CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the research background, research questions, objectives, significance, conceptual framework, and previous studies. It presents the theoretical foundation supporting the study, explains its importance, and outlines the conceptual framework. The chapter concludes with a summary of previous research.

A. Background to the Study

Speaking is the most important skill in second language learning. If we focus on speaking, we notice that there are several things we usually do not pay attention to. Speaking is a complex skill and should be taught everywhere and it is a skill that learners learn better in groups (Celce Murica, 2001 as cited in Fatehi Rad et al. (2016:1). Every language has four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is the second naturally acquired skill and it has an important role in communication. Speaking is part of our daily life which should be developed in subtle and detailed language. One of the most important things about language is the participation in a social context (Schemitt, 2012 as cited in Fatehi Rad et al. (2016:1).

According to Sabilla & Kaniadewi (2025), Indonesian students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) face several challenges in developing spoken English skills, with limited vocabulary being a primary obstacle. This restricts their ability to form coherent sentences and hinders real time comprehension. Fluency issues, such as pauses and fragmented speech, further disrupt communication and diminish confidence. Additionally, grammar and pronunciation difficulties lead to awkward sentence structures and unclear speech, often resulting from direct translations and unfamiliarity with English phonetics. These combined barriers create insecurity and a fear of making mistakes, reducing students' willingness to practice and improve their communication skills. The writer identified during the preliminary stage that it was found that many students continued to face significant challenges in developing their speaking skills. A large number of students

expressed a lack of confidence when speaking English due to their limited vocabulary and fear of making grammatical mistakes. They often hesitated or paused frequently during conversations, which disrupted their fluency and made communication difficult. In addition, students rarely had the opportunity to practice speaking in class, as the teaching approach was mostly teacher-centered and focused more on reading and writing activities. Speaking tasks, when given, were often repetitive and lacked real life relevance, which made students feel unmotivated and disengaged. As a result, students became passive learners with minimal oral participation, which further hindered their speaking development. These observations highlight the need for more interactive, communicative, and student-centered speaking activities that encourage active participation and build learners' confidence in using English for real communication.

Conversation activities in the classroom gives more opportunity to the student to speak. It is also called as a free communicative interaction. It means that the students are free to use their own words to talk about their own way. According to Thornbury (1984 as cited in Said et al. (2015:3), "Conversation models can help students increase their fluency, accuracy, and confidence by encouraging them to progress from giving brief responses to engaging in more expanded interactive discussion."

The classroom activities identified by the experts show that the goal of speaking instruction is to improve students' conversational skills in the target language. This is in line with Nunan's idea (1991 as cited in Normawati et al. (2023:3) which addresses that the most crucial part of learning a second or foreign language is developing speaking skills, and its success is determined by one's ability to have a conversation in that language. There are several previous studies relevant to current research. The first is a research conducted Zahir & Dewi (2022), focusing on affective, linguistic, cognitive, and social factors. and the research, investigates speaking difficulties in conversation classroom activities for EFL students, likely focusing on psychological and linguistic challenges in a formal classroom setting. And the second by Riadil (2020), which examines speaking difficulties in conversation classroom activities at a senior high school, likely addresses similar

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challenges in a formal classroom setting. The research by Afebri & Muhsin (2019) found that limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and lack of confidence were significant contributors to speaking difficulties. Therefore, research by Agustia (2022), This research identified various student driven strategies to address challenges in speaking. However, this study focuses on coping strategies rather than analyzing the underlying causes of speaking difficulties in classroom conversation activities. In the study by Zrekat et al. (2022), this research identified a lack of English speaking environments, low confidence, and insufficient exposure to the target language as key barriers. However, this study focuses on university students and their general fluency challenges, leaving a gap in understanding the specific speaking difficulties encountered by senior high school students in conversation classroom activities.

