

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the study's background, identification of the problem, limitations, research questions, objectives, and significance.

1.1 The Background of the Study

English is a universal language, allowing people from all corners of the globe to connect. For many individuals around the world, English is their second language. Language is not limited to words and phrases; it also represents culture, identity, way of life, traditions, norms, and much more. As a result, learners and speakers must go through all of these experiences, which are certain to have an impact on them (Khan, 2019). According to Rahman (2022), the significance of English in global communication did not emerge in a vacuum. English is increasingly becoming the primary language used in communication, technology, academia, economics, and entertainment. Due to its extensive use, English has evolved from a foreign language (EFL) to a global lingua franca (ELF) in numerous settings in the last twenty years. The main goal of ELF is to achieve effective communication and mutual understanding, not to achieve fluency like native speakers (Galloway & Rose, 2018).

In English language learning, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) is closely related to ELF, especially in terms of speaking in an EFL context, the development of speaking skills is the main goal so that learners can use English effectively in oral communication. In the ELF context, speaking skills are essential because English serves as a bridge between speakers from different backgrounds (Derwing et al., 2022). Therefore, mastering speaking is very important for EFL learners. Learning to speak English, the most commonly spoken language worldwide, is undoubtedly crucial. Thus, people who improve their knowledge and skills will not simply be forced to acquire new knowledge of interest. They will also have many opportunities to find work and easily meet

new people from different countries with whom it will be easier to communicate and interact on travel journeys (Budiastono, 2021).

Speaking is an essential skill in learning English. It involves more than just correct pronunciation; it involves understanding context, using appropriate intonation, and engaging effectively in a variety of communication scenarios. At the high school level, students are expected to develop oral communication skills in English that are not only fluent and accurate but also appropriate to the various social and academic situations they may encounter (Brown & Lee, 2015).

Speaking involves expressing ideas, thoughts, and information using words or sounds that convey specific meanings (Assidiqi, 2022). Although English is considered a foreign language in Indonesia, it is widely used as a means of communication throughout the world. However, only a few people in Indonesia use it in everyday conversation (Ilustre et al., 2022). Speaking skills are also important in language learning, as they promote mutual understanding and reciprocal communication. Furthermore, speaking competence encourage the formation of student self-confidence, active involvement in the educational process, and speech relevance (Zuliani et al., 2023).

In the era of Industry 4.0, the rapidity of technological advancement has transformed how humans interact with their surroundings, having a significant impact on many aspects of life (Mampuono, 2022). Tablets, smartphones, notebooks, and, most importantly, PCs are not new to our students who are still in school. In addition, English opens up access to a variety of online learning resources, such as courses, webinars, and e-learning platforms. Many educational institutions and organizations now provide these learning resources in English so that people can learn from anywhere in the world (Houtman, 2017).

In high school, learning to speak involves developing a specific set of skills designed to equip students to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings. Students must be able to express complex ideas clearly and accurately, which includes choosing appropriate vocabulary, constructing

logical arguments, and using relevant examples to support their opinions (Ur, 2019). In the context of academic discussions, schools expect students to engage constructively in the exchange of ideas in class, including the ability to listen actively, respond politely to others' opinions, and make meaningful contributions to enrich the discussion (Richards & Rodgers, 2020).

The ability to design and deliver well-organized presentations is also an important focus in learning expectations. This requires organizing content coherently, utilizing visual aids effectively, and presenting information in a way that is engaging and easy for the audience to understand (Harmer, 2018). In addition, students are expected to overcome language barriers by using various communication strategies, such as the ability to paraphrase, use synonyms, or even use non-verbal gestures to convey meaning when having difficulty finding the right words (Dörnyei & Scott, 2017). A wide and varied vocabulary is a crucial aspect in speaking learning expectations. Students are expected to use appropriate words according to the context, including academic terms and commonly used idioms (Nation, 2020). This ability allows students to express nuances of meaning more accurately in various communication situations. In addition, the correct and varied use of various grammatical structures is a significant indicator of language proficiency. Students are expected to apply various tenses, including relative clauses, conditional sentences, and passive forms, to express their ideas more sophisticatedly (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2019).

However, the reality on the ground often shows a significant gap between expectations and reality. Many learners at the senior high school level still face various challenges and obstacles in developing their English-speaking competence. Maharani's (2020) research uncovered a troubling issue: many students show a significant lack of confidence when required to speak English in the classroom. This finding does not stand alone but rather correlates with The results of a study conducted by Nguyen and Tran (2019), which revealed students' tendency to be passive and show a marked reluctance to participate in activities that involve the oral use of English. This phenomenon is largely

triggered by a deep-seated fear of possibly making mistakes and experiencing embarrassment in front of their peers.

