

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews theories and literature related to the English speaking experiences of Thai students in a multilingual academic environment. It presents the theoretical framework and reviews previous studies relevant to the topic.

A. Theoretical Framework

This section highlights several key concepts that form the foundation of this study, including the multilingual academic context, English speaking skills, challenges in speaking, and opportunities in a multilingual environment.

1. Multilingual Academic Context

Multilingual academic context refers to an educational situation that involves the use of more than one language in academic and social activities, especially among international students, where languages are not used separately but as a unified resource to construct meaning and support communication (Khudhur et al., 2025). This perspective aligns with translanguaging theory, which views language practices as dynamic and flexible, allowing individuals to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire simultaneously (García & Otheguy, 2025).

Nevertheless, multilingual practices in higher education are often influenced by the dominance of certain languages and the assumption that students have similar language abilities, even though their backgrounds are highly diverse (Angouri & Delmas, 2025; Georges, 2025). This condition may lead to difficulties in understanding materials, participating in discussions, and completing academic tasks (Hao et al., 2025). In this study, Thai students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri navigate Thai, Indonesian, Javanese, and English simultaneously. In this context, English functions not only as a subject of learning but also as the primary medium of oral academic communication, which directly shapes

their speaking experiences in terms of both challenges and opportunities.

2. English Speaking Skills

Speaking is one of the core English language skills that functions as a means to deliver ideas, opinions, and information orally in communication contexts. Among the four English skills, speaking ability plays a very important role because it allows individuals to express feelings and emotions, and also functions as an international communication tool that supports various global activities, including cross-cultural transactions and interactions (Abrar et al., 2024). In addition, speaking competence not only contributes to academic success but also has significant implications for career opportunities and professional interaction (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2024).

From a deeper perspective, Brown (2019) states that speaking skills do not only focus on grammatical accuracy, but also involves fluency and clarity as important elements in oral performance. Furthermore, the components underlying speaking skills include micro skills and macro skills that represent linguistic and communicative aspects, which are used to identify learners' strengths and constraints in oral communication. Therefore, the discussion of these two aspects is explained as follows.

2.1. Microskills of Speaking

Brown's (2019) framework explain that speaking microskills relate to the ability to produce language elements in smaller units, such as sounds, words, phrases, and grammatical structures. However, this study does not discuss all aspects of microskills in detail. Instead, it focuses only on the aspects that are most relevant to students' speaking experiences, namely pronunciation and grammatical accuracy. Pronunciation is included because difficulties in pronunciation can make spoken messages harder for

listeners to understand, while grammatical accuracy helps learners produce clear and appropriate utterances. Therefore, these aspects are selected because they are directly related to students' ability to communicate effectively in oral interaction. As a result, microskills in this study serve as a conceptual foundation for understanding the linguistic aspects that emerge in the speaking experiences of Thai students in a multilingual academic environment.

2.2. Macroskills of Speaking

Macroskills of speaking refer to learners' ability to manage broader communicative aspects of oral interaction, including maintaining the flow of communication, organizing ideas coherently, expressing meaning appropriately according to context, and applying communication strategies to achieve interactional goals. However, this study does not examine all components of speaking macroskills. Instead, it focuses on the aspects most relevant to students' speaking experiences in a multilingual academic setting, namely fluency, interactive communication ability, and communication strategies. These aspects are reflected in learners' ability to participate in conversations, respond appropriately to others, maintain communication, and overcome communication difficulties during interaction. Therefore, speaking macroskills in this study provide a conceptual basis for understanding the communicative dimensions of Thai students' speaking experiences in a multilingual academic environment.

Based on the explanation above, speaking involves both linguistic and communicative aspects. In this study, these aspects include pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, fluency, interactive communication ability, and communication strategies, while vocabulary knowledge is considered a supporting factor for fluency.

Therefore, Brown's (2019) framework serves as the main foundation for understanding Thai students' English-speaking experiences in a multilingual academic environment.

3. Challenges in Speaking

Considering its complexity, speaking skill involves both linguistic and communicative aspects, and it cannot always be mastered optimally by learners, especially in a multilingual academic context that requires the use of several languages at the same time. In this situation, oral performance is not only determined by language proficiency but is also influenced by psychological factors such as language interference and emotional pressure during communication (Darwis, 2023; Gkonou et al., 2017). In addition, Brown (2015) emphasizes that successful speaking lies in the ability to maintain effective communication in real contexts, so challenges in speaking need to be understood through the integration of linguistic and psychological aspects. In this study, these aspects are analyzed by referring to the framework of Brown (2015) and the concept of language anxiety proposed by Oxford in Gkonou et al. (2017).