The aim in this study is to analyze the difficulties EFL students faced while engaging in classroom conversations. This study seeks to improve the teaching of speaking by analyzing the factors that inhibit students' speaking performance and analyzing the strategies used by students and teachers to overcome these barriers. Following up on this study, the study will analyze difficulties experienced by Indonesian EFL students when conducting conversational activities in class.

B. Research Questions

Based on the problem above, this research is intended to answer the following question:

1. What challenges do 11th grade students face that lead to difficulty when speaking English during conversation classroom activities?
2. How do the 11th grade students overcome their difficulties in developing their speaking English?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the research question above, purposes of this study are:

1. To figure out the difficulties faced by 11th grade students in Speaking English

2. To figure out and analyze the challenges contributing to difficulties among 11th grade students in senior high school

D. Research Significance

The significances of this research are follows:

1. Theoretical Significance

   This research is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of English, particularly in understanding the nature and causes of students' speaking difficulties.

2. Practical Significance

   Practically, the research can give some contribution to the following parties:

   a. This research is expected to give contribution for English Education Department, especially to analysis about speaking difficulties and find the problem solving ways.
   b. This research hope future researchers can be helpful with this research the information about speaking difficulties at senior high school.
   c. Finally, this research can be suggest from this study to their students that have difficulties faced in speaking English to communicate better.

E. Research Scope

   Based on the problem, this research focuses on 11th grade high school students in their learning and will analyze their difficulties in speaking English, especially during conversation activities in class. Interviews and observations was used as benchmarks to find out what challenges affect students with speaking difficulties. The goal of this study is to find out why the students have difficulties in speaking English. So, the research focuses on providing difficult understanding to the 11th grade high school students when doing conversation in class activities.

F. Conceptual Framework

Speaking and the causes of speaking difficulties was covered in this section. Despite its significance in language learning, many students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) struggle to become proficient speakers. These difficulties can be linked to several things, such as linguistic, psychological, and environmental issues, all of which have a major impact on students' capacity to speak English fluently and confidently.

According to Khatoony (2020), speaking skill is considered aa challenging skill for all language learners, especially Non native EFL learners. Non native language learners, specifically, university level students, experience many difficulties and weaknesses in way of developing or improving speaking skill. So, speaking is very important for EFL learners because it greatly affects the process of learning English, especially when conversation. when conversation takes place, EFL learners should be able to respond to the other person because it is very valuable and it can be practice the pronounciation and grammar of the student.
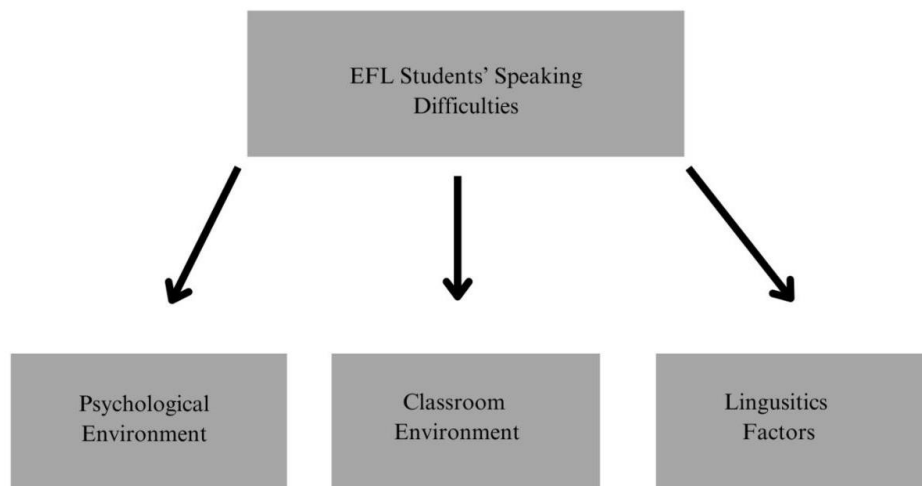
1.1 Scheme of Conceptual Framework

Speaking difficulties in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students can be attributed to linguistic, psychological, and environmental factors, each influencing students' ability to communicate effectively

1. Linguistic Factors: Thornbury (2005) explains that lack of vocabulary, weakness in pronunciation, and grammar limitations are the main obstacles students face when speaking in English. When students lack vocabulary, they will find it difficult to convey ideas clearly. On the other hand, improper pronunciation is often misunderstood by the other person.