Based on the results of preliminary observations conducted on Tuesday, May 7, 2024 by giving speaking tests to eleventh grade students in one class representative in each department of Language, Science, and Social Sciences at SMA N 1 Singaraja, it was found that some eleventh-grade students showed symptoms of anxiety when asked to speak using English as evidenced by the characteristics and gestures of students who showed self-consciousness. Some students showed different types of anxiety, such as trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety, which made it challenging for them to speak during the test. This anxiety is often caused by fears of being mocked by peers, making mistakes, a lack of motivation to learn, and the impact of technological advancements like the prevalence of smartphones that may reduce personal interactions with others.

Several interconnected factors influence the difficulty of speaking English, with anxiety being a significant contributor. According to Horwitz et al. (2021), their comprehensive study revealed that anxiety related to using a foreign language can severely impair students' speaking effectiveness. This anxiety can present itself in various ways, such as challenges in recalling vocabulary or conveying complex ideas. Additionally, research by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) found a significant negative correlation between students' anxiety levels and their willingness to participate in foreign language conversations. This suggests that higher anxiety levels can reduce students' motivation to use the language, thereby adversely affecting their overall speaking proficiency.

Initial observations revealed that students experienced anxiety when speaking in front of the class, suggesting a connection between anxiety and speaking performance. Various studies have investigated this connection, which corroborates these initial findings. For instance, Sutarsyah (2017) found notable differences in speaking performance between students with high anxiety levels and those with low anxiety levels. Those with low levels of

anxiety were generally calmer and scored higher, while speaking anxiety negatively affected performance, causing a 31.9% decrease in speaking proficiency.

Saputra (2018) supported this conclusion by demonstrating that students who experienced lower levels of speaking anxiety exhibited better speaking skills compared to those with higher anxiety levels. Additionally, the study indicated that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) effectively enhanced students' speaking abilities, particularly among those with lower anxiety levels.

Asyisyifa et al. (2019) conducted a detailed examination of speaking anxiety levels and their causes. Their findings revealed that most students experienced a level of anxiety categorized as "Quite Anxious" (40%). The primary factors leading to this anxiety were insufficient preparation, fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence in pronunciation and vocabulary.

The third study focuses on addressing speaking anxiety in English instruction. Sutarsyah (2017) suggested that English teaching in Indonesia should prioritize communicative functions and enhance all four language skills. Saputra (2018) advocated for Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an effective method for managing speaking anxiety. Additionally, Asyisyifa et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of EFL teachers recognizing the causes of speaking anxiety and using teaching strategies to help mitigate it.

Previous research has primarily concentrated on college students taking English courses. This study, however, will focus on eleventh-grade students in senior high school, a critical period for preparing for further education. Understanding how anxiety affects speaking ability in these students can provide important insights to improve their preparedness and success in tackling more complex academic and social challenges ahead.

Although various studies have investigated the link between anxiety and English-speaking proficiency, there remains a need for research in more specific contexts. This study targets eleventh-grade students at SMA N 1 Singaraja, a prominent school in Bali with distinctive features that may affect

English language learning. Factors such as the school's curriculum, teaching methods, and students' socio-cultural backgrounds in the Singaraja region could significantly impact the relationship between anxiety and English-speaking ability. Understanding this relationship is vital for the broader English language teaching and learning field in Indonesia. By exploring how anxiety influences English-speaking skills among secondary school students, this study aims to help develop more effective teaching strategies to overcome psychological barriers in language education. This is crucial given that good English language skills are increasingly required in the era of globalization, both for continuing education and for competing in the international job market. Concentrating on this specific context, the study aims to offer a more detailed and contextual understanding of how anxiety impacts English-speaking ability in a particular senior high school setting. The results are expected to yield valuable insights applicable not only to SMA N 1 Singaraja but also to other schools with similar characteristics across Indonesia.

1.2 Problem Identification

Many previous researchers have studied anxiety in the context of learning to speak, with some focusing on language anxiety and speaking competency. Speaking anxiety poses a significant challenge for many students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) or English as a second language (ESL). Suciati (2020) and Putri et al. (2023) emphasize the detrimental impact of speaking anxiety on students' speaking skills and overall achievement in language learning. Speaking anxiety can be categorized into trait anxiety (common tendency to be anxious), state anxiety (emotional reaction to a particular situation), and situation-specific anxiety (anxiety in specific situations like speaking in a foreign language). A few factors contribute to its development and intensification, including fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation and language proficiency, low self-confidence and negative mentality, and cultural and environmental factors.

According to Mulyono (2019), high levels of speaking anxiety can prevent students' ability to effectively verbal communicate in English. It leads them to avoid speaking up in class, participating in activities, and asking

questions due to the fear of making mistakes or being negatively judged. Speaking anxiety can act as an emotional filter, preventing learners' participation and progress in language learning, resulting in poor speaking performance and achievement. Taqwa et al. (2022) and Asyifa et al. (2019) identify several factors that influence student anxiety, including difficulties in understanding the material, noisy classroom environments, fear of being ridiculed or corrected by classmates, and a lack of concern from peers about their mistakes. Additional sources of anxiety include boredom with unengaging teaching methods and uncertainty about correct pronunciation. Moreover, when teachers are overly focused on the material, it can create a tense atmosphere that diminishes students' motivation to learn English.