3.1. Linguistic Difficulties

Speaking difficulties arise from various linguistic limitations that affect learners' ability to express their ideas effectively. Brown (2015) states that successful speaking depends not only on producing language accurately but also on using language that listeners can easily understand. In this study, linguistic difficulties focus on pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, and fluency because these aspects are closely related to students' speaking experiences in a multilingual academic environment. In addition, vocabulary knowledge is considered a supporting factor that may influence speaking fluency. Pronunciation difficulties involve producing understandable English speech sounds.

These may include segmental features, such as consonants and vowels, as well as suprasegmental features, such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. However, this study does not examine all aspects of pronunciation in detail. Instead, it focuses on difficulties related to producing understandable English speech sounds, which are considered the primary focus of the pronunciation analysis in this study. Meanwhile, grammatical difficulties relate to learners' ability to construct sentences according to English grammar rules so that messages can be conveyed clearly and accurately.

Furthermore, linguistic difficulties are also reflected in speaking fluency. Brown (2015) explains that spoken communication often includes pauses, repetitions, self-corrections, and hesitation during the speaking process. These features may interrupt the flow of communication and reduce speaking fluency.

In addition to these characteristics, speaking fluency is closely related to learners' ability to access and use appropriate vocabulary during communication. Limited vocabulary knowledge may make it difficult for learners to express their ideas smoothly, which can lead to pauses, repetitions, or hesitation while speaking. According to Ilham et al. (2024), insufficient vocabulary reduces learners' ability to communicate effectively and maintain smooth speech. When learners cannot find appropriate words to express their ideas, they often pause, repeat words, or hesitate while speaking. Although vocabulary is not examined as a separate analytical category in this study, limited vocabulary knowledge is considered a factor that may influence students' speaking fluency. Similarly, Yu and Li (2025) argue that speaking difficulties result not only from limited language knowledge but also from the need to process and

use language spontaneously in real-life interactions. Therefore, in this study, linguistic difficulties refer to challenges related to pronunciation, grammar, and speaking fluency that influence students' ability to communicate orally.

3.2. Psychological Difficulties

In addition to linguistic factors, psychological barriers such as anxiety, low self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes also affect learners' experiences. In multilingual contexts, these barriers do not only occur at the linguistic level but also at the psychological level, leading learners to hesitate in selecting and using appropriate language. This is in line with Horwitz and MacIntyre as cited in Dewaele et al. (2024), who state that anxiety arises from difficulties in expressing oneself naturally, which reduces willingness and engagement in communication.

According to Oxford in Gkonou et al. (2017), anxiety in language learning is closely related to learners' mindset and beliefs. Oxford relates anxiety into *social anxiety*, which is fear of being negatively evaluated by others, and *generalized anxiety*, which refers to broader feelings such as lack of confidence, tension, and difficulty concentrating in language use. These conditions often lead learners to experience pressure during speaking and to avoid participation due to fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, Oxford explains that anxiety is strengthened by maladaptive beliefs such as the need for perfect speech and negative self-perception as a weak language user, which results in avoidance behavior and reduced language use.

In addition, Dewaele and Horwitz as cited in Gkonou et al. (2017) emphasize that anxiety is interconnected with other emotional factors such as motivation and self-

confidence, and is strongly influenced by social evaluation. Therefore, psychological factors are an important component in understanding speaking experiences in multilingual academic contexts, as anxiety can hinder speaking performance even when learners possess sufficient linguistic competence.

4. Opportunities in Multilingual Academic Context

Although various challenges hinder the development of speaking skills, these conditions are not entirely negative because a multilingual academic environment provides various opportunities that support the development of their speaking skills. A multilingual academic environment enables students to interact with diverse languages, cultures, and learning resources, allowing them to utilize their full linguistic repertoire in the learning process. Brown (2015) emphasizes that exposure to a second language plays an important role in integrating linguistic elements into meaningful communication.

