

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one as an introduction covers the description of the research background. It consists of rationale, research questions, research objectives, scope of the research and significant of research.

1.1 Rationale

In language learning, the four fundamental skills listening, reading, writing, and speaking are crucial for attaining proficiency in any language especially English. Speaking, however, is frequently the most difficult of these abilities for students, particularly when speaking a foreign language. Speaking is considered the most difficult skill to master when learning a foreign language, particularly English, as it involves delivering information in real-time (Baykara & Aksu Ataç, 2021). Speaking involves more than just vocabulary and grammar knowledge; it also calls for the capacity for rapid thought, the formation of cohesive ideas, and clear communication of those ideas. Speaking is essential for students learning English as a foreign language (EFL), especially those in their second year of English education programs, as it will help them succeed academically and in their future careers as teachers. If students are unable to express their opinions, share their thoughts, convey information, or respond to questions, the teaching and learning process cannot proceed effectively (Nurilahi & Luwandi, 2022). Speaking with assurance and fluency is essential for participating in class discussions, giving presentations, and interacting with students and coworkers.

The ability to speak effectively is crucial for successful communication, as it enables individuals to express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions clearly and persuasively. Whether in personal, academic, or professional settings, speaking skills are essential for building relationships, participating in social interactions, and conveying information. Both students and the general public need to develop proficiency in foreign language skills, both spoken and written, in order to effectively use English as a means of communication, particularly in academic and professional contexts (Usmonov, 2020). Copland, Mann, & Garton (2020) suggest that English language teachers should assist students with the greatest potential in

reaching this speaking goal. Focusing on guiding students and providing opportunities to improve their speaking skills is crucial in addressing speaking anxiety. When teachers create a supportive environment where students feel encouraged to practice, it helps reduce the fear of making mistakes and boosts their confidence. By addressing speaking anxiety, teachers not only help students become more confident but also create a positive classroom atmosphere where all students feel more comfortable and motivated to engage in speaking activities.

Speaking anxiety refers to the feeling of nervousness, fear, or discomfort that individuals experience when they are required to speak, particularly in public or unfamiliar situations. It can arise from a variety of factors, including the fear of making mistakes, being judged, or not being understood. According to Horwitz (1986), as cited in Nurilahi et al. (2022), three factors associated with classroom anxiety are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. In language learning contexts, speaking anxiety can hinder a student's ability to communicate effectively, especially when speaking a foreign language. Symptoms of speaking anxiety may include a racing heartbeat, sweating, trembling, or an inability to find the right words. This type of anxiety can significantly impact one's confidence and performance in speaking tasks, making it an important area of focus for educators working to create supportive learning environments.

Many students find it difficult to improve their speaking skills, especially in non-native environments. They often feel scared of making mistakes, being judged, or not performing well, which leads to speaking anxiety and stops them from fully joining speaking activities. For second-year English Education students at Universitas Kuningan, this anxiety can seriously affect their learning progress. At this stage, they are moving from basic language skills to more advanced tasks like giving presentations, joining group discussions, and preparing for teaching in the class. That's why focusing on speaking skills is very important at this stage, it helps students manage their anxiety, build confidence, and prepare for success in their studies and future careers to be a teacher especially.

Numerous research have investigated the issue of speaking anxiety in English as a foreign language (EFL). For instance, Nirmala (2024) examined

speaking anxiety among second-semester students at Universitas Borneo Tarakan, identifying internal factors such as shyness and external factors like limited vocabulary as contributors, with strategies such as preparation and relaxation suggested to address the issue. Similarly, Prayudi (2024) explored speaking anxiety among third-semester students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, highlighting fear of criticism and negative thoughts as key causes. Putri (2021) focused on test anxiety, fear of taking risks, and unpreparedness for criticism as significant factors in EFL students' anxiety. Wijaya (2024) analyzed public speaking anxiety at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, identifying both internal factors, such as fear of making mistakes, and external factors, such as fear of negative evaluation, as major contributors. Fauzi and Asi (2023) found that female students experienced higher levels of anxiety than male students, with test anxiety being a primary cause. Other studies, including those by Mulyana & Burki (2024) and Kucuk & Daskan (2024), pointed to fear of negative evaluation and lack of grammar knowledge as contributing factors. Santoso & Perrodin (2021) identified concerns about accuracy as a main cause of anxiety among junior high school students. Rajitha & Alamelu (2020) and Sam, Yoeng, Tieng, & Chiv (2024) highlighted low self-confidence, limited class interaction, and inadequate practice as significant contributors to speaking anxiety. While these previous research have contributed valuable insights into the factors leading to speaking anxiety, this research distinguishes itself by focusing on second-year EFL students at Universitas Kuningan, specifically examining the factors of speaking anxiety they face and the strategies they employ to overcome it.

1.2 Research Questions

This research is guided through the following major questions:

1. What are the main factors of speaking anxiety experienced by the second-year English education students at Universitas Kuningan?
2. What strategies do second-year English education students employ to overcome speaking anxiety?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the problem above, the goals of this research:

1. To identify the main factors of speaking anxiety experienced by second-year English Education students at Universitas Kuningan.
2. To explore the strategies employed by second-year English Education students to overcome speaking anxiety.

1.4 Scope of the Research

To investigate the factors and strategies of speaking anxiety in the speaking class, the researcher concentrates on the factors and strategies experienced by second year English students at Universitas Kuningan.

1.5 Significance of Research

This research provides contributions from both theoretical and practical perspectives. It investigates the main factors that contribute to speaking anxiety experienced by second-year English education students at Universitas Kuningan, focusing on how these factors appear within the context of English language learning. Additionally, it explores effective strategies for managing speaking anxiety, helping students engage confidently in speaking tasks and improve their overall learning experience in English class.

This research provides valuable insights for teachers, lecturers, and EFL learners by helping them understand the various factors that contribute to speaking anxiety experienced by English students. It also identifies effective teaching-learning strategies that match students' perceptions, ensuring a more supportive and productive learning environment. Furthermore, the outcomes of this research serve as a significant resource for future researchers interested in exploring related topics. It acts as a reference point for developing further studies and inspires other researchers to explore issues surrounding speaking skills and anxiety in language learning contexts.