

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter discusses into 5 sections. They are speaking, speaking anxiety, coping strategies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Foreign Language Learning, and review of previous study which related to this thesis.

A. Speaking

This section is further divided into three discussions, namely the definition of speaking, the components of speaking, and speaking in an academic context.

1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking is generally defined as an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking is considered the most critical productive skill to master. According to Brown (2004), speaking is a productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed; however, those observations are invariably colored by the accuracy and effectiveness of a test-taker's listening skill, which necessarily compromises the reliability and validity of an oral production test.

According to Suryani (2015, as cited in Amalia, 2024) speaking is used to convey meaning so that others can understand the message being communicated. This indicates that speaking is not merely about producing spoken language, but also about delivering ideas clearly and appropriately to ensure the intended meaning is understood. Additionally, Speaking is considered one of the most difficult skills for language learners (Leong et al., 2017, as cited in Syamarotul, 2023). It is also viewed as the most important among the four language skills.

Moreover, speaking plays a vital role not only in the teaching and learning process, but also in everyday life communication.

Furthermore, speaking is not merely about knowing linguistic rules but also about how to use them appropriately in real-time contexts. Chaney (1998) defines speaking as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in various contexts." In line with this, Harun (2022, as cited in Nihayatur, 2023) describe speaking as the ability to express ideas appropriately, describe events accurately, and communicate fluently in sequence. Therefore, speaking can be concluded as a complex skill that involves the ability to use language meaningfully, accurately, and fluently in appropriate contexts.

2. The Components of Speaking

To assess speaking proficiency and understand the specific difficulties faced by students, it is essential to break down speaking into its core elements. According to Harmer (2007, as cited in Ilham, 2024), speaking is a complex skill that involves five main components: comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. As stated by Harris (1969) that there are five components of speaking skill recognized in language testing:

- a. Grammar: It is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation. It is in line with the explanation by Brown (2001) that grammar is the system of rules governing the conventional arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. As highlighted in this study, the fear of making grammatical errors is often a major trigger for student anxiety.

- b. Vocabulary: According to Siska (2014, as cited in Ziyad, 2023), vocabulary plays an essential role in forming sentences and supports comprehension in speaking, reading, and writing. This refers to the appropriate selection of words during communication. Without sufficient vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas in both oral and written form.
- c. Pronunciation: Thornbury (2005, as cited by Anisa, 2023) states that pronunciation serves as a basic foundation in speaking skills. Pronunciation is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak. It deals with the phonological process that refers to the component of a grammar made up of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and pattern in a language as stated by Rahayu (2005, as cited in Anisa, 2023). This component is crucial as it directly affects comprehensibility.
- d. Fluency: According to Hughes (2002, as cited in Leong and Ahmad, 2017), fluency is the ability of learners to speak in a clear and understandable manner so that communication can run smoothly without causing listeners to lose interest. In the context of this research, fluency is often the first aspect to suffer when a student experiences high anxiety.
- e. Comprehension: According to Hornby (2014, as cited in Ziyad, 2023), comprehension refers to the ability to understand and grasp the meaning or ideas conveyed by others. This refers to the ability to understand the speaker's intention and general meaning to facilitate an effective flow of communication.

3. Speaking in Academic Context

Speaking in an academic setting poses different challenges compared to daily conversation. For students in the English Education Department, speaking courses often require formal performances, such as presentations, debates, or oral examinations, as stated by Richards (2008). These types of activities demand a higher level of language proficiency and performance. Furthermore, Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that speaking is one of the most difficult skills for learners to master because it requires them to process information and respond instantly. Therefore, in academic contexts, speaking activities such as presentations and discussions demand not only fluency but also critical thinking and the ability to organize ideas effectively (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

In this academic context, the pressure to perform accurately often creates a gap between students' theoretical knowledge and their actual speaking performance. Recent studies show that EFL learners often possess linguistic knowledge but struggle to apply it in real-time communication due to cognitive and performance demands (Hanifa, 2018). According to Bozkurt (2023), when students feel judged, they tend to focus excessively on form (grammar) rather than meaning, which inhibits their ability to speak naturally. Therefore, mastering academic speaking requires not only linguistic competence but also psychological readiness and supportive tools to practice independently.

B. Speaking Anxiety

The section on speaking anxiety is further divided into two themes. The first is the definition of speaking anxiety, the second is causes and manifestations in EFL settings.

1. Definition of Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety, or Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA), is the central affective factor investigated in this study. According to Spencer et al. (2003, as cited in Choiriyah, 2021), anxiety refers to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that arise when individuals perceive a threat, even in situations that others may not consider dangerous. Similarly, Taylor (1953, as cited in Wulan, 2023) defines anxiety as a general feeling of restlessness and tension caused by an individual's inability to cope with problems or uncomfortable situations. In this study, speaking anxiety refers to the feelings of tension, worry, and nervousness experienced by English Education students when communicating orally in English. This condition often inhibits learners from actively participating and developing their speaking fluency.

