CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the fundamental background of the research, focusing on the importance of English speaking skills for university students in the modern global era. It explains the real challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia and how institutional initiatives, specifically the English Time Program, are implemented to provide practical solutions. Furthermore, this section clearly outlines the main research questions, the specific purposes of the study, and its theoretical and practical significance for educational development. By reading this chapter, readers will grasp a logical understanding of why exploring students' perceptions of this program is highly necessary.

A. Background

English has become an indispensable language in the twenty first century, serving as the primary medium of international communication in education, science, technology, business, and global collaboration (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2006). The rapid development of globalization has increased interactions among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making English proficiency an essential competence for university graduates (Harmer, 2007; Mogea, 2021). Consequently, higher education institutions are expected not only to develop students' linguistic knowledge but also to prepare them to communicate effectively in diverse academic and professional contexts (Richards, 2006; Brown, 2007). For students enrolled in English Education programs, this expectation is even more significant because they are prepared to become future English teachers who are required to demonstrate communicative competence in both academic and professional settings (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2008; Mogea, 2021).

In response to these global demands, many universities have implemented institutional English speaking programs that encourage students to use English beyond formal classroom instruction (Richards, 2006; Ramadani & Dharmawan, 2025). One of these initiatives is the English Time Program, which is designed to provide regular opportunities for students to communicate in English during designated academic activities (Hidayat et al., 2024). Unlike conventional language

courses that mainly emphasize classroom learning, the English Time Program aims to establish English as a medium of daily communication within the academic community (Ramadani & Dharmawan, 2025). Through continuous exposure and authentic interaction, the program is expected to foster students' confidence, fluency, and communicative competence (Richards, 2006; Hidayat et al., 2024).

From the perspective of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), meaningful communication constitutes both the primary objective and the principal means of language learning (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980). Hymes (1972) introduced the concept of communicative competence, arguing that successful language learning involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately according to social contexts. Likewise, Canale and Swain (1980) explain that communicative competence encompasses grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences that enable learners to participate effectively in communication. Building upon these theoretical foundations, Richards (2006) emphasizes that language learning becomes more effective when students actively engage in authentic communicative situations rather than merely memorizing linguistic forms. Recent studies also show that CLT based learning environments positively influence students' speaking performance and willingness to communicate (Hakami, 2025; Hui & Yunus, 2023).

Within the Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, opportunities to communicate in English remain relatively limited because English is rarely used outside educational settings (Harmer, 2007; Brown, 2007). As a result, many students possess adequate grammatical knowledge yet still experience difficulties in expressing their ideas orally (Richards, 2008; Andas et al., 2020). Speaking requires learners to organize ideas, retrieve vocabulary, apply grammatical knowledge, and respond spontaneously during interaction (Brown, 2004; Harmer, 2007). Therefore, speaking is widely recognized as one of the most challenging productive skills for EFL learners (Aubrey et al., 2022; Richards, 2008).

Recognizing these challenges, many educational institutions have introduced English speaking initiatives such as English Day, English Zone, English Area, and

English Time Program to increase students' exposure to authentic English communication (Silvia et al., 2023; Aryaputri & Kaniadewi, 2024). These programs are intended to create supportive language environments where students regularly use English in academic and social interactions (Muzakki & Basya, 2022). Previous studies consistently report that participation in English speaking programs contributes to improvements in speaking fluency, confidence, and communicative competence because students receive sustained opportunities to practice English in meaningful contexts (Yanti et al., 2024; Silvia et al., 2023).

Although English speaking programs have gained increasing attention in recent studies, the English Time Program is still relatively underexplored compared to other institutional initiatives such as English Day or English Camp (Hidayat et al., 2024). Moreover, most previous studies tend to focus on speaking achievement, while limited attention has been given to students' perceptions and the implementation process of the English Time Program in higher education contexts (Datugan, 2025; Hakami, 2025). Therefore, investigating the implementation of the English Time Program and students' perceptions is important to provide deeper insight into its contribution to speaking skill development in English teacher education contexts (Hidayat et al., 2024; Hui & Yunus, 2023).

