

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and definition of key terms. The introduction provides an overview of the challenges senior high school students in learning English speaking skills. It highlights the importance of speaking as a crucial aspect of language learning and discusses the common difficulties students encounter in developing their speaking abilities.

A. Research Background

Speaking English fluently is one of the most crucial abilities for secondary school students, particularly in light of the increasing globalization. This skill is necessary not only for classroom communication but also for comprehending and using a variety of English-language information sources, including reference books, scientific journals, and online learning materials (Andayani, 2022). Additionally, students' confidence in voicing their thoughts and opinions in group discussions, presentations, and interactions with teachers and peers is greatly influenced by their ability to speak clearly (Haryanti et al., 2021).

Proficiency in English, particularly in speaking, is also important for students in both the workplace and in further education. English language competency is a top priority for many domestic and international colleges when it comes to entrance requirements. Furthermore, a wide range of occupations in the current day require employees with strong communication abilities in English, particularly in the domains of technology, business, and international services.

Therefore, the capacity of students to speak English fluently and confidently is one of the markers of effective secondary school English study.

However, despite the importance of speaking abilities, many students are still struggling in different ways to acquire them. Numerous studies have looked at some of the biggest obstacles that students have when speaking English. According to some previous studies, there are a number of reasons why students struggle with speaking, such as a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, a lack of practice opportunities, a lack of experience using English in everyday situations, a fear of public speaking, and a lack of motivation to practice speaking.

But despite its significance, many students encounter a number of challenges when trying to improve their speaking abilities. Students frequently struggle with a lack of confidence in themselves. Lack of confidence is one of the biggest barriers that students encounter when speaking English. According to Marewangang et al. (2024), a lot of students experience anxiety when speaking in front of an audience because they worry about mispronouncing words or using the wrong grammar. The findings of this study are consistent with those of, who emphasized that students' confidence in speaking English might be further undermined by worry and a lack of support from the learning environment. Consequently, a supportive setting and a more conversational approach can aid in lowering their anxiety.

In addition to students' lack of confidence, vocabulary limitation is also another problem that makes it difficult for students to compose coherent sentences and express their thoughts clearly. Hidayati & Diana (2019) in her research showed that students who have limited vocabulary often have difficulty in

constructing sentences when speaking. In addition, research by Rahayu (2023) found that the use of digital media such as conversation-based applications can help enrich students' vocabulary and improve their fluency in speaking.

The lack of opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom is also a significant obstacle. Uyun (2022) mentioned that many schools still focus more on writing and grammar aspects than speaking skills. Students who engaged in practice-based activities, such as debates and language games, showed more significant improvements in speaking skills than students who only followed conventional learning methods (Saha & Singh, 2021).

The next challenge is the low use of English use in daily life. Research by Rajendran & Md Yunus (2021) emphasizes that an environment that supports the use of English, such as the English Day program or English clubs, significantly contribute to improving students' conversation skill. This English Day program is a structured training system that requires participants to communicate exclusively in English for a certain period. This intensive environment provides stimulus through repeated use, thereby improving students' English speaking skill and confidence. However, in many schools, the use of English outside the classroom is still limited. This situation makes it difficult to use English regularly in everyday communication, thereby constraining the natural language learning process.

In addition, students' motivation in learning to speak English is also an influential factor. Student learning success is often linked to their level of motivation. Motivation in learning plays an important role because it can influence students' preparation and willingness to communicate in English. In other words, motivation is a major factor that determines the extent to which

students are prepared to speak in that language. Motivation can be understood as an internal energy that drives oneself to act. Regardless of the type of reward students receive, motivation can increase their interest in learning (Purmama et al., 2019). Various studies show that highly motivated students tend to be more persistent in the learning process and achieve better academic results, including test scores, than students with low motivation. However, in the context of learning English speaking skills, low motivation is often a challenge experienced by students. Many students feel reluctant, lack confidence, or are afraid of making mistakes when speaking, so that lack of motivation can make these challenges even worse. This emphasizes the need for teachers to play a role in fostering and increasing students' motivation to learn so that they are better prepared to face the challenges of speaking English. The various challenges that have been explained show that students need the right approach to overcome them. Therefore, a strategy is needed to help students face these challenges so that their English speaking skills can develop optimally.

Difficulties in learning to speak English are a common challenge faced by students. This is often caused by a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, and minimal opportunities to practice. Several previous studies have proposed various strategies to overcome these obstacles, which emphasize not only individual aspects such as confidence, vocabulary mastery, and motivation, but also external factors such as opportunities to practice, the learning environment, and the use of technology.

One important method for improving speaking skills is through prior preparation. Students are advised to prepare a script or key points to help organize their thoughts before speaking. This step can reduce communication anxiety and help in the logical arrangement of ideas. Adequate preparation makes students more confident, fluent, and less hesitant when speaking in public (Amelia et al., 2022).