2. Psychological Factors: One of the most common psychological barriers is language anxiety. Based on Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) findings, this anxiety will make students reluctant to speak for fear of making mistakes or receiving negative judgment. As a result, they tend to remain silent or avoid opportunities to speak, so their participation in speaking activities is very limited.

3. Environmental Factors: Harmer (2007) states that a rich classroom environment will not only introduce students to language but also allow them to activate their language knowledge. In addition, it should also allow them to learn the language and how it works because, for some students, this will be the key to their success, and for all other students, it will be a useful addition to other activities we do in class.

G. Previous Study

Research on investigating EFL learners speaking difficulties has been previously carried out by several research:

The study by Zrekat et al. (2022) entitled "Arab EFL University learners' perceptions of the factors hindering them to speak English fluently". Zrekat and Al-Sohbani conducted a quantitative study to understand Arab EFL university learners' perceptions of factors hindering their English fluency. The research identified a lack of English speaking environments, low confidence, and insufficient exposure to the target language as key barriers. However, this study focuses on university students and their general fluency challenges, leaving a gap in understanding the specific speaking difficulties encountered by senior high school students in conversation classroom activities. this study addresses gap by focusing on the high school context and conversational challenges.

Afebri & Muhsin (2019) entitled "Factors affecting students' difficulties in speaking performance of the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Tiworo Kepulauan". Afebri and Muhsin used a mixed method approach to analyze factors affecting the speaking performance of tenth grade students in an Indonesian senior high school. The study found that limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and lack of confidence significantly contributed to speaking difficulties. However, this research takes a broader perspective on speaking performance and does not focus specifically on classroom conversation activities. The gap lies in the lack of attention to the conversational aspects of speaking difficulties.

Zahir & Dewi (2022) entitled " An Analysis of Some Causal Factor Difficulties in Speaking English Ability at the Member Destorel English Club of Senior High School 8 Kota Jambi " analyzes speaking difficulties among members of the Destorel English Club, focusing on affective, linguistic, cognitive, and social factors. And the research, on the other hand, investigates speaking difficulties in conversation classroom activities for EFL students, likely focusing on psychological and linguistic challenges in a formal classroom setting. The gap lies in the context: Hendri's study is based in an informal club setting, while the study focuses on formal classroom activities, offering a chance to compare how speaking difficulties manifest in these two environments.

The study by Riadil (2020) entitled "A Study of Students' Perception: Identifying EFL Learners' Problems in Speaking Skill" explores EFL learners' perceptions of speaking difficulties, identifying factors such as inhibition, lack of motivation, and the use of the mother tongue during speaking practice. And the research, which examines speaking difficulties in conversation classroom activities at a senior high school, likely addresses similar challenges in a formal classroom setting. The gap between these studies lies in their contexts: Riadil's study looks at perceptions of speaking difficulties in a broader EFL learning environment, while your study focuses specifically on speaking difficulties within classroom activities, providing a more targeted analysis of how these challenges manifest in structured learning activities.

Agustia (2022) entitled "Students' Strategies to Solve Speaking Difficulties: A Case Study at the Eleventh Grade of a Public Senior High School 2 Kandis". Agustia used a qualitative case study method to investigate the strategies employed by eleventh- grade students at a public senior high school in Indonesia to overcome speaking difficulties. The research identified various student driven strategies to address challenges in speaking. However, this study focuses on coping strategies rather than analyzing the underlying causes of speaking difficulties in classroom conversation activities. The gap lies in the lack of emphasis on identifying specific speaking challenges in conversational settings.