Understanding these opportunities requires drawing on the concept of translanguaging proposed by García and Li Wei (2014), which is understood as the practice of flexibly using the entire linguistic repertoire by bilingual or multilingual speakers to construct meaning, acquire knowledge, and communicate effectively. García and Otheguy (2025) further argue that translanguaging cannot be seen as a simple alternation between languages, but rather as a dynamic practice that simultaneously integrates multiple linguistic resources. This perspective is reinforced by Seltzer et al. (2024), who highlight that translanguaging reflects complex language practices that go beyond the boundaries of separate language systems. Within this study, this concept is particularly relevant as Thai students at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri engage with Thai, Indonesian, Javanese, and English simultaneously.

Speaking learning processes shows that students do not always use English exclusively, but also draw on other languages they master for understanding materials, organizing ideas, maintaining communication, and adapting to academic and social environments. This phenomenon is also identified by Kim and Kim (2024), who show that multilingual learners naturally combine several languages within a single utterance as a communication strategy. For example, in their study, a student states, “Cool. Cool, because *así aprendí a usar un poco más los verbos y escribir más palabras,*” which shows the use of English (“Cool, because”) and Spanish (“*así aprendí...*”) within one complete sentence. This example confirms that learners do not merely switch between languages, but integrate them spontaneously to clarify meaning and maintain the flow of communication.

Chapter 7 of García and Li Wei (2014) presents several pedagogical goals of translanguaging in multilingual contexts are presented. In this study, only the most relevant goals are adapted, namely identity investment and positionality, building background knowledge, deepening understanding and developing new knowledge, as well as cross-linguistic flexibility. In addition, this study also considers the use of multilingual and multimodal resources and technologically enhanced media as an extension of translanguaging practices in language learning. Based on this framework, opportunities in this study are classified into three dimensions: social and affective opportunities, cognitive and strategic linguistic opportunities, and digital opportunities. Overall, opportunities are understood as various forms of support emerging from translanguaging practices that assist Thai students in developing their speaking skills in a multilingual academic environment.

4.1. Social and Affective Opportunities

Social and affective opportunities refer to opportunities that arise through social interaction and emotional conditions that support students' participation in speaking. Within the translanguaging framework, García and Li Wei (2014) place identity investment and positionality as one of the main pedagogical goals. It is explained that one of the goals of translanguaging is to strengthen identity and encourage learner engagement through a more active role in the learning process. This statement shows that translanguaging does not only function as a flexible language-use strategy, but also encourages students' engagement as multilingual speakers in the learning process. Through this practice, students obtain space to display their linguistic identity more actively and feel that their language diversity is valued in the academic environment.

In the context of this study, Thai students have opportunities to interact with friends, lecturers, and the surrounding environment without pressure to always use English perfectly. Flexibility in the use of various languages makes students feel more comfortable, accepted, and less worried about making mistakes. Interaction with peers also contributes to increasing engagement in language learning through collaborative activities, such as discussions, pair work, and feedback exchange (Liu et al., 2023; Brown, 2015). This condition is important for speaking development because affective factors, such as anxiety and confidence, influence willingness to communicate. Oxford in Gkonou et al. (2017) states that positive emotions, such as enjoyment, interest, and pride, increase communication participation, while anxiety tends to hinder language production. Therefore, translanguaging presents social and affective

opportunities by creating a more inclusive, safe, and supportive communication space for students' speaking confidence.

4.2. Cognitive and Strategic Linguistic Opportunities

Cognitive and strategic linguistic opportunities refer to the benefits of using multilingual resources to help students understand materials, organize ideas, and maintain communication during speaking activities. García and Li Wei (2014) explain that translanguaging helps learners build background knowledge, deepen understanding, and develop and extend new knowledge through the flexible use of different languages. In addition, translanguaging also supports critical thinking and cross-linguistic flexibility because learners can connect meaning, compare languages, and adjust language use based on communication needs. These goals show that multilingual practices support both knowledge construction and communication processes in language learning.

In the context of this study, Thai students use Thai, Indonesian, Javanese, and English to understand academic materials, organize ideas, remember vocabulary, and prepare speaking performances. They often translate ideas from one language to another, use simpler English expressions, switch languages when necessary, and explain ideas again to maintain communication. These practices show that speaking is not only related to language production, but also involves thinking processes, meaning construction, and communication strategies in multilingual situations.