The implementation of the English Time Program is closely related to the concept of an English speaking environment, which refers to a learning atmosphere that encourages learners to use English consistently in authentic communication. According to Long (1996), language acquisition is facilitated when learners actively interact with others through meaningful communication. Likewise, Krashen (1985) argues that language learning becomes more effective when learners receive sufficient comprehensible input in a supportive environment. In educational settings, an English speaking environment provides opportunities for students to practice English naturally, develop communicative competence, and reduce their dependence on their first language (Vygotsky, 1978; Richards, 2006). Recent studies also indicate that creating a supportive English speaking environment contributes positively to students' confidence, language exposure, and speaking performance (Ningsih & Hamdani, 2022; Ramadani & Dharmawan, 2025).

A supportive language environment is particularly important in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts because students generally have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. Unlike learners in English speaking countries, Indonesian students rarely interact in English during their daily activities, causing them to rely heavily on classroom instruction as their primary source of language exposure (Harmer, 2007; Richards, 2008). Consequently, many students experience difficulties in developing oral communication skills despite having learned English for several years (Andas et al., 2020). Aubrey et al. (2022) further explain that regular engagement in communicative activities significantly improves learners' willingness to communicate and speaking performance, indicating that frequent language practice is essential for developing speaking proficiency.

Among the four language skills, speaking is widely regarded as one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners because it requires learners to integrate linguistic knowledge with real time communication. Brown (2004) explains that speaking involves not only producing grammatically correct sentences but also conveying meaning fluently, accurately, and appropriately according to the communicative context. Similarly, Harmer (2007) emphasizes that successful speaking requires vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, fluency, grammatical accuracy, and interactional competence. Therefore, improving speaking ability requires continuous practice in authentic communicative situations rather than relying solely on theoretical classroom instruction (Richards, 2008; Canale & Swain, 1980). Recent empirical studies also demonstrate that students who participate in communicative English programs tend to achieve better speaking performance than those who learn exclusively through conventional classroom instruction (Aryaputri & Kaniadewi, 2024; Silvia et al., 2023).

Despite the importance of speaking skills, many university students still experience various challenges when communicating in English. Previous studies report that students often encounter difficulties related to limited vocabulary, grammatical insecurity, pronunciation problems, lack of confidence, speaking anxiety, and fear of making mistakes (Andas et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2023). These

factors frequently discourage students from actively participating in oral communication activities, even when they possess adequate knowledge of English grammar. Maros et al. (2023) further found that speaking anxiety negatively affects students' confidence and willingness to communicate, highlighting the importance of creating a supportive learning environment that encourages students to practice English without fear of being judged.

Considering these challenges, higher education institutions need to provide learning programs that extend beyond conventional classroom instruction and facilitate authentic language use in everyday academic life. One such initiative is the English Time Program, which aims to create consistent opportunities for students to communicate in English during academic activities. By encouraging students to use English regularly, the program is expected to foster communicative competence, increase confidence, and improve speaking performance through meaningful interaction (Hidayat et al., 2024). This approach is also consistent with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching, which emphasize that language learning is most effective when learners actively participate in authentic communication rather than merely studying linguistic forms (Richards, 2006; Hakami, 2025).

At the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, the English Time Program has become one of the institutional efforts to strengthen students' English communication skills. As prospective English teachers, students are expected not only to master linguistic knowledge but also to demonstrate effective spoken communication in academic and professional contexts. Nevertheless, the extent to which the English Time Program has been implemented and how students perceive its contribution to the development of their speaking skills have not been comprehensively explored. This situation indicates the need for further investigation to understand how the program supports students' speaking development and to identify its educational value within the context of English teacher education.

Although various studies have examined English speaking programs such as English Day, English Zone, and other communicative based learning environments,

most of these studies primarily focus on measuring students' speaking achievement rather than exploring the implementation process and students' perceptions in depth (Yanti et al., 2024; Silvia et al., 2023). In addition, several studies tend to concentrate on general EFL contexts without specifically addressing institutional programs designed within English Education departments in higher education settings (Datugan, 2025; Hakami, 2025). As a result, there is still limited empirical evidence explaining how structured programs such as the English Time Program operate in supporting students' daily English communication practices.

Furthermore, although previous research has highlighted the positive impact of communicative language environments on students' speaking skills, there is still a lack of focus on how students perceive the effectiveness of such programs in their real academic life (Aubrey et al., 2022; Maros et al., 2023). Students' perceptions are important because they reflect how learners experience, interpret, and respond to the implementation of language programs. Without understanding students' perspectives, it is difficult to evaluate whether the program truly meets its intended goals in enhancing communicative competence and speaking confidence.

