

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Background

Speaking is a crucial component in classroom learning as it significantly enhances students' communicative competence and overall language proficiency. According to Brown (2001), speaking is fundamental to human communication and serves as a primary medium for interaction and expression in both social and academic contexts. In the classroom, effective speaking skills enable students to articulate their thoughts clearly, participate in discussions, and engage actively in collaborative activities. Richards (2008) emphasizes that speaking is not only about producing language but also about comprehending and responding appropriately in real-time, which promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, Ur (1996) points out that speaking activities foster a dynamic and interactive learning environment, encouraging students to use the target language more spontaneously and confidently. By practicing speaking, students can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making the learning process more meaningful and relevant. Thus, integrating speaking exercises into the curriculum is essential for developing students' fluency, pronunciation, and conversational skills, ultimately preparing them for real-world communication and academic success.

Moreover, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, speaking skills become even more critical. Thornbury (2005) argues that for EFL students, speaking is often the most challenging yet essential skill to master due to the limited exposure to authentic language environments. This makes classroom practice indispensable for developing oral proficiency. As EFL learners frequently rely on structured opportunities provided in class to practice speaking, teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating these interactions. Nunan (1999) highlights that through consistent and deliberate speaking activities, EFL learners can improve their

linguistic competence and gain confidence in their ability to communicate in English. Additionally, the importance of speaking in classroom presentations cannot be overstated. Classroom presentations provide EFL students with a platform to organize their thoughts, practice public speaking, and develop their ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently. According to King (2002), presentations enhance students' speaking abilities by requiring them to use formal language structures and engage with the audience effectively. These are priceless experiences that help students get ready for the professional and academic environments of the future, where effective presentation is essential. Consequently, focusing on speaking skills within the EFL classroom is not only about language practice but also about empowering students to become effective communicators in diverse situations, thereby increasing their overall language acquisition and fluency.

One of the speaking skills that must be mastered is speaking during presentations. Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) emphasize that speaking during presentations helps students to develop their organizational skills and critical thinking, as they must structure their content logically and anticipate audience questions. Furthermore, mastering speaking skills is essential for delivering effective classroom presentations. Presentations require students to convey information clearly and persuasively, which is critical for academic success and professional competence. As Lucas (2001) points out, effective speaking skills enable presenters to engage their audience, maintain their interest, and communicate their message with clarity and confidence. This is especially crucial in the classroom, as students' grades and academic performance are greatly impacted by their capacity to communicate ideas logically.

In addition, classroom presentations provide a unique opportunity for students to practice public speaking in a supportive environment, receiving feedback from peers and instructors, which is invaluable for improving their delivery. Harmer (2007) suggests that repeated practice in speaking before an audience builds fluency and helps students to internalize language patterns and vocabulary. Therefore, mastering speaking skills for classroom presentations is not only crucial for academic achievement but also for developing the confidence and competence needed for future professional endeavors. Consequently, emphasizing speaking skills in EFL classrooms prepares students for real-world communication

challenges, enhancing their overall language proficiency and effectiveness as communicators.

In English Education the phenomenon of speaking difficulties among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners during classroom presentations has garnered significant attention. According to the Interactionist Theory proposed by Long (1996), language acquisition is facilitated through social interaction, emphasizing the importance of communicative activities like speaking in language learning. However, EFL learners often encounter obstacles in this process, as discussed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), who highlighted its debilitating effects on language performance. Moreover, the Affective Filter Hypothesis, introduced by Krashen (1985), posits that high levels of speaking difficulties can create a psychological barrier that impedes language acquisition. Additionally, learners' limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, as emphasized by Ellis (2008), contribute to their struggles in articulating ideas effectively during presentations. Cultural factors, elucidated by Hofstede (1980), also play a significant role, as EFL learners may face challenges in adapting to English-speaking norms. Understanding these multifaceted influences is imperative for educators to devise targeted interventions to support EFL learners in overcoming their speaking difficulties and fostering their linguistic competence and confidence.

The purpose of this study is to identify speaking difficulties experienced by EFL learners, factors causing speaking difficulties of EFL students and how do they cope. This research applied qualitative descriptive research method. This study will involve the fifth-semester students of English Education Department. Some Researches on exploring difficulties in speaking like this has been done by other researchers, such as Razawi (2019), Barret (2019), Riadil (2020), Hammad (2020), Grieve (2020). This research is different from previous studies as it specifically explores the factors influencing the challenges EED students encounter in speaking, particularly during oral presentations. The study aims to reveal the reasons behind the difficulties these students face when expressing themselves verbally in an English language learning context.

B. Research Questions

Based on the previous context, this study identifies the research problems into two research questions:

- 1) What kinds of speaking difficulties do the students encounter?
- 2) How do they cope with the difficulties?

C. Purposes Of Research

This study is aimed at acquiring the following purposes from the research questions above:

- 1) To figure out kinds of difficulties encountered by the students.
- 2) To figure out the strategies to cope with the difficulties.