Furthermore, García and Otheguy (2025) explain that all linguistic resources owned by multilingual learners can function as learning assets in communication and meaning-making processes. This idea is in line with Brown (2015),

who states that successful speaking does not only depend on grammatical accuracy, but also on the ability to achieve communicative goals effectively. Therefore, translanguaging provides cognitive and strategic linguistic opportunities that help Thai students understand materials more flexibly, maintain speaking fluency, and communicate more confidently in a multilingual academic environment.

4.3. Digital Opportunities

Unlike the previous three dimensions adapted from pedagogical goals of translanguaging proposed by García and Li Wei (2014), the digital opportunities dimension in this study is based on broader translanguaging pedagogical practices. García and Li Wei (2014) explain that translanguaging pedagogy does not only occur through oral interaction, but also includes the use of multilingual and multimodal resources and technologically enhanced media to support meaning-making and learning processes. This term is conceptualized based on various strategies in translanguaging studies, including multilingual listening/visual resources, reading multilingual texts, and alternating languages and media, which are used as an umbrella term for data analysis operationalization and supported by literature on technology use in language learning. Thus, translanguaging practice occurs not only through direct communication, but also through various digital resources that expand access to language learning.

In the context of this study, Thai students use online dictionaries, translation tools, artificial intelligence, and other supporting applications to support speaking practice. These digital resources help students understand materials, enrich vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and increase learning independence in adjusting learning strategies

(Indriani et al., 2024; Pinandhita, 2025). In line with this, Brown (2015) states that authentic and meaningful language use through various linguistic resources supports language practice and contextual communication skills. Therefore, technology is understood as a supporting medium that expands translanguaging practice beyond the classroom while also supporting speaking skill development.

B. Previous Study

Several previous studies are used as the basis of this research by reviewing relevant studies related to speaking difficulties, language learning, and learning experiences in multilingual contexts, as follows:

The first previous study by Kunaepi et al. (2024) entitled *Thai International Students' Experiences in Studying Islamic Education in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities* aims to examine Thai students' academic experiences in Indonesia through a qualitative case study approach. The results show that students face various challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, and difficulties in understanding academic materials, but also gain benefits such as improved cross-cultural understanding and learning experiences in multicultural environments. These findings confirm that learning experiences are influenced by the interaction between challenges and opportunities in cross-cultural contexts.

The second study by Danisti et al. (2025) entitled *Do International Students Speak Confidently? Exploring English-Speaking Anxiety Among Thai and Egyptian Students* examines international students' speaking experiences in Indonesian universities through a qualitative case study approach using interviews. The results show that Thai students experience issues such as limited English exposure, low self-confidence, and anxiety in communication. This indicates that speaking difficulties are not only related to linguistic aspects but are also influenced by psychological and social factors.

The third study by Huayluek (2024) entitled *The English Speaking Problems of Thai Students in Learning English at English Department of*

UIN KHAS Jember aims to identify Thai students' speaking problems in academic settings through observation and interviews. The results show linguistic problems such as limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, and pronunciation issues, as well as non-linguistic factors such as low self-confidence, anxiety, and lack of preparation. In addition, limited use of English in daily life also affects their speaking ability.

The fourth study by Yu and Li (2025) entitled *Cross-Linguistic Influence in Third Language Acquisition* analyzes the influence of first and second languages on third language acquisition through discourse completion tasks and interviews with multilingual participants. The results show that first and second languages significantly influence English use, especially in pragmatic aspects, with second language influence being more dominant. These findings indicate language transfer in multilingual learning that can have both positive and negative effects on speaking skills.

The fifth study by Suksud (2024) entitled *A Survey of English-Speaking Problems among Thai MA-CEIC Students* aims to identify Thai students' speaking problems and possible solutions using a mixed-method approach through questionnaires given to 33 students. The results show that main problems include limited vocabulary, fear of grammatical mistakes, and pronunciation uncertainty that affect speaking fluency. In addition, lack of real communication opportunities also becomes an important factor affecting students' speaking ability.

Based on previous studies, researchers have examined international students' English-speaking experiences, particularly linguistic and psychological challenges, including those faced by Thai students in Indonesia. However, limited studies have specifically explored Thai students' speaking experiences in multilingual academic contexts within Islamic universities by integrating both challenges and opportunities, such as language exposure, peer interaction, and translanguaging practices. Therefore, this study aims to explore how Thai students experience challenges and utilize opportunities in developing English-speaking skills at UIN Syekh Wasil Kediri.