

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

Speaking skill plays a crucial role in language learning as it directly involves learners in real-time communication and allows them to actively produce the target language. Through speaking, learners reinforce their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation while developing fluency and communicative competence. It also serves as a means to receive immediate feedback, which helps learners recognize and correct their mistakes effectively. As Brown (2001) highlights, speaking is not only a productive skill but also a central element in second language learning because it triggers the integration of other language components in practical use.

Furthermore, speaking is essential for achieving functional proficiency in a second or foreign language. It enables learners to interact meaningfully in academic, professional, and everyday settings, thus promoting real-life language use. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), speaking is the most important skill among the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) because it reflects learners' ability to convey ideas and emotions clearly. Therefore, fostering speaking skills is vital for effective communication and long-term language development.

Speaking is a skill in English that is important to learn. Speaking is an activity where someone can share information, thoughts, ideas and feelings

with other people According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), When speaking, a person must speak clearly so that the listener can understand what we are saying. Good speaking abilities enable students to interact with people in a natural and comfortable way. They can so communicate with others in the community to convey their ideas, realize them in a variety of ways, and uphold social ties.

Speaking plays a crucial psychological role by helping individuals build confidence, reduce anxiety, and express emotions. The act of verbalizing thoughts can enhance self-esteem and provide a sense of control over one's environment. According to Tsang, A. (2022) speaking in a second language is often associated with language anxiety, and building speaking competence can significantly reduce this psychological barrier. Practicing speaking in supportive environments fosters a sense of achievement and contributes to mental well-being.

In social contexts, speaking is fundamental to human interaction, relationship-building, and cultural integration. It allows individuals to share ideas, express empathy, and establish trust Strfani and marco (2019) . Effective spoken communication fosters understanding and cohesion within communities.

A major challenge in developing speaking skills is speaking anxiety. Research by Salameh (2022) shows that this anxiety can hinder students' ability to express themselves orally. Factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and negative perceptions of language ability can

exacerbate this condition. This condition can reduce students' active participation in classroom speaking activities and slow down the development of their speaking skills.

According to research by Pawlak (2015), limitations in vocabulary, improper pronunciation and grammatical errors often hinder students' speaking fluency. This shows the importance of developing teaching strategies that can help students overcome these linguistic barriers and improve their speaking effectively.

The factors that become obstacles in speaking English are divided into 3 factors, namely psycholinguistic, social and linguistic. Psychological elements such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence play a crucial role in speaking proficiency Sari (2022) , The findings show that anxiety has a significant negative effect on the willingness to communicate in online learning environments (path coefficient = -0.210, $t = 2.588$, $p \leq 0.05$). Motivation (0.208, $t = 2.619$, $p \leq 0.05$) and self-confidence (0.483, $t = 4.721$, $p \leq 0.05$) play a positive role in enhancing students' desire to speak. Thus, these three psychological elements—anxiety, motivation, self-confidence—play a crucial role in facilitating or hindering students' ability to speak in English.

According to Putra (2023) Social interactions and cultural context greatly influence speaking skills, In this study, Putra et al. (2023) revealed that sociocultural factors, including social interactions (family, friends, environment) and cultural context are one of the main causes of students'

speaking difficulties. This supports the statement that social and cultural interactions significantly influence speaking skills.

A similar case study In this study, it was found that eighth grade students experience difficulties in speaking due to, Linguistic factors limitations in vocabulary, grammar, and inaccurate pronunciation Psychological factors: such as lack of confidence, anxiety, shyness, and fear of making mistakes. The findings were collected through questionnaires and interviews from 79 middle school students and discussed in depth in the article Syahdila & Trisno,(2023).

Another researcher studying a similar case is Bohari (2024) , who examined the psychological barriers faced by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students at Global Village Sumbawa in expressing their ideas through speaking. This study aims to explore the mental factors that hinder students from speaking actively in class, even though cognitively they have mastered the linguistic aspects of the English language. Methodology Descriptive qualitative Instrument: Classroom observations over three months (June September 2022) and interviews in July 2022, Participants: 12 graduating high school students (ages 17–19) from various regions in Indonesia, attending a TOEFL/IELTS preparation course at Global Village Sumbawa. Main Findings Anxiety, Students feel "nervous," afraid of making mistakes, and hesitant, hindering them from expressing ideas. Shynes,The factor of shyness encourages students to choose to remain silent rather than speak in front of the class. Lack of Motivation, Low motivation makes

students reluctant to participate actively - they feel there are no ideas, are not interested, or lack academic drive.

