

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the study's background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and a review of previous studies.

A. Background

Speaking is a skill that enables an individual to convey information and knowledge. Speaking requires the participation of two or more individuals to communicate and comprehend messages or information verbally, as well as to convey their ideas, emotions, and provide advice or opinions to others. Speaking has become crucial for forging connections, influencing decisions, and initiating change. Moreover, speaking represents one of the five fundamental macro skills in English, alongside listening, reading, writing, and grammar, that every youngster in the 21st century must possess. This capability refers to communication skills (Seamolec online course 2, 2006).

According to Haryudin and Jamilah (2018: 61), extensive practice is necessary to achieve proficiency in English as a foreign language. To facilitate their adaptation to the English language and gradually improve their fluency, students should engage in practice with equal intensity both in the classroom and outside of it. According to Brown and Yuke (1983), "Speaking is the skill on which students will be most evaluated in real-world situations." Diverse students can employ a range of strategies to improve fluency, necessitating personalized approaches for each individual.

Students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can achieve fluency in spoken English; however, they must refine their learning methods and strategies. There are various approaches to enhance their speaking skills. Furthermore, globalization and technological innovations have influenced the domain of education over time. The advancement of the times has transformed numerous aspects of the education system. Rosenberg (2001) and

Wentling et al. (2000) characterize online material strategies as an application of Internet technology to improve knowledge and performance through several modalities. Online education enhances and facilitates learning via the implementation of computer and communication technologies. Teaching and learning activities that were once conducted in person transitioned to applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, LSM, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Edmodo, Schoology, and others.

Based on preliminary observation in the English Education Department, several second-semester students still experienced difficulties in developing their public speaking skills. They frequently seek assistance with speaking, and some may feel hesitant to ask a peer informally about the content. Conversely, some individuals may experience despair and a lack of motivation due to the perception that the content will be challenging, which could adversely impact their grades. They may also feel uncertain about proper pronunciation, encounter difficulties with the signal, or face heightened anxiety during class sessions. Consequently, challenging circumstances often diminish students' motivation in speaking classes.

Regarding this, Dhawan (2020) asserts that students may allocate their time to complete online courses designed to enhance speaking skills. Google Classroom, Google Meet, and Edmodo are programs that facilitate online learning. The potential for students to study is boundless; they can acquire knowledge irrespective of time or place. This technology enhances the online learning experience for students.

In the context of the previous discussion, the researcher aims to conduct this study due to the significance of speaking as a fundamental skill. The ability to articulate correctly and fluently in a non-native language is particularly compelling, as it underscores the diverse challenges and obstacles faced. Given the variety of strategies available for enhancing speaking proficiency, it is clear that students must identify the most suitable approach for themselves. The researcher seeks to understand the individual strategies employed by second-semester students, the rationale behind their choice of a

specific strategy, and how they implement this strategy to improve their English speaking skills through online learning.

Several previous studies on this topic have yielded significant results. Aini (2021) asserts that students in the English department do not have challenges in acquiring speaking skills using online strategies; instead, the majority find that online learning increases their confidence. Albogami (2021) demonstrated that online learning enhances students' speaking skills, improves their concentration, boosts self-confidence, and fosters independence. Baron (2020) identifies YouTube as an engaging online resource for English language development, while WhatsApp is seen as a user-friendly social media platform for English learning. The last one is conducted by Dalila, Rahmansyah, and Wulandari (2024), who found that students employ various cognitive, affective, and social strategies to overcome difficulties in public speaking.

Thus, the previous research on the use of online learning strategies for developing speaking skills has mainly highlighted the advantages and beneficial results of these strategies. However, several studies have not mentioned the difficulties that students may encounter when they use online strategies to develop their speaking skills. Thus, the current study aims to explore further the actual experiences and difficulties faced by students in online learning contexts.

The current study was conducted at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung. The researcher takes second-semester students for their intermediate proficiency in essential public speaking skills. This research also aims to investigate the difficulties that students experience and how they formulate their solutions. On the other hand, previous study results indicated that the student encountered no difficulties. This study qualitatively examines the individual online learning strategies used by EFL students to develop their speaking skills.

B. Research Questions

There are two research questions:

1. What difficulties do the 2nd-semester students encounter when they learn public speaking?
2. What individual online strategies did the 2nd-semester students use to overcome their difficulties?