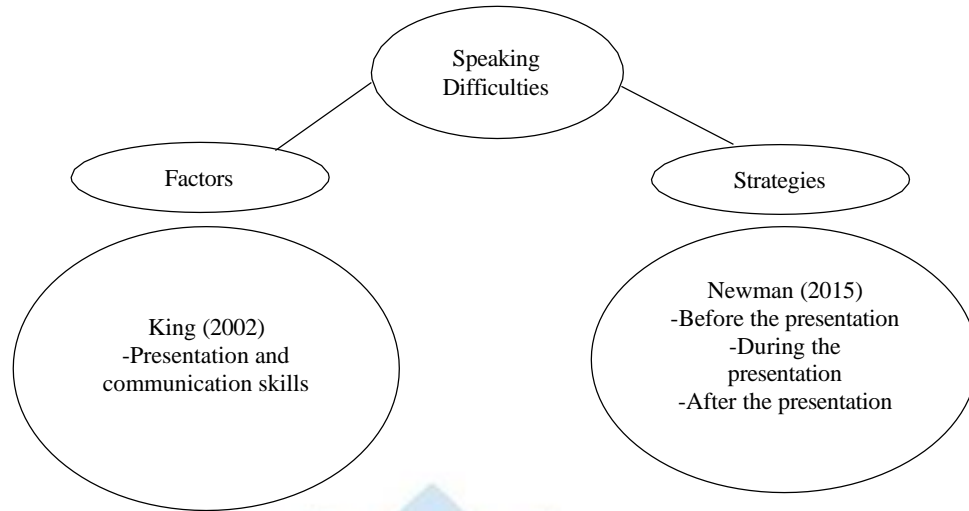
D. Research Significances

This research aims to enhance the English language teaching process, specifically in students' presentation skills. This approach provides an option for students to improve their speaking abilities. By identifying the obstacles that hinder students from speaking English fluently, this research conduct a needs analysis and create lesson plans catering to their specific needs, encouraging and empowering them to become proficient English speakers.

E. Research Scopes

This study takes in only oral classroom presentation discussions among EFL learners from the English Education Departments at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung are covered in this study. The focus is to investigate why EFL learners struggle with speaking English to fifth-semester students. Therefore, this study tries to prove that the problem exists in the studied area. Theoretically, this research is expected to address the challenges EFL learners face in developing English speaking skills specifically during oral classroom presentations. The focus is on learners from the English Education Department.

F. Conceptual Framework



King (2002) found that very often, students were anxious about the presentation and communication skills required for a good presentation. When it comes to speaking, students face challenging scenarios, such as prohibition, having nothing to say, poor participation, and the continuous usage of their native language. Some students may fear public speaking, where stage fright becomes their nightmare. Other students may have negative beliefs about making oral presentations. As a result, they may not get positive results from oral presentations. Students often feel stressed and worried when making oral presentations individually and in groups.

“A classroom presentation is a structured, planned talk on a specific topic or subject that is delivered to a group of people in a classroom setting.” (Byrne & Feez, 2003). A student or group will deliver knowledge about a particular topic or subject to their peers and teacher during a classroom presentation. A presentation in a classroom aims to enlighten, convince, or educate the audience on a specific subject. Overall, presentations in class are a significant component of academic learning and aid in the development of students’ abilities in oral communication.

This study focuses on speaking difficulties among EFL students. Gardner and Macintyre (1993) define speaking anxiety as fear or apprehension when a learner is expected to perform in a second or foreign language. Moreover, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) discover a unique factor influencing students' oral production. Anxious foreign language learners consider speaking in the target language a frightful skill. In this study, the EFL students from English Education Department are expected to be fluent in English as future teachers. Thus, they are considered to experience speaking difficulties during the speech with the target language.

This research is pondered to explore students' strategies for reducing speaking difficulties. Newman (2015) mentions that learners' strategies to overcome anxiety in speaking a foreign language comprise three steps. The first is before the presentation. In this stage, students prepare the material by writing notes and understanding the material. Students also practice the material to prevent anxiety from occurring. The second is during the presentation. In this phase, students might take a deep breath to cope with the anxiety that emerges. The third is after the presentation. To soothe themselves, students may write down what they can improve for another performance. Thus, this study tends to analyze the students' strategy with the theory proposed by Newman (2015). Exploring the strategies students use before, during, and after encountering anxiety in speaking may improve understanding EFL students' strategies for reducing speaking difficulties. The following picture represents the connection of each concept.

G. Previous Studies

Some researchers have already conducted research related to this problem. First, the research conducted by Razawi et al (2019), examined the possible causes of anxiety oral presentations among Dungun UiTM students. The result showed that several factors such as communication, language skills, preparation and audience interest could affect students' oral presentations.

The research conducted by Barrett et al. (2019) investigated how students design an English academic oral presentation through a mixed language learning environment at the University of Science & Technology, Tainan City, Taiwan. The results showed that the group's oral presentation improved, with stronger recognition, linking devices, and visual elements.

The research conducted by Riadil (2020) revealed the effect of oral presentations on the development of student's ability to speak English and to find out students' difficulties in making oral presentations at the English Department of Tidar University. The research showed that oral presentation affected students' ability to speak and students' difficulty in speaking that came from personal factors, presentation skills, and audience.

The research conducted by Hammad (2020) discussed the effectiveness of oral presentations in improving speaking performance and reducing students' speaking anxiety levels at Al-Aqsa University. The results of the study revealed that oral presentations had an impact on student performance in speaking and helped reduce speech anxiety.

The research conducted by Grieve et al. (2021) revealed further insights into the fear of speaking experienced by students in an oral presentation at one of the United Kingdom High Education. The results of this research identify that fear has a negative effect on their higher education experience.

This research different from previous studies as it specifically explores the factors influencing the challenges EED students encounter in speaking, particularly during oral presentations in English courses. The study aims to reveal the reasons behind the difficulties these students face when expressing themselves verbally in an English language learning context. In addition, this research focuses on the 5th-semester students of English Education at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.