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), he conceptualized foreign language anxiety as a distinct form of anxiety specific to the language learning context. They developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and identified three interrelated components: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication anxiety refers to the fear of engaging in communication, test anxiety relates to the fear of being evaluated during assessments, and fear of negative evaluation involves concerns about being judged by others. Hanifa (2018) and Bozkurt (2023) also used this framework, they emphasized that these components remain the main factors influencing students' speaking anxiety.

2. Causes and Manifestations in EFL Settings

In the Indonesian EFL context, speaking anxiety is influenced by various factors, as identified by Suparlan (2021), including fear of speaking

in English, fear of teachers' consequences, lack of self-confidence, fear of being less competent than others, embarrassment, insufficient preparation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, lack of habitual use of English, and language tests. These factors can be grouped into several categories.

First, linguistic difficulties include insufficient preparation, limited vocabulary, and fear of making grammatical mistakes. Second, affective barriers involve psychological factors such as fear of speaking, lack of self-confidence, embarrassment, and fear of negative evaluation from teachers or peers. Third, contextual challenges relate to external conditions, such as limited opportunities to practice English, lack of habitual use of the language, and pressure from language tests or classroom evaluation.

According to Liu (2006, as cited in Amalia, 2024), several factors contributing to students' reluctance to speak English are low English proficiency, lack of familiarity with the task, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and incomprehensible input.

- a. Low English Proficiency: Students may feel their speaking ability is weak and inferior to others, which reduces their willingness to communicate.
- b. Lack of Familiarity with the Task: Students tend to participate less when they are not familiar with or interested in the topic being discussed.
- c. Lack of Confidence: Students with low self-confidence often avoid speaking, even when they have sufficient language ability.
- d. Fear of Making Mistakes: Anxiety about making errors and receiving negative evaluation discourages students from expressing their ideas.

- e. Incomprehensible Input: Difficult or unclear language input can hinder students' understanding and limit their ability to respond effectively.

C. Coping Strategies

Coping strategies refer to the cognitive and behavioral efforts used by individuals to manage stressful situations, emotional challenges, or psychological pressures. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping strategies are constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts employed to manage specific internal or external demands that are perceived as taxing or exceeding an individual's resources.

In the context of foreign language learning, coping strategies are commonly used by learners to manage speaking anxiety and maintain their participation in communication activities. Students may employ various strategies, such as preparing speaking materials in advance, repeating speaking practice, seeking feedback, using supporting tools, or developing self-confidence to reduce anxiety during language performance.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) classify coping strategies into two main categories. The first is problem-focused coping, which aims to address the source of the problem directly through actions such as preparation, practice, and skill improvement. The second is emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional responses to stressful situations, such as reducing nervousness, increasing confidence, or seeking a more comfortable learning environment.

In this study, coping strategies are understood as the efforts developed by students to manage speaking anxiety while using the Loora application.

These strategies include preparation, repetition and self-correction, confidence-building behaviors, and the utilization of Loora as a supportive and low-pressure learning environment.

D. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Foreign Language Learning

This subchapter explains four themes, namely the Role of Digital Platforms in Language Learning (MALL), Artificial Intelligence-Based Interaction and Anxiety Reduction, Instant Corrective Feedback Mechanisms, and the Loora Application as an Anxiety Mediation Tool.

1. The Role of Digital Platforms in Language Learning (MALL)

In response to modern educational challenges, particularly in overcoming affective barriers such as speaking anxiety, educational institutions are increasingly turning to technological solutions. The integration of digital platforms and applications has emerged as a promising intervention for reducing speaking anxiety. As this research focuses on applications used on mobile devices, this approach falls under the umbrella of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Kukulska-Hulme, 2009), which facilitates learning with the advantages of portability and accessibility outside of traditional classroom settings.

2. AI-Based Interaction and Anxiety Reduction

In the last decade, Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based applications have attracted significant attention, primarily due to their ability to provide detailed and instant corrective feedback. These platforms offer a safe, non-judgmental, and highly personalized practice environment through features such as simulated private conversations or AI-driven interactions. Indonesian

scholars emphasize that the integration of AI in English Language Teaching (ELT) facilitates a transformative approach to learner autonomy, allowing students to navigate their learning speed without external pressure (Yuliana, 2023). Furthermore, the use of AI-based chatbots and adaptive applications provides a more personalized experience that directly addresses individual linguistic gaps, which is often difficult to achieve in crowded traditional classrooms (Rahman, 2024).

This private environment is crucial as it serves as a ‘mental safety net’, allowing learners to make mistakes and receive corrections without the fear or embarrassment associated with public performance. This low social pressure mechanism directly targets a key psychological barrier, thereby potentially reducing anxiety levels and systematically building student confidence (Horwitz et al., 1986). This private environment helps reduce learners' speaking anxiety and increases their confidence in using English during speaking practice as stated by Hasnatan (2025, cited in Hafizah et al., 2025).