C. Research Purposes

From the research questions above, this study aims to obtain the following purposes:

1. To find out what difficulties the 2nd-semester students encounter when they learn public speaking.
2. To find out what individual online strategies the 2nd-semester students use to overcome their difficulties.

D. Research Significances

This research is expected to serve as a source of information for students about their perceptions or experiences in facing similar or different difficulties while learning to improve their speaking skills using only the provided material. The potential to improve the researcher's understanding of individual strategies for developing speaking skills is anticipated to serve as a resource for both educators and learners. It is anticipated that this will help teachers and students locate resources to enhance their speaking skills through online learning.

Theoretically, this research can be beneficial to students, particularly in making the learning process more enjoyable. Practically, this research gives meaning to:

1. Theoretically, the findings of this research may serve as a reference for students and future researchers who are interested in exploring speaking skill development and online learning strategies within the EFL context.

2. Practically, the results of this research are expected to help teachers design more effective online speaking activities, while also guiding students in selecting and applying appropriate strategies and tools to improve their speaking proficiency independently.

E. Research Scope

This research investigates the use of individual online learning strategies by second-semester students in the English Education Program at the State Islamic University of Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, to enhance their speaking skills. This research aims to explore the challenges they encounter during online speaking practice and examines the strategies they apply to overcome these difficulties, utilizing their own solutions and learning initiatives.

F. Conceptual Framework

Speaking refers to an interpersonal exchange of ideas requiring both the sending and receiving of information to create meaning (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). The form and significance are dependent upon the context, including the participants, what they have in common, the physical surroundings, and the motivations for communication. It is often spontaneous, dynamic, and indeterminate. Fortunately, not all speaking is unpredictable. Language functions or patterns that commonly appear in specific discourse contexts, such as declining an invitation or requesting time off, can be identified and mapped (Burns & Joyce, 1997).

The typical dialogue pattern after a teacher's inquiry, "May I assist you?" involves the student expressing their need, the instructor offering a solution, the student expressing gratitude, and the teacher acknowledging this gratitude before concluding the interaction. Students must possess knowledge in various aspects, such as syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary, for speaking effectively. Furthermore, they require contextual knowledge regarding the appropriate timing, rationale, and methodology for language

usage (sociolinguistic competence). Finally, spoken language requires different competencies, frameworks, and conventions (Burns & Joyce, 1997; Carter & McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996). To be effective in any speech act, competent speakers need to apply a wide range of skills and understanding.

According to Brown and Yule (1983), speaking is the skill by which students will be predominantly assessed in real-life situations. The ability to communicate verbally has grown essential, as it is the primary means by which humans share information and ideas. There were four additional speaking skills: First, students require an understanding of grammar to construct accurate phrases in speaking. Secondly, vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively in English, either verbally or in writing, without a comprehensive grasp of vocabulary. Third, students must acquire proper word pronunciation to articulate language correctly when speaking. Lastly, the skill to convey content and context when reading, comprehending, and reacting in a language concisely and clearly.

Meanwhile, the idea of employing strategies to improve English speaking skills is a learning strategy that enables students to enhance understanding, accelerate learning, increase enjoyment, promote self-direction, improve effectiveness, and ensure transferability to other situations (Oxford, 1990). A learning strategy is any technique used by a student to enhance comprehension and acquire new information more efficiently and effectively. Students will successfully acquire knowledge of any subject only when they use various learning strategies. Students possess various options to address the difficulties related to improving their speaking skills (Stevanie, 2021). There are six kinds of learning strategies for a language. First, memory strategies that help learners store and retrieve new knowledge. Secondly, cognitive strategies facilitate learners' comprehension and production of new language through various strategies. Third is compensation strategies that help learners bridge knowledge gaps and maintain effective and acceptable communication. Four practical strategies that build self-confidence. Five meta-cognitive strategies help students manage their cognitive capacities

while focusing, planning, and evaluating their progress toward communicative competence. Lastly, there are social strategies that enhance engagement and create empathetic understanding. All suitable learning strategies facilitate the development of communicative proficiency (Oxford, 1990, pp. 14-16).