Understanding the difficulties faced by students in developing speaking skills is crucial for improving the effectiveness of speaking instruction. Students often encounter various obstacles, including limited vocabulary, grammatical difficulties, pronunciation issues, anxiety, lack of confidence, insufficient support, and the influence of local culture that hinders their oral communication. By identifying these barriers, teachers can tailor their teaching approaches to meet the specific needs of students. This understanding enables educators to create a more supportive learning environment that encourages participation and reduces the fear of making mistakes, which is often a major psychological barrier in speaking.

Moreover, recognizing the social and linguistic contexts in which students learn is equally important. Different learners may experience varied speaking challenges depending on their cultural background, exposure to the target language, and opportunities for interaction. Without this insight, instruction risks being generic and less impactful. Therefore, incorporating findings from research into classroom practice, such as differentiated tasks, communicative activities, and anxiety-reducing techniques, not only improves speaking proficiency but also empowers students to engage more confidently and fluently in both academic and real-life communication (Pawlak, 2015; Putra, 2023).

Although various studies have explored the challenges faced by EFL learners in developing speaking skills, most of them tend to focus on a single dimension rather than providing a comprehensive classification. For example, Sari (2022) and Salameh (2022) concentrated on psychological factors, such as anxiety, low self-confidence, and motivation, while neglecting how social and linguistic aspects also contribute to speaking difficulties. Likewise.

Other research has examined linguistic barriers, such as limited vocabulary, inaccurate grammar, and poor pronunciation (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017) without linking these issues to social interactions or the learners' emotional state. Similarly, some studies only highlighted social factors such as lack of environmental support or cultural background (Putra, 2023), but failed to integrate them with other related challenges. This fragmented approach shows a research gap in providing a systematic and integrated framework for understanding speaking challenges in EFL contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by conducting a more holistic analysis that explicitly classifies speaking challenges into three main aspects: psychological (Anxiety, Lack of Confidence, and Shyness), social (Lack of Social Support, Limited Speaking Opportunities and Cultural Influences), and linguistic (Limited Vocabulary, Poor Pronunciation, and Weak Grammar). By doing so, this research is expected to provide a more detailed and structured understanding of the multifaceted nature of speaking difficulties and offer insights for more effective pedagogical interventions.

Previously, the researcher had conducted observations at SMAN 12 Banda Aceh regarding the speaking skills of tenth grade students. The researcher has taught at this school several times as a substitute teacher, and SMAN 12 is also where the researcher did teaching assistance. The researcher observed that most of the students faced difficulties in speaking English in class during speaking practice activities, and the researcher did not know the reasons and causes of why these students experienced difficulties in speaking English

In this study, the researcher will raise the title : "AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILL AMONG EFL LEARNERS AT SMAN 12 BANDA ACEH CLASS X IPAS1

1.2. The Problem of Research

The problem of the research is What are the difficulties faced by students in developing speaking skills among EFL learners?

1.3. The Objective of Research

The objectives of this research is to find out what are the difficulties faced by students in developing speaking skills among EFL learners

1.4. The Significant of study

1.4.1 Teachers

This study can help English teachers understand the specific difficulties their students face in developing speaking skills. By identifying these obstacles, teachers can adapt their teaching methods, provide more appropriate speaking

activities, and create a more supportive classroom environment that encourages students to speak confidently.

1.4.2 Students

Through this research, students may become more aware of the factors that hinder their speaking performance. This awareness can motivate them to take more initiative in improving their speaking skills, such as practicing outside the classroom.

1.4.2 Future Researchers

This study can serve as a reference and foundation for future researchers who are interested in exploring speaking difficulties in EFL contexts. It provides relevant data and findings that can be developed further in similar or broader studies related to English language learning, especially in the area of speaking.

1.5. The Scope of Study

This study is limited to analyzing the difficulties faced by students in developing their speaking skills in English as a foreign language. The research specifically focuses on EFL learners in class X IPAS 1 at SMAN 12 Banda Aceh. This study is limited to identifying linguistic difficulties (such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar) as well as non-linguistic difficulties (such as anxiety, confidence, motivation, and classroom environment) that affect students' speaking performance. Furthermore, this research involves students from class X IPAS 1 and does not aim to measure students' speaking abilities quantitatively. Instead, this study emphasizes understanding the factors that hinder students' ability to speak English fluently and effectively.