

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research

Speaking anxiety has become one of the most common problems faced by senior high school students in English learning. This type of anxiety often emerges when students are required to speak in front of the class, join discussions, or do oral presentations. It can hinder their confidence, participation, and performance in class activities. The ability to speak English is increasingly important as it is widely used in daily communication and social media. Along with the use of English in the era of globalization, many students feel pressured when they have to speak a language that is not their mother tongue. However, for students who do not have high confidence, speaking in English can cause speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety is a form of learning anxiety that students often experience, especially in public speaking skills or in the context of foreign language learning. English language learning has been established into the learning curriculum as a subject that must be followed by all students. According to Brown "Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy" (1994) Speaking ability includes aspects such as fluency, accuracy, including grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and affective factors such as confidence. However, the average student experiences speaking anxiety, especially when speaking in front of the class, whether in the form of presentations, group discussions, or dialogues. Speaking anxiety may inhibit students from demonstrating their full potential and may adversely affect their

academic performance and even become one of the main obstacles in learning English among high school students. According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1991), anxiety in foreign language learning can hinder the language acquisition process as it reduces working memory capacity and lowers students' confidence in speaking. This causes students to avoid speaking situations in English, which ultimately hinders the development of their speaking skills. Dewaele & MacIntyre (2014) also assert that speaking anxiety has two sides: on the one hand, anxiety can be an obstacle in foreign language communication, but on the other hand, it can provide a challenge that encourages students to study harder.

Although various studies have been conducted on speaking anxiety in English language learning, most of them focus on university students or learners at the higher education level. There is limited research on how high school students experience and cope with speaking anxiety, despite the fact that speaking skills are needed in various academic aspects, such as presentations, group discussions, and oral examinations. In addition, the condition of the learning environment in high school is different from higher education, both in terms of teaching methods and the level of maturity of students, making effective strategies to overcome speaking anxiety among high school students need to be researched further. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by describing how high school students experience learning anxiety in speaking English.

In high school, English speaking skills are an important part of the curriculum, and English is even a compulsory subject, as students are expected to be able to communicate in the language, both orally and in writing. However, high levels of anxiety are the main problem that makes students feel uncomfortable and

reluctant to actively participate in classroom speaking activities such as presentations in front of the class, group discussions, or speaking in English. Ganschow and Sparks (2007) assert that the manifestation of anxiety in second or foreign language learning situations shown by learners can be classified as a specific anxiety reaction similar to anxiety towards math or physics. This condition not only hinders their progress in mastering speaking skills, but also negatively impacts their ability to learn the language as a whole, as anxiety can get in the way of effective learning. According to Liu and Jackson (2008), students who experience speaking anxiety tend to remain silent or avoid speaking tasks altogether, especially in classrooms with high pressure or unsupportive environments. This can affect their academic achievement. With the urgency of the problem in mind, this study was chosen to investigate the level of speaking anxiety experienced by students. Its focus on high school students is particularly relevant because at this age, students are expected to have good English-speaking skills to face more complex academic and social challenges, both in college and in the world of work. Previous studies in the Indonesian EFL context have consistently shown that speaking anxiety is a widespread issue among students. Wijaya (2023) emphasized that both psychological support and interactive teaching strategies are effective in reducing anxiety. Dewi (2019) found that drama and role-play activities help students speak more confidently. In line with this, Mirani et al. (2021) and Utami & Nurjati (2017) confirmed that lack of self-confidence and low motivation are major contributors to speaking anxiety. These findings indicate that speaking anxiety is not only a personal issue but also a pedagogical one, which must be addressed through supportive classroom

strategies and engaging learning methods. The results of this study showed that most students experienced a moderate level of speaking anxiety, with communication apprehension being the most dominant aspect. This finding suggests that students tend to feel nervous especially when they are required to speak spontaneously or in front of others. These insights are valuable for English teachers and curriculum developers because they highlight the importance of designing speaking activities that reduce pressure and promote confidence. This study contributes to the growing body of research on language anxiety by offering specific data from the Indonesian high school context, where such studies are still limited.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that speaking anxiety is still a significant issue among senior high school students. Most of them fall into the moderate anxiety category, and the most dominant aspect is communication apprehension. This shows that students are more anxious about speaking directly in front of others rather than being tested or judged. These conclusions confirm that emotional and psychological support is needed in English classes to reduce students' anxiety and improve their speaking performance. Although this study has revealed the students' levels of speaking anxiety and the dominant anxiety aspect, it does not explore in depth the specific causes behind students' fear or how they develop coping strategies. Future research could investigate the psychological or environmental factors that trigger speaking anxiety and how different classroom interventions can reduce it effectively. It would also be beneficial to conduct qualitative studies to gain deeper insights into students' personal experiences and perceptions related to speaking English. In addition,

research conducted by Marlia et al. (2022) also shows that speaking anxiety is a real problem faced by high school students in Indonesia. They found that students are afraid of making mistakes, feel nervous when being assessed by teachers, and lose confidence when speaking English, especially when they have to speak in public. This research reinforces the view that speaking anxiety needs to be taken seriously in foreign language learning.