However, Stevanie (2021) identifies several techniques that students can use to improve their skills. At first, pause and repeat words to express meaning. Secondly, speakers use mimes, gestures, and facial expressions during their conversation. Thirdly, excessive generalization and creative morphological constructions. Four Paraphrase, rewriting concepts and information. Five origins of the world, this strategy requires the student to invent new terms to define concepts they are unable to understand. Sixth: Collaborate with a group of friends. In seven restructuring, when a student recognizes that their statement was not comprehended, they typically begin again and attempt to reiterate it. When changing one's code, a learner may incorporate a word or phrase from their native language into their code-switching when speaking with a language partner. Lastly, students can swap an unfamiliar term with a more familiar one during the closest approach.

While general speaking skills are essential in daily communication, public speaking requires an additional set of techniques and confidence. Amelia, Afrianto, Samanik, Suprayogi, Pranoto, and Gulo (2022) state that public speaking is more organized, requires more formal language, and demands an individual style of delivery. Certain situations require different forms of speeches. Specific sources categorize these speeches based on factors such as the requisite preparation time or the intended aim of the speech.

The last one is learning to speak English using online learning. Online learning encompasses various types based on technology. The use of technology inside the distribution system and as an instrument to enhance the expression of concepts (Hedberg & Ping, 2004). Recently, worldwide developments have improved prospects for educators to implement online

learning methodologies, facilitating students' development into independent language learners. Numerous research studies indicate that information and communication technology (ICT) influences education by enhancing the enjoyment, interactivity, relevance, and inspiration of teaching and learning (Tinio, 2002; Chapelle, 2003; Kenning, 2007). Furthermore, Rodrigues and Vethamani (2015) found that online learning improved the speaking skills of students. This online learning method has been demonstrated to enhance language proficiency and self-confidence, ultimately leading to improved speaking skills among students.

This research aims to explore the specific strategies employed by the second student in online learning to enhance their speaking skills. Therefore, the instruments used are questionnaires and interviews. The use of questionnaires is to get a general view of the phenomenon being studied. Meanwhile, interviews are used to obtain more in-depth answers and to validate the answers provided by participants in the questionnaire.

G. Previous Study

The first previous study was conducted by Aini (2021). In her research, she employed a quantitative approach to assess student perceptions of online learning in the speaking class at the Fourth Semester English Education Study Program of the State Islamic University of Sultan Thaha Saifuddin, Jambi. The findings of her research indicate that students in the English department do not encounter difficulties in learning to speak through online methods. They gain comfort from it, and several individuals have perceived that online speaking has boosted their self-confidence during conversations.

The second previous study was conducted by Albogami (2021), whose research aimed to investigate EFL students' perceptions of the efficacy of online learning in developing their English language skills. The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data revealed that online learning was accompanied by specific flaws, as described

by the participants. Moreover, the data demonstrate that online learning helps students improve their speaking skills, boosts their concentration, fosters self-confidence, and encourages them to become more independent. The data also revealed that online learning aids EFL students in building online learning skills.

The third previous study by Baron (2020). The purpose of the study is to identify suitable application forms for learning English that meet the needs of the students. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. The methods of data collection are interviews, observations, and questionnaires. The data analysis consisted of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the collaboration between Zoom and Google Hangouts is a popular video application. Moreover, YouTube is an exciting web tool for English language study, while WhatsApp is an easy-to-use social media network for learning English. It is capable of forming a group. The study's implication is to encourage teachers' innovative use of online applications.

The last one is the study conducted by Dalila, Rahmansyah, and Wulandari (2024), in which they investigate the EFL students' strategies for improving their public speaking skills. This qualitative study examines students' experiences and perceptions about the improvement of their public speaking skills. The data were gathered through comprehensive interviews with four students selected via purposive sampling. Data analysis employing grounded theory revealed that EFL students use a range of cognitive, affective, and social methods to overcome problems in public speaking. The objective of this small research is to provide knowledge to fellow EFL students regarding strategies that can be applied to improve public speaking skills.

Although previous studies have reported that students generally enjoy using online learning strategies and perceive them as practical and user-friendly, there remains a lack of research focusing on the actual difficulties students encounter when using these methods. These previous studies often downplay or disregard the potential obstacles students face, particularly in

diverse learning environments. Therefore, this research aims to explore the difficulties encountered by second-semester students in learning public speaking in an online environment. Furthermore, it aims to investigate the strategies used to overcome these difficulties, offering insights into how students adjust and regulate their performance in online public speaking environments.