To address this issue, Hadriana (2020) proposes strategies to reduce speaking anxiety, such as building self-confidence and motivation through consistent practice, improving language skills (pronunciation and vocabulary). Additionally, Yuliawati (2019) suggests that in addition to employing relaxation techniques like deep breathing and muscle stretching, it is also essential to foster a supportive and positive learning environment. Based on observations conducted at SMA N 1 Singaraja on May 7th, 2024, several common issues related to English speaking competence, resulting from students' anxiety, have been identified :

- a) Students' lack of confidence in speaking English in front of the class or public.
- b) Students' fear of making mistakes in pronunciation or grammar when speaking English.
- c) Students' lack of understanding of adequate English vocabulary and grammar to communicate orally.
- d) Lack of support and motivation or the school environment in improving students' English-speaking competence.
- e) The assumption is that speaking English is difficult and scary for most students.

Besides, in this modern era almost everyone has a smartphone. Smartphones are used to simplify the work of mankind but some people use

smartphones as their daily activities which will have an impact on their speaking skills. Heavy smartphone use among students can significantly influence their English-speaking abilities, especially in the context of communication anxiety (Hawi & Samaha, 2017). Relying on digital devices often reduces face-to-face interactions, which are crucial for enhancing speaking skills. As a result, students might feel more anxious during in-person English-speaking situations (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Lack of exposure to face-to-face conversations may hinder the development of confidence in using a foreign language, while reliance on text-based communication via smartphones may reduce the ability to respond spontaneously in spoken conversations. Lack of speaking practice creates anxiety, which in turn further reduces the desire to engage in verbal interaction, especially in English (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). For example, they spend For example, students who spend excessive time on their smartphones and have little interaction with others may develop anxiety about speaking in front of the class or public. This lack of interaction can cause fear when talking to people in various settings. In this study, the researcher explores whether there is a connection between anxiety levels and English-speaking skills among eleventh-grade students at SMA N 1 Singaraja.

1.3 Limitation of Study

In order to make the discussion more focused and not too broad, this thesis limits the scope of research on the correlation, direction and strength of students' anxiety levels with English-speaking competence in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background above, the writer formulates a research question as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between students' anxiety level and English-speaking competency in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja?

2. Does students' anxiety level on English-speaking competence have a negative or positive correlation direction in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja?
3. How strong is the relationship between students' anxiety level and English-speaking competence in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja?

1.5 The Objective of the Study

From the background of this study there are several objectives in this research, as follows:

- 1 To find out whether there is a correlation between students' anxiety level and English-speaking competency in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja.
- 2 To find out the direction of the correlation between students' anxiety level and English-speaking competency in eleventh-grade student of SMA N 1 Singaraja.
- 3 To find out the strength of the correlation between students' anxiety level and English-speaking competency in eleventh-grade students of SMA N 1 Singaraja.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

In line with the research goals, this study seeks to provide meaningful contributions to the field of education, both directly and indirectly. The significance of this research includes:

1) Theoretical (scientific) Significance

Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to be useful, namely:

- a) This research can contribute to the development of science, especially in communication skills, namely speaking.
- b) This study can contribute to new understandings of individuals' psychological dynamics in language learning. Moreover, this study could significantly advance the theory and practice within psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, and language education. It also

lays a solid groundwork for future investigations into the role of anxiety in language learning.

2) Practical Significance

Practically, this research is expected to contribute to writers, teachers and schools.

a. For Researchers

- a) Obtaining empirical data on the relationship between English speaking anxiety and students' speaking competence.
- b) Expanding the understanding of the relationship, the direction of the relationship and the strength of the relationship about English speaking anxiety in students.
- c) Gaining new insights that can be used for further research on related topics.
- d) Contributing to the development of science in the field of language education and educational psychology.

b. For Teachers

- a) Understanding the level of English-speaking anxiety experienced by students, that can design more effective teaching strategies.
- b) Raise awareness about the importance of overcoming English speaking anxiety to support successful foreign language learning.
- c) Gain insight into the relationship between speaking anxiety and students' speaking competence, that can adjust the teaching approach accordingly.

c. For School

- a) Provide data and information that can be used to develop programs or activities that can reduce students' English-speaking anxiety.
- b) Improve the quality of English language teaching in schools by understanding the relationship between anxiety levels and speaking competence to minimize the amount of student anxiety that occurs.

- c) Assist schools in creating a more conducive learning environment to support effective English language learning.
- d) Improve student achievement in English speaking skills, which can have a positive impact on the school's reputation.

Thus, this study presents valuable advantages for researchers, educators, and schools, aiming to improve English language instruction and address students' speaking anxiety.