In addition to preparation, vocabulary mastery also plays an important role in improving speaking skills. Students can enrich their vocabulary through fun activities such as watching movies, reading various English texts, or listening to English songs. These activities not only help students remember and use new words in the right context, but also boost their confidence and clarity of communication. As a result, students who actively develop their vocabulary tend to speak more clearly and concisely (Afirin et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the habit of reading contributes to improved speaking skills. Through reading, students are exposed to correct grammar, good sentence structure, and natural speech patterns used by native speakers. Regular reading also introduces students to various styles of language and communication techniques that they can apply in everyday conversation. Reading helps students understand the natural and contextual use of language (Afirin et al., 2025).

In addition to individual aspects, social interaction is also an important factor in developing speaking skills. Through conversations with peers or native speakers, students can overcome shyness, gain real speaking experience, and practice fluency and spontaneity in communication. This interaction allows students to receive immediate feedback that helps them improve their accuracy

and confidence. Thus, speaking practice through social interaction can significantly improve students' proficiency (Intang et al., 2023).

Finally, technological advances provide new opportunities in English speaking learning. Applications such as Duolingo and ELSA Speak provide interactive activities that focus on pronunciation, intonation, and vocabulary development. With the help of these applications, students can practice independently at their own learning pace and receive immediate feedback. The gamification features and attractive appearance of these platforms also increase student motivation and consistency in practicing (Alrashedi et al., 2024).

Thus, various strategies involving preparation, vocabulary development, reading habits, social interaction, and the use of technology form a comprehensive approach to overcoming difficulties in learning to speak English. Although these strategies are theoretically important, their application in the real classroom context is not always effective. In practice, many students still face consistent challenges that hinder the development of their English speaking skills. The gap between theoretical expectations and classroom reality highlights the importance of analyzing the real challenges students face in specific learning environments.

At SMAN 1 Plosoklaten, several problems are still being seen in English learning that hinder students' progress in speaking. Many students have difficulty understanding the teacher's instructions, especially when lessons focus on speaking exercises. One of the main causes is their limited vocabulary, which makes it difficult to compose and communicate sentences fluently. In addition, most students have little exposure to spoken English, both inside and outside the classroom, which keeps them from becoming practiced at speaking naturally. This

problem is made worse by the lack of a supportive environment that encourages regular interaction in English, limiting students' opportunities to build confidence and fluency in speaking.

With these conditions in mind, it becomes clear that English language proficiency remains a significant challenge for many students at SMAN 1 Plosoklaten. Although the importance of speaking skills has been widely recognized, persistent barriers such as limited vocabulary, lack of practice, and the absence of a supportive environment continue to hinder student progress. Therefore, it is essential to conduct research that explores these challenges in greater depth in order to provide a clearer picture of the factors that influence students' speaking skills. Through this research, the author hopes to provide valuable insights for teachers, students, and education stakeholders in designing more effective strategies to improve English speaking competence, particularly in the context of high school learning.

B. Research Problem

Mastering Speaking skill is an important thing for senior high school. However, many students in SMAN 1 Plosoklaten faced various challenges in developing this competence. A various factor both internal and external, contribute to the difficulties they face. Therefore, this study aims to explore the challenges faced by the students, the factors that causes them, as well the teacher's views and the strategies used in learning. On this basis, the research question of this study is formulated as follows:

1. What are the challenges that students encounter in learning to speak in English?

2. What are factors that causes students have difficulties in expressing themselves in English?
3. What strategies do students use to overcome the challenges in learning speaking?

C. Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the factors affecting students' speaking ability in SMAN 1 Plosoklaten and to suggest effective strategies for improving their English speaking ability. Specifically, the objectives of this study are 1) to describe the challenges that students in learning to speak English 2) to describe the factors that cause students to have difficulties in expressing themselves in English 3) To explore the strategies that students use to overcome the challenges in learning to speak English.

D. Research Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich literature on English speaking challenges in the context of Indonesian secondary schools. By presenting empirical evidence from tenth grade students at SMAN 1 Plosoklaten, the research may also serve as a reference for future studies that aim to design more effective strategies in teaching speaking skills.

Practically, the findings are expected to help teachers more communicative and engaging methods that encourage students to speak English more actively. At the same time, students may benefit by better understanding both the challenges they face and the possible strategies to overcome them, which in turn can enhance the overall quality of English speaking learning.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To maintain uniformity and clarity, a number of important words are specified in this study. The capacity of students to communicate successfully in spoken English, including pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, is referred to as English speaking skills. These abilities are essential for helping students articulate their ideas and opinions in a clear and concise manner (Brown, 2001). However, a lot of students face learning difficulties, such as low self-esteem, a small vocabulary, nervousness when speaking, a lack of practice chances, and inefficient teaching strategies (Haryanti et al., 2021). Students in the tenth grade, who are in their second year of senior high school and are usually between the ages of 15 and 16, are especially affected by these difficulties.