

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Speaking is a human activity that involves the voice to convey information, thoughts, or feelings to others on a daily basis and involves not only words, but also gestures, facial expressions, voice modulation, pitch, and pronunciation (Yadav et al., 2023). The ability to speak is key to effective communication and when the ability to speak has been obtained, it will not only increase the value of self-confidence but will also get a secure position in building connections with others which will certainly have an impact on the work that is done. However, it is undeniable that many students have difficulty in speaking, are faced with psychological challenges and have difficulty in conveying their thoughts so gaining this speaking ability is not easy. Many people when required to speak in public, are immediately approached by a fear and end up with rejection and gradually, this fear will turn into anxiety that will interfere with student activities.

Anxiety is a common mental health condition characterized by excessive worry and fear. It can manifest in various forms, such as generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias. Individuals with anxiety often experience a range of physical and emotional

symptoms, including restlessness, fatigue, difficulty in concentrating, muscle tension, and irritability. These symptoms can significantly impact daily life, affecting relationship, work performance, and overall well-being.

Public speaking anxiety is a common condition where a person experiences excessive fear or anxiety in front of many people. It can range from mild discomfort to a paralyzing fear that prevents people from participating in public speaking situations which can lead individuals to excessive insecurity and can adversely affect individual skills in public speaking. Research shows that students experience medium to high levels of speaking anxiety when speaking in English (Montano et al., 2022; Daud et al., 2019; Sutarsyah, 2017). Anxiety is formed from unpleasant situations experienced by an individual that are perceived as threatening or stressful and involves complex interactions between the mind, body and the surrounding environment.

This anxiety in speaking is also influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include shame, lack of self-confidence, memory dissociation, stage fear, and fear of being laughed at by peers (Abdillah, 2016; Christy, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2023). External factors include grammar skills, vocabulary, reading proficiency, teacher demeanor, and school setting (Abdillah, 2016; Styo Nugroho et al., 2023). Research has shown different degrees of anxiety, ranging from low to high, that can greatly affect students' speaking abilities (Christy, 2021; Qadri & Bte Abdul, 2023). Also, high-pressure environment, insufficient preparation, perfectionism, and unfamiliar surroundings can worsen the condition of individual. Anxiety is

characterized by excessive worry, tension, nervousness, often accompanied by physical symptoms like tachycardia and sweating (Costa Duriguetto, 2020). The influence of anxiety on a person's emotional well-being and life quality can be considerable, possibly resulting in numerous health problems if not properly managed (Irgebaeva & Akmusaeva, 2020).

Students who struggles with fear of speaking frequently encounter different obstacles that can affect both their academic and personal lives. They may reluctant to engage in class discussions, group activities, and presentations, affecting their academic assessment because one of the evaluation require students activeness in the classroom.

Furthermore, speaking anxiety can significantly impact a student's ability to concentrate effectively in the classroom. When Students experience anxiety about speaking, their minds become preoccupied with self-doubt, fear of judgement, and negative thoughts about their performance. This mental preoccupation diverts their attention away from the lesson, making it difficult to focus on the content being presented. Also, speaking anxiety can lead to physical symptoms, such as trembling, sweating, increased heart rate, and nervousness. These physical manifestations can further disrupt concentration, as students may become preoccupied with managing their discomfort rather than engaging with the learning material. As a result, their comprehension suffers, and they may struggle to retain information.

In research conducted by Fauzi & Asi, 2023 it was found that 32% learners feel anxious, 43% mild anxious, and only 25% learners that feel more relaxed

in speaking English. The study revealed a significant inverse relationship between speaking anxiety levels and numbers of years in learning English and gender. In simple terms, the longer anyone learns English the less anxious he or she speak the language.

Drawing from firsthand experience and observation, the researcher saw many students felt anxious and uncomfortable when required to speak. This anxiety hindered their ability to formulate questions, express opinions, and speak, leading to silence in the classes so there is no discussion in the class that trigger to speak others. In UKI Toraja itself, especially in English study program, speaking in front of people feels like a nightmare for some people. For Example, in English debate competition held in 2024 in EXPO UKI Toraja, the participants from English department were just 3 teams, and on the second day only 2 teams remaining. Not only that, when English study program get the invitation from another university, the students just remain silent until the lecturer try to convince them to participate in the event. Also, in the preparation for National University Debat Competition (NUDC), only 2 person that participate in coaching. Their fear of speaking in front of others is deeply ingrained within them. Excessive fear significantly impacts their speaking ability. When feeling anxious, their focus shifts away from the current topic, causing their mind to go blank, leading to stuttering and eventually withdrawing from the conversation. Moreover, the apprehension of being mocked by peers causes us to be cautious of feedback, leading students to opt for silence without attempting. Not practicing public speaking also make us feel more nervous and insecure. Indeed, this anxiety can be accompanied by Physical manifestations like shaking, perspiration, rapid heartbeat, and abrupt cold sensations.

B. Research Questions

The research question of this study : “Is there any significant differentiation level of speaking anxiety among students of English study program at UKI Toraja?”

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on the research question stated above, the object of this research is to find out the significant level of speaking anxiety among students of English study program at UKI Toraja.

D. Significance of the research

1. For Students

This research aims to assist students in recognizing the various forms of speaking anxiety they encounter in order to aid them in identifying effective solutions to manage it.

2. For Lecturers

This research aims to assist lecturers in comprehending students anxiety while speaking in order to offer better support and guidance for them and adjust their teaching methods to create a more comfortable and supportive learning environment and improve their academic performance.

3. For UKI TORAJA

This research aims to offer recommendations for university to develop a curriculum that addresses anxiety during public speaking, enhancing student

quality for competition in speech events, debates, storytelling, and other public speaking contests against other universities.

4. For Researchers

This research aims to enhance researchers' understanding of speech anxiety among students of English Department at UKI Toraja and to improve knowledge of the causes of speaking anxiety and potential solutions for students' future. Moreover, this research will help the next researchers to regenerate a better study.

Hopefully, this research could serve as fundamental information for foreign language learners seeking to enhance their speaking abilities and conquer their anxiety. This study will benefit students in the English Department of UKI Toraja, helping them enhance their English Speaking proficiency and consequently strengthen the department's competitiveness against other English departments in various universities.

E. Research Methodology

Quantitative methodology was employed by the researcher in this research. Quantitative research methods consist of a structured inquiry using measurable factors and numerical information to understand occurrences and evaluate theories (Helmold, 2019; Mohajan, 2020). This method aim to be objective, dependable, and applicable to a wide range of populations, reducing researcher influence (Hasan, 2024).

F. Key Terms Definition

1. Comparative analysis

Comparative analysis involves systematically examining the similarities and differences between two or more subjects to gain understanding. In this study, researcher do comparative analysis to gain understanding about their speaking anxiety level among English study program students at UKI Toraja.

2. EFL Students

The acronym EFL represents English as Foreign Language. Individuals who are learning English in a country where English is not a primary language are referred to as EFL students. In this research, researcher will use English study program students at UKI Toraja to gain understanding about their speaking anxiety level.

3. Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is a common issue that impacts a large number of individuals. It appears in various physical and psychological signs, such as fast heartbeat, sweating, shaking, and trouble focusing. This anxiety may arise from different sources, including the fear of not succeeding, receiving negative feedback, or past upsetting events. In this study, researcher will try to gain understanding about their speaking anxiety level through the questionnaire.