In the context of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, the English Time Program is implemented as part of the institutional effort to strengthen students' English speaking abilities. However, its implementation and effectiveness have not been comprehensively documented, particularly from the perspective of English Education students as the main participants of the program (Hidayat et al., 2024). This gap indicates the need for a more focused investigation that not only examines how the program is implemented but also explores how students perceive its contribution to their speaking skill development.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by exploring the implementation of the English Time Program and students' perceptions toward its role in enhancing speaking skills in the context of English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. By doing so, this research is expected to contribute to the development of English speaking programs in higher education and provide insights for improving communicative language practices in EFL learning environments (Richards, 2006; Hakami, 2025).

B. Research Questions

Based on the background of the research presented above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. How do students perceive the English Time Program in supporting their speaking skills development at the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung?

C. Research Purposes

Based on the research questions above, the purposes is to:

1. To explore students' perceptions of the English Time Program in supporting their speaking skills development at the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung.

D. Resarch Significance

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significance in the field of English language teaching, particularly regarding the implementation of institutional English speaking programs and the development of students' speaking skills.

E. Theoritical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the existing body of knowledge in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the areas of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), English speaking environments, and speaking skill development. By exploring the implementation of the English Time Program and students' perceptions of its contribution to speaking skills, this study is expected to provide additional empirical evidence regarding the role of institutional English speaking programs in supporting communicative language learning. Furthermore, the findings of this research are expected to complement previous studies by providing insights into the implementation of the English Time Program within the context of higher education, particularly in English teacher education programs.

F. Practical Significance

Practically, the findings of this study are expected to provide benefits for several parties.

1. **For Students** This study is expected to help students understand the importance of participating actively in the English Time Program as an opportunity to improve their speaking skills through authentic communication. The findings may also encourage students to develop greater confidence, communicative competence, and motivation to use English both inside and outside the classroom.
2. **For Lecturers** The findings of this study are expected to provide lecturers with a better understanding of students' perceptions regarding the implementation of the English Time Program. The results may serve as valuable feedback for designing more effective communicative learning activities and creating a supportive English speaking environment that facilitates students' speaking development.
3. **For the English Education Department** This study is expected to provide useful information for the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung in evaluating and improving the implementation of the English Time Program. The findings may also contribute to the development of institutional policies and language programs that support students' communicative competence and prepare them to become professional English teachers.
4. **For Future Researchers** This study is expected to serve as a reference for future researchers who are interested in investigating English speaking programs, students' perceptions, Communicative Language Teaching, and speaking skills. It is also expected to provide recommendations for further studies in similar contexts or with different research perspectives.

G. Conceptual Framework

This study is framed within the concept of students' perceptions as the main focus of analysis in understanding the role of the English Time Program in supporting speaking skill development. Students' perceptions refer to how learners interpret, experience, and evaluate learning activities based on their personal understanding, experiences, and interaction with the learning environment (Robbins & Judge, 2019; Schunk, 2020).

In this study, the English Time Program serves as the contextual learning environment where students engage in English communication activities outside formal classroom instruction. The program is designed based on the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emphasizes meaningful interaction, authentic communication, and the development of communicative competence (Richards, 2006; Hymes, 1972).

Meanwhile, speaking skill is viewed as one of the primary language skills that can be developed through continuous exposure to communicative practice. Speaking involves fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, pronunciation, and interactional ability, all of which are essential components of effective oral communication (Brown, 2004; Harmer, 2007).

Based on these theoretical foundations, this study assumes that students' perceptions of the English Time Program are shaped by their experiences during participation in the program. These experiences may include opportunities for communication, confidence in speaking English, interaction with peers, learning environment, and perceived benefits or challenges of the program.

Therefore, the conceptual framework of this study can be described as follows:

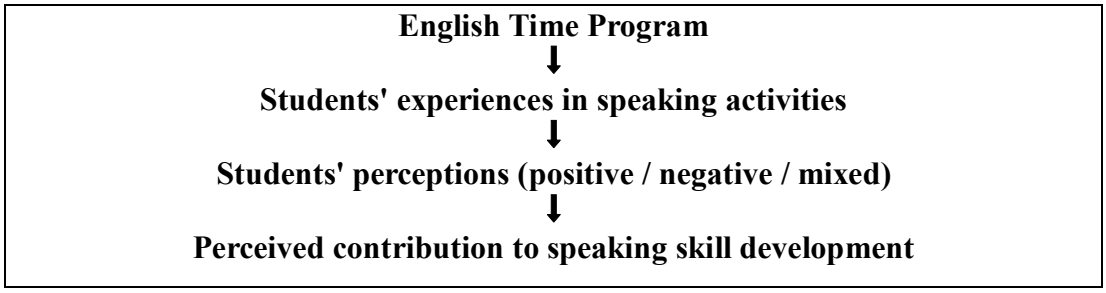


Figure 1.1 ***Conceptual Framework of Students' Perceptions on the English Time Program***

This framework indicates that the English Time Program does not directly measure speaking improvement in this study, but rather it is analyzed through how students perceive and interpret its role in supporting their speaking skill development.