Furthermore, according to Gleason & Gillern (2018, cited in Hidayatullah, 2024), AI features enable personalized learning tailored to individual students' needs, effectively addressing specific linguistic challenges. This adaptive process provides targeted support that helps students overcome hesitation and awkwardness in speaking as stated by Zuhro & Hermawati (2017, cited in Hidayatullah, 2024). This consistent and patient feedback cycle helps stabilize students' emotions and fosters a positive attitude toward repeated speaking practice (Hidayatullah, 2024).

Consequently, AI-based tools serve not only as teaching aids but also as psychological interventions that build the confidence necessary for students to eventually communicate in real-world academic settings.

3. Instant Corrective Feedback Mechanism

One of the most powerful aspects of AI tools is the provision of real-time corrective feedback. Research highlights the potential of applications such as Loora to provide real-time, personalized feedback on grammatical accuracy during active conversation, directly addressing a major source of anxiety: the fear of making mistakes (Salmanda, 2025). This non-judgmental correction mechanism turns errors into valuable learning opportunities, allowing learners to reflect on their language production instantly and adjust their output without the pressure of social evaluation, thereby fostering greater confidence and willingness to engage in more extensive speaking practice.

This instant correction mechanism encourages independent and reflective language use by transforming mistakes from a source of embarrassment into a trigger for learning. This process supports Learner Autonomy (Benson, P. 2001) as low social pressure encourages flexible independent practice and fosters a more reflective learning attitude, which is essential for managing the need for consistent practice outside of class.

4. The Loora App as an Anxiety Mediation Tool

The Loora application serves as a specific Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based language learning tool that functions effectively as an anxiety mediator for EFL students, particularly those in the English Education department. Its

mediation capability is rooted in its core design features. First, Loora facilitates a Safe Practice Environment by acting as a personal, non-judgemental tutor, providing detailed real-time corrections on grammar, pronunciation, and fluency errors. This low-social-pressure setting is critical for reducing anxiety and promoting the Willingness to Communicate (WTC), a finding echoed in similar studies on AI speaking assistants like "Loora" (Zhang et al., 2024).

Second, the provision of Personalized Private Lessons allows users to identify and systematically reduce error patterns independently, transforming mistakes from a source of public embarrassment into a trigger for reflective learning. Finally, in the context of this study, Loora's Academic Relevance lies in its use for unsupervised practice by students to prepare for mandatory speaking assessments and oral assignments, positioning it as the central focus of exploration for anxiety management. The cumulative effect of these features points to a strong pathway for English Education students to manage their anxiety and become autonomous learners, especially as they prepare for academic coursework.

E. Review of Previous Studies

This research positions itself within the body of previous works that extensively discuss the problem of speaking anxiety and the role of technology in its alleviation. The primary focus of research on speaking anxiety among Indonesian EFL learners, often utilizing descriptive qualitative approaches, has been to identify the anxiety triggers. Studies such as *Analysis of Student Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom* by Putri (2025) and *A Case Study of*

Students' Speaking Anxiety in Learning English in the Classroom by Rohmah (2025) consistently conclude that the main factors causing anxiety are oral presentations, limited vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and the fear of negative evaluation from lecturers or peers. These findings strongly affirm the relevance of the Horwitz et al. (1986) theoretical framework which underpins this study. Furthermore, the research by Faidotur Rohmah, which highlights students' personal experiences in managing anxiety, provides an important methodological foundation for the qualitative approach to be employed here.

In parallel with technological advancements, a series of studies has also focused on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a tool for speaking practice and its impact on anxiety. Qualitatively, A study of Students' Perception of Character AI in Practicing English Speaking Fluency by Napitupulu (2025) indicates that learners positively receive AI solutions, reporting increased confidence and a significant reduction in anxiety, citing the judgment-free environment as a key factor. Meanwhile, more outcome-oriented quantitative research, such as AI Applications for EFL Learners: Enhancing Speaking Performance and Reducing Anxiety with Gender-Based Analysis by Fauzi (2025), demonstrates a statistically significant reduction in speech anxiety and an improvement in speaking performance after utilizing AI-based platforms. These pieces of evidence collectively underscore the effectiveness of AI tools in supporting practice and reducing anxiety by offering a private and non-judgmental environment. However, these studies tend to treat anxiety reduction and skill improvement as isolated outcomes and have not yet fully explored the subjective experiences underlying these results.

Based on this comprehensive review, a crucial research gap emerges. Although previous studies have shown that speaking anxiety is highly prevalent among Indonesian EFL learners and that AI-based applications can support language learning, limited research has explored how English Education students perceive the use of AI applications in managing speaking anxiety and what coping strategies they develop while using such tools. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by employing a descriptive qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and coping strategies in utilizing the Loora application as a tool for overcoming speaking anxiety in academic speaking contexts.