Speaking anxiety can be caused by several factors, such as lack of preparation, previous negative experiences, and peer pressure sourced from the research of (Nuradilla, 2023) Speaking anxiety in English is also often caused by internal factors, one of the main factors is a lack of self-confidence, where individuals feel unsure of their abilities and are afraid of making mistakes. Another impact of anxiety is a decrease in self-confidence, which can affect various aspects of an individual's life, including social relationships and mental well-being. Therefore, it is important to address English speaking anxiety through training programs and psychological support (Anindyta Najwa Mirani et ddk., 2021). This self-confidence is often compounded by low motivation to learn and practice, which may be due to the notion that English is too difficult or irrelevant (Utami & Nurjati, 2017). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is quite common, given that the use of English in everyday life is still limited, so opportunities to practice speaking in a foreign language are minimal. Students who feel less confident in their speaking ability tend to avoid situations where they have to speak in public, such as presentations or class discussions or dialogues using English.

The journal *Strategies to Overcome Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in Indonesian EFL Learning Context* by Wijaya (2023) shows that speaking anxiety can be reduced through psychological and pedagogical strategies. Creating a supportive classroom atmosphere helps students feel more comfortable participating in learning. Peer influence also plays a role; for instance, learning in small groups provides a more relaxed setting, allowing students to practice speaking with greater confidence. The presence of supportive peers helps reduce fear and build self-assurance. In addition, technology can assist in lowering anxiety by offering various learning resources such as videos and interactive platforms, allowing students to practice privately before speaking publicly. Another study by Dewi (2019) found that the use of role-play and drama activities significantly reduces speaking anxiety among high school students. These activities allow learners to express themselves in structured, yet creative ways, making speaking tasks feel less stressful and more engaging.

Therefore, this study aims to describe the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by senior high school students and to identify the most dominant types of anxiety in their English speaking activities. This study is important because many senior high school students still face psychological barriers when speaking English, which may hinder their academic performance and confidence. Understanding the specific aspects of speaking anxiety will help teachers create more supportive classroom environments and develop more effective learning strategies tailored to students' needs. This study focuses on investigating the level of speaking anxiety and identifying the most dominant aspect among communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The

variables investigated are students' speaking anxiety levels (dependent variable) as measured through three components using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This research uses a quantitative descriptive method involving 100 eleventh-grade students from SMAN 1 Asembagus. The data were collected using a validated FLCAS questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics via SPSS version 27 to determine anxiety categories and dominant aspects. The main instrument used in this study is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), which measures students' anxiety in foreign language learning contexts. This instrument covers three specific components: Communication Apprehension (anxiety when speaking spontaneously), Test Anxiety (anxiety during language tests), and Fear of Negative Evaluation (concern about being judged by others).

1.2 Problem of the Research

The researcher formulated the research problem as follows:
How is the description of speaking anxiety experienced by senior high school students in learning activities?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

Based on the research problem, The purpose of the research is:
To describe the level of speaking anxiety experienced by students.

1.4 Operational Definition

1.4.1 Learning Anxiety in Speaking

Speaking-related learning anxiety refers to the feeling of anxiety when students are asked to speak English in class, including fear of speaking, anxiety during tests, and fear of being evaluated. FLCAS is used to measure this anxiety in a valid and reliable manner.

1.5 Significant of the Research

This research is expected to provide several benefits, both theoretically and practically:

1.5.1 Theoretically

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of speaking-related learning anxiety among high school students.

1.5.2 Practically

The findings can help educators understand the nature and sources of students' speaking anxiety in English classes.

1.6 Scope of the Research

The scope of this study focuses on identifying and describing learning anxiety in English speaking activities among senior high school students. The study involved 100 students of class XI from SMAN 1 Asembagus to ensure relevant data. The study aimed to identify the level of speaking anxiety using the FLCAS.