H. Previous Stuides

Several previous studies have investigated English speaking programs, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and students' speaking skills in

different educational contexts. Reviewing these studies is essential to identify the similarities, differences, and research gaps that justify the necessity of the present study.

Hidayat, Abdurrahman, and Imani (2024) conducted a study entitled Students' Perception of "English Time" Program to Improve Students' Speaking Skills: A Case Study in English Education Studies of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The study employed a qualitative case study approach to investigate students' perceptions regarding the implementation of the English Time Program. The findings revealed that the program positively influenced students' confidence, speaking practice, and motivation to communicate in English. This study is closely related to the present research because both investigate the English Time Program in the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. However, the present study differs by examining not only students' perceptions but also the implementation process of the English Time Program, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how the program contributes to speaking skill development.

Aryaputri and Kaniadewi (2024) investigated the effectiveness of the English Day Program in improving students' speaking skills. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers found that regular participation in the English Day Program significantly improved students' speaking confidence, vocabulary mastery, and communicative competence. Although both studies focus on institutional English speaking programs, the previous study examined the English Day Program, whereas the present research focuses specifically on the English Time Program implemented in higher education. Moreover, this research emphasizes students' perceptions together with program implementation.

Silvia, Rosmiyati, and Zam (2023) explored the implementation of the English Day Program to improve students' speaking performance. The findings demonstrated that continuous English communication activities enhanced students' fluency, confidence, and classroom participation. The similarity lies in the discussion of English speaking programs and speaking development. However, the

present study specifically investigates English Time Program implementation from the perspective of university students, which has received less scholarly attention. Muzakki and Basya (2022) conducted a descriptive study on the implementation of English Day in an Islamic boarding school. Their findings indicated that students became more accustomed to using English in daily communication, resulting in better speaking ability and increased self confidence. Unlike the previous study, the present research is conducted in a university context and focuses on English Time Program implementation rather than English Day activities.

Hakami (2025) investigated students' perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching in developing English language skills. The study reported that communicative learning activities positively affected students' speaking confidence, classroom participation, and overall language development. This previous study provides theoretical support for the present research because the English Time Program is implemented based on communicative language learning principles. Nevertheless, the previous research did not investigate a specific institutional English speaking program.

Hui and Yunus (2023) revisited the implementation of Communicative Language Teaching in teaching speaking skills. Their findings emphasized that authentic communication significantly improves learners' speaking performance and willingness to communicate. While the previous study focused on classroom teaching strategies, the present study explores an institutional language program that extends communicative practice beyond classroom instruction.

Aubrey, King, and Almukhaild (2022) examined learner engagement during speaking tasks. The study concluded that active participation and meaningful interaction contribute significantly to speaking development. This study supports the present research because the English Time Program provides opportunities for continuous learner engagement through authentic communication. However, the previous research did not investigate students' perceptions of a structured institutional language program.

Datugan (2025) explored EFL students' beliefs and attitudes toward Communicative Language Teaching. The findings suggested that positive

perceptions of communicative learning encourage students to participate more actively in English communication activities. The previous study focused on students' attitudes toward CLT in general, whereas the present research specifically investigates students' perceptions of the English Time Program and its contribution to speaking skill development in the context of English teacher education.

Based on the previous studies discussed above, it can be concluded that most existing research has examined English Day programs, Communicative Language Teaching, speaking performance, or students' attitudes toward communicative learning. Although these studies consistently report positive impacts on students' speaking ability and communicative competence, limited attention has been given to investigating the implementation of the English Time Program within higher education, particularly in English teacher education programs. Moreover, previous studies have generally focused on learning outcomes or speaking achievement rather than exploring both the implementation process and students' perceptions simultaneously.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by exploring how the English Time Program is implemented in the English Education Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and how students perceive its contribution to improving their speaking skills. By integrating these two perspectives, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the educational value of the English Time Program and contribute to the development of communicative language learning practices in higher education.