

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the research. It covers the Background of the study, Research questions, Research objectives, scope and limitations of the study. Significance of the study, hypothesis, and definition of key terms.

A. Background of the study

English has become a global language that plays a crucial role in education, communication, technology, and career development, making English proficiency essential for students worldwide. According to Rao (2019), English serves as an international language that facilitates communication and participation in international relations among people from various linguistic backgrounds. Students are expected to develop communicative competence to use English effectively in real-life situations (Rose et al., 2021). English language learning involves four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these skills, speaking is often considered the most crucial because it reflects how well students can communicate, share ideas, and participate actively. Speaking fluency is especially important in the EFL context, such as Indonesia, because it helps students prepare for social, professional, and academic interactions in an increasingly global world.

However, developing speaking skills remains a significant challenge for many English as a foreign language (EFL) students in Indonesia. Previous research shows that students frequently struggle to speak English because of limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, limited grammatical knowledge, and low fluency

(Franscy & Ramli, 2022). Furthermore, Indonesian students often have limited opportunities to practice speaking and tend to be passive during speaking activities in class (Pratolo et al., 2019). These difficulties make students less confident and reluctant to speak in English. As a result, many students choose to stay silent, give short answers, or speak in their native tongue instead of speaking in English. Therefore, although speaking skills are crucial to learning English, many Indonesian students still struggle to communicate effectively in spoken English

In addition to linguistic challenges, students' speaking abilities are influenced by psychological factors, particularly speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety is the anxiety, fear, and worry students feel when asked to speak in English, especially in front of others (Sari, 2020). Students with high levels of speaking anxiety are more hesitant to share their ideas, avoid speaking activities, and fear making mistakes or receiving negative feedback from teachers and classmates. These feelings often reduce students' confidence and participation during speaking activities in the classroom. According to Qureshi et al. (2020), speaking anxiety can negatively affect students' fluency, confidence, and overall speaking performance. As a result, students with high anxiety may struggle to communicate effectively even if they have sufficient linguistic knowledge.

Besides psychological factors, social factors such as peer support are crucial in students' speaking activities. Peer support is defined as supporting, accepting, and assisting each other during the learning process. Sarafino (1998) defines social support as emotional, self-esteem, informational, instrumental, and network support that helps individuals cope with stressful situations. Peer support can help students feel more comfortable, confident, and motivated to participate in speaking activities

while learning English. Positive connections with peers can help reduce students' anxiety and encourage them to express themselves more actively in class (Juvonen et al., 2019).

Several previous studies investigated the correlation between speaking anxiety, peer support, and students' speaking performance when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Previous studies have found that speaking anxiety reduces students' confidence, participation, and speaking performance (Djahimo et al., 2018; Chen et al., 2022). On the other hand, peer support has been shown to make students feel more relaxed and motivated during speaking activities. Suryani et al. (2024) showed that students who receive more peer support tend to have lower levels of public speaking anxiety. Similarly, Hafifah and Anggraini (2023) found that speaking anxiety and social support have a significant effect on students' speaking skills.

Although previous research has provided useful insights into the correlation among speaking anxiety, peer support, and speaking performance, most of these studies have examined only one or two factors separately or have been conducted at the college level. As a result, research into the correlation between speaking anxiety, peer support, and simultaneous speaking performance, particularly among high school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia, is still limited.

At SMAN 4 Kediri, students often hesitate to speak English during class activities. Many prefer to remain silent, give brief answers, or speak in Indonesian rather than English. Some students appear nervous and uncomfortable when asked to speak in front of the class. These patterns suggest that psychological and social

factors may influence students' speaking performance. This study aims to investigate the correlation among speaking anxiety, peer support, and students' speaking performance in senior high school in Kediri.

B. Research questions

The writer constructed research questions based on the research objectives.

Here are the research questions for this study:

1. Does a significant correlation exist between students' speaking anxiety and speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri?
2. Does a significant correlation exist between peer support and students' speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri?
3. Does a significant simultaneous correlation exist between students' speaking anxiety, peer support, and speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri?

C. Research objectives

Based on the research questions above, the purpose of this research is:

1. To determine whether there is a significant correlation between students' speaking anxiety and speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri.
2. To determine whether there is a significant correlation between peer support and students' speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri.
3. To determine whether there is a simultaneous correlation between students' speaking anxiety, peer support, and their speaking performance at senior high school in Kediri.

D. Scope and limitations of the study

This research focuses on the relationship between speaking anxiety, peer support, and speaking performance among eleventh-grade students at SMAN 4 Kediri. Speaking anxiety and peer support are independent variables, while speaking performance is the dependent variable. Data were collected through questionnaires and speaking tests involving two classes.

The findings of this study are limited to the participants involved and cannot be generalized to all senior high school students. In addition, this study examined only two independent variables. Therefore, other factors that may influence speaking performance, such as vocabulary mastery, grammar knowledge, pronunciation, motivation, self-confidence, speaking practice, and English proficiency, were beyond the scope of this study.

E. Significance of the study**a. For students**

This study can help students recognize how anxiety and peer support affect their speaking performance and encourage them to develop strategies to reduce anxiety and improve their speaking skills.

b. For teachers

By reading the findings of this research, it is hoped that it will provide a better understanding to teachers about how speaking anxiety and peer support affect student performance and offer strategies to create a more supportive learning environment that reduces anxiety and boosts students' confidence in speaking.

c. For the researcher

This study enables academics to acquire a better understanding of speaking anxiety and peer support and how it affects students' speaking performance in EFL classrooms. The authors are expected to improve their skills in conducting academic research, evaluating data, and interpreting findings in language learning. Furthermore, this study is expected to allow researchers to investigate effective teaching strategies that can help reduce students' speaking anxiety, which will benefit their future jobs as teachers.

d. For the next researcher

This study is expected to provide a reference for future research on speaking anxiety, peer support, and performance, as well as encourage future research on more effective approaches to help EFL students overcome their anxiety.

e. For institution

The writer seeks to develop in the research field and hopes that the research will be a useful reference for future academic research and library resources.

F. Hypothesis

Based on the research questions, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Null Hypotheses (H0):

- a. There is no significant negative correlation between students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance.

- b. There is no positive significant correlation between students' peer support and their speaking performance.
- c. There is no significant simultaneous correlation between students' speaking anxiety, peer support, and speaking performance.

2. Alternative Hypotheses (H_a):

- a. There is a negative significant correlation between students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance.
- b. There is a positive correlation between students' peer support and their speaking performance.
- c. There is a significant simultaneous correlation between students' speaking anxiety, peer support, and speaking performance

G. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following key terms are defined as follows:

1. Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety refers to students' feelings of nervousness, fear, or tension when they are required to speak in English during classroom activities. In this study, speaking anxiety is measured using a questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

2. Peer Support

Peer support refers to the emotional, academic, and social support provided by classmates, such as encouragement, acceptance, and assistance during English learning activities. In this study, peer support is measured using a questionnaire adapted from peer support scales grounded in Sarafino's concept of peer relationships.

3. Speaking Performance

Speaking performance is generally understood to be the act of expressing ideas verbally. Speaking performances, as defined by Richards (2008), are defined as public talks intended to convey prior knowledge to an audience. Examples of these talks include speeches, public announcements, and classroom presentations.