

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses several aspects dealing with the topic of the research. They are the background of the research, the problem of the research, the objective of the research, the benefit of the research, the scope of the research, and the operational definition of the research.

### 1.1 Background of the Research

The majority of people believe that good speaking ability is one of the most important aspects of learning a language. People continue to believe that the more fluent learners speak English, the more competent they are in language. As a result, the learners frequently set a standard for themselves in terms of speaking skill success (Miskam & Saïdalvi, 2019). Furthermore, the majority of students rate their language abilities and compare them to those of others. Students push themselves to achieve their goals and become more successful, which makes them nervous, especially during oral exams. They feel uncomfortable speaking a foreign language because of the unrealistic aim they set for themselves (Khusna et al., 2021). According to Ozturk & Gurbuz (2013), foreign language learning is linked to human psychology, self-esteem, risk-taking, motivation, and anxiety are some personality traits that can have positive or negative consequences on learning a foreign language. Over the past few decades, language anxiety has been the most frequently recognized obstacle in speaking classes (Pakpahan & Gultom, 2021). It occurs when learners must process knowledge in their minds while producing it orally at the same time (Harmer, 2004).

Anxiety, on the other hand, has a negative impact on foreign language speaking (Luo, 2014). Students make numerous attempts to avoid the situation of not appearing or speaking in public, but if it is inevitable, they will experience pressure, humiliation, voice shaking, rapid heartbeat, discomfort, and insecurity (Sikandar, 2017). This can be due to a lack of speaking practice, a lack of mastery of the subject, or a low self-image (Goberman, Hughes, & Haydock, 2011).

Although there have been many previous studies that have investigated student's anxiety and how these have an impact on their foreign language communication and language use (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012), most of those studies take place offline, and there are few studies that have looked at students' speaking anxiety in online settings, especially during COVID-19 in Indonesia (Hasibuan et al., 2022; Pakpahan & Gultom, 2021). A latest study conducted by Aziz (2021), which title "The Development of Level Students Speaking Anxiety during Online Learning Process" is relevant to this study, as this study will also focus on students' speaking anxiety in online learning. The study employed a qualitative research approach. The data was collected using a questionnaire and interview.

Anxiety in learning English can be a complex process that has an impact on students' academic achievement. Anxiety about learning English is one of the elements that can affect student achievement, especially in speaking, because it is considered as a learning barrier (Richard, 2006 as cited in Fitriati & Jannah, 2016). Anxiety in learning English has a relationship with student achievement. This has both positive and negative impacts on academic achievement. This phenomenon of events can occur as a result of anxiety that facilitates and weakens

students. Over the past few years, there have been several studies which have investigated the effects of speaking anxiety on students' achievement, the relationships, and other related aspects that related to it, in the context of students' achievement in different kind of skills. As this study focus on the correlation between students' speaking anxiety and students' speaking achievement, thus, the related previous studies will be presented below.

The first study is from Tridinanti (2018), entitled "The Correlation between Speaking Anxiety, Self-Confidence, and Speaking Achievement of Undergraduate EFL Students of a Private University in Palembang,". In collecting the data, twenty-five students were asked to do a short monologue and answer to the questionnaire questions. She discovered that the variables of self-confidence and learning achievement have a significant positive correlation. The stronger the self-confidence, the higher the speaking achievement.

The next study is from Harahap (2020), entitled "The Correlation between Learning anxiety and Speaking Mastery to the VIII Grade Students of SMPN 2 Padangsidimpuan". There are 74 students were chosen as the research participants in this study. The researcher used questionnaire for learning anxiety and test (dialogue) for speaking mastery as the instrument for collecting data. The results of the study revealed that there was significant negative correlation between learning anxiety and speaking mastery to the VIII grade students of SMPN 2 Padangsidimpuan.

The last previous study is from Lestari, et.al (2019), entitled "The Correlation among English Learning Anxiety, Speaking and Writing Achievements of Senior High School Students". The study's sample included 112

eleventh graders. The study employed a quantitative research approach. The data was collected using a questionnaire, as well as writing and speaking tests. The study found a negative low correlation between English learning anxiety and speaking achievement ( $r=-.269$  with  $p0.01$ ), as well as a negative low correlation between English learning anxiety and writing achievement ( $r=-.213$  with  $p0.05$ ).

The gap from the previous study is that most of the previous research that has the same focus as this research was mostly carried out in offline learning settings, as well as the previous research presented above. However, there are relatively few studies investigating the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking achievement in online learning settings. Furthermore, previous studies used speaking tests to obtain data on students' speaking ability, mastery, or achievement. The novelty of this research is this study tries to investigate it in an online learning setting and the researcher will obtain student achievement data from their final speaking scores. In addition, to obtain data on student anxiety, a questionnaire developed by Horwitz, et.al (1986) will be used to obtain data on student anxiety.

## **1.2 Problem of the Research**

In light of the literature outlined above, this study addressed the following research question:

1. What is the level of speaking anxiety EFL students experience during online learning?
2. Is there any significant correlation between EFL students' anxiety and their speaking achievement?

### **1.3 Objective of the Research**

Based on the research question formulated above, the present study aims to investigate the level of speaking anxiety students experience during online learning and to find out whether there is correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking achievement.

### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

The writer hopes that the findings of this research can contribute to the English language teaching and learning. It has two major significances; they are theoretical and practical significances:

#### **1. Theoretical Significance**

The theoretical Significance of this research will contribute to provide empirical evidence and support theories related to this research later. So that the findings of this study can be a reference for further research related to speaking anxiety in the context of a foreign language, especially English during online learning, such as research on teaching techniques and activities that can be used in speaking classes to overcome speaking anxiety.

#### **2. Practical Significance**

Provide an overview to the teacher about students' speaking anxiety in online learning so that they can be more aware when students' speaking anxiety appears in the learning process in online classes. Then the teacher can choose the right teaching technique to minimize the anxiety. This research can also be useful for students in building their background knowledge about anxiety in speaking class during online learning that may arise in the learning process, so that students can take steps to anticipate it.

## **1.5 Scope of the Research**

In this study the researcher limits the scope of this research, starting from the research participants, location of the research, and variables studied. Undergraduate students from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> semester who attended speaking courses will become research participants in this study. Moreover, this study will only focus on investigating the level of speaking anxiety students experience during online learning and the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking achievement.

## **1.6 Operational Definition of the Research**

In order to prevent misunderstandings, the researcher should define the following main terms:

1. Anxiety: It refers to a state of uneasiness and distress of mind due to fear of misfortune or danger.
2. Online learning: It refers to any online platforms used by both teacher and students in the process of speaking learning.
3. Speaking anxiety: It refers to the feelings of fear and apprehension of students in using language orally.
4. Level of anxiety: It refers to a measure of several levels of anxiety consisting of high, moderate, and low.
5. Speaking Achievement: It refers to the students' final score of their guided speaking course that was given by their lecturer.
6. English as a Foreign Language: It refers to the study of English by nonnative speakers living in a non-English-speaking environment.