the creation of supportive learning environment. As a result, many students experience a decrease in self-confidence and are reluctant to speak or actively participate in class activities, ultimately affecting their English-speaking ability. Based on the observation and conversation conducted, this study aims to identify the extent to which students' anxiety influences their speaking performance,

some difficulties that faced by the Ninth-grade students of SMP Nurul Fikri are as follows:

1. Some students are still lack in their English vocabulary mastery.
2. Some students are difficult to pronounce words in English clearly.
3. Some students are afraid to speak and having conversation in English.
4. Some students feel nervous when asked to have conversation in English.
5. Some students avoid to speak English because they are afraid of being corrected for being wrong in speaking English.

The problems above, occur because of students' anxiety in English Speaking class, so that the researcher intends to find whether or not the correlation between SMP Nurul Fikri students' anxiety and their speaking ability. The researcher interested to conduct the research entitled "The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and their English Speaking Ability at The Ninth Grade of SMP Nurul Fikri"

B. Identification of Problems

Based on the background described above, several problems that exist in the classroom can be identified as follows:

1. Some students are still lack in their English vocabulary mastery.
2. Some students are difficult to pronounce words in English clearly.
3. Some students are afraid to speak and having conversation in English.
4. Some students feel nervous when asked to have conversation in English.

5. Some students avoid to speak English because they are afraid of being corrected for being wrong in speaking English.

C. Scope of Problems

Every research requires problem limitations to avoid broadening the issue or differences in interpretation, so that the discussion remains focused.

The limitations of the problem in this research are as follows:

1. This research was conducted on ninth-grade students at SMP Nurul Fikri for the academic year 2024/2025, located in Dusun Dono, Desa Sendang.
2. This research focuses solely on finding the relationship between students' anxiety and their speaking ability in English language classes.
3. The anxiety used to examine the relationship with students' speaking ability is limited to their anxiety during English class and does not relate to their anxiety outside of class.
4. The skill measured to examine the relationship with students' anxiety is speaking ability, without involving other basic skills in English lessons.

D. Formulation of Problems

After identifying the problems, the researcher want to make a limitation to the research and focused the research problems on the correlation between the ninth grade students' anxiety and their speaking ability, thus, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is the students' anxiety at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School?
2. How is the students' speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School?
3. Is there any significant correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School?

E. Research Objective

According to the problems, the objective of this research are as follows:

1. To find out students' anxiety at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School.
2. To find out students' speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School.
3. To find out the correlation of whether or not there is any significant relationship between students' anxiety and their English speaking ability.

F. Research Hypothesis

Based on the research problem "Is there any significant correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School?", the researcher formulates the hypothesis as follows:

If $r_{xy} > r_{table}$ means there is significant relationship between X variable and Y variable. H_a is accepted and H_o is rejected

If $r_{xy} \leq r_{table}$ means there is no significant relationship between X variable and Y variable. H_o is accepted and H_a is rejected

1. Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

There is a significant correlation between students' anxiety and their English-Speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School.

2. Null Hypothesis (H_o):

There is no significant correlation between students' anxiety and their English-Speaking ability at the ninth grade of SMP Nurul Fikri Junior High School.

G. Significance of Research

As a novice researcher, the writer sincerely hopes that the results of this study will bring meaningful contributions both theoretically and practically, as well as provide benefits for students, teachers, schools, and the writer as the researcher.

1. Theoretical Significance

It is hoped that this study can contribute to the development of existing theories regarding students' anxiety in language learning, particularly in the context of Speaking ability. By exploring the correlation between anxiety and speaking ability, this research may help expand the understanding of

how psychological factors influence language performance. The writer also hopes that the findings could become a useful reference for future studies in similar areas.

2. Practical Significance

The writer expects that this study may offer valuable insights for English teachers in addressing student anxiety more effectively. The results may serve as a practical guide to develop more supportive classroom environments and design speaking activities that reduce anxiety. Furthermore, it is hoped that schools and educational stakeholders can consider the findings when evaluating or improving English language teaching programs, especially in supporting students' emotional well-being.

3. For Students

It is hoped that students will benefit from this research by becoming more aware of how their anxiety affects their Speaking performance. With this awareness, they may be more motivated to manage their anxiety and build confidence in expressing themselves in English. Hopefully, this study can also help students feel that they are not alone in facing such challenges.

4. For Teachers

The writer wishes that the findings of this study could support teachers in understanding their students' emotional struggles, especially in English speaking classes. It is hoped that teachers will be encouraged to apply more student-centered and emotionally sensitive teaching approaches that make learners feel more comfortable and less anxious when speaking.

5. For Schools

The writer hopes this research can be one of the many small contributions toward improving the quality of English language learning at school. By acknowledging the role of student anxiety, schools may be inspired to create learning environments that are not only academically supportive, but also emotionally safe for students. The results may also be useful in developing school programs that strengthen both academic skills and emotional resilience.

6. For the Writer (as a Researcher)

As someone who is still learning about the world of research, the writer truly hopes that this study can be a valuable learning experience. This process is expected to help the writer grow in understanding educational issues more deeply, especially the emotional aspects of learning. The writer also hopes that the completion of this study marks the beginning of a meaningful journey in contributing to the field of education, even in a small way.

H. Definition of Terms

To avoid mistakes in understanding the terms listed in this research, the following is an explanation or definition of the terms contained in this research:

1. Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the key affective factors influencing second language acquisition. According to Scovel (1978), anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry.⁴ It is commonly classified into two types: trait anxiety, which refers to a relatively stable predisposition to be anxious in a wide range of situations, and state anxiety, which arises in specific situations such as language classrooms or during speaking tasks. In the context of second language learning, foreign language anxiety is considered a form of situation-specific state anxiety, which particularly affects learners when they are using or learning a foreign language (Brown, 2006).

2. Speaking

In the context of foreign language learning, speaking is one of the most complex productive skills as it involves both cognitive and social components. According to Bygate (1987), oral interaction has two main characteristics. First, it is constrained by time, requiring speakers to conceptualize, formulate, and articulate messages more or less simultaneously.⁵ This makes speaking a cognitively demanding activity. Second, oral interaction is reciprocal, meaning that speakers must not only produce utterances but also comprehend their interlocutor's messages in real time. They are required to adjust their own messages according to their partner's level of understanding and manage the flow of the interaction as a

⁴ Learning, 19, 245-254. Scovel, T. (1978). The effect of affect on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety

⁵ Bygate, M. (1987). Speaking. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

whole. Furthermore, speaking competence is not solely dependent on linguistic knowledge such as vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical structures but also on the ability to use that knowledge appropriately in real-time and context-specific situations.