

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The ability to communicate in English is one of the important competencies in learning foreign languages in universities, especially for students of the English Language Education Study Program. Speaking skills are considered the most challenging skills because they require students to actively convey thoughts, maintain conversations, and think and speak at the same time in the language learned. Unpreparedness in this context will inevitably trigger anxiety when speaking, namely feelings of nervousness, fear, or worry when asked to speak in front of the class, such as during a presentation, or microteaching.

Anxiety when speaking English often makes students feel afraid, worried, and tense when they have to use the language in interaction situations. This happens because they are afraid of making mistakes and are worried about being judged badly by others. Research shows that when students lack confidence or are not proficient in English, they tend to feel tense, shaky, and hesitant before and during speaking, thus affecting their participation and performance in English classes (Khafidhoh et al., 2023).

Speaking is a key language skill that learners must learn to communicate effectively. Many English language learners feel nervous when they have to speak in English. According to (Ayu Purnama Sari, et al 2024) speaking anxiety involves feeling worried, nervous, and unsure of oneself when talking in English in front of

other people. The study found that several things cause speaking anxiety, like being nervous in public and being shy, worrying about being judged badly, fearing making mistakes, having weak English skills, facing new or unknown tasks, having certain feelings about English, and the background of the students' English learning.

Many students still find it difficult to speak English for fear of making mistakes, anxiety about being perceived badly, and nervous when speaking in front of others. Factors such as fear, anxiety, and worry are considered to be the main causes of the emergence of speaking anxiety. In addition to psychological factors, other research shows that anxiety when speaking is also influenced by the way students perceive their language skills. Students who feel less confident or unprepared usually feel more anxious when asked to speak, this then affects their enthusiasm and desire to participate in the class (Nuralika et al., 2023).

Speaking anxiety in foreign language learning is still one of the main obstacles for students at various levels of education. This can be seen from the way they often look down, avoid eye contact, and even do not come to class when there is a speaking activity. According to (Khouni et al., 2022), incomprehension of instructions or corrections from lecturers can worsen the situation, because students feel more depressed when they do not understand what the lecturer says or corrects. This pressure makes them even more reluctant to try to speak in English. In addition to psychological factors, academic aspects such as the level of material difficulty, heavy task load, and an assessment system that strongly emphasizes speaking skills also exacerbate speaking anxiety, so that students increasingly feel less confident when participating in speaking activities.

Research conducted by (Ramli et al., 2024) shows that anxiety when speaking is not only due to fear of being wrong, but also due to the pressures of the social and academic environment faced by students. Low self-confidence, fear of bad judgment, and influence from peers make students more hesitant to speak in class. This problem is made worse because students feel that their speaking skills are not as good as other peers, so in such conditions, students tend to choose not to speak so as not to feel embarrassed, which ultimately makes them lose the opportunity to practice and improve their English speaking skills.

Anxiety in speaking not only affects performance during presentations, but also affects students' long-term participation in class, growth in speaking skills, and their emotional state. Students who are highly anxious often experience thinking barriers while speaking, such as difficulty remembering words and the appearance of physical symptoms such as shaking or tension. This leads to a decrease in the quality of speech and enthusiasm for practice, so participation in speaking learning is less effective. Research in the field of English as a foreign language in college shows that there is a negative relationship between speaking anxiety, confidence in speaking, and speaking performance, where the higher the anxiety, the student's confidence and speaking ability (Ostonova Charos Zubaydullayevna, 2025)

Therefore, this study not only discusses the causes and impacts of speaking anxiety, but also looks at the ways students use to overcome it. Previous research has shown that methods such as preparing material before speaking, practicing many times, getting support from peers, and managing feelings with positive thinking and relaxation techniques can help reduce speech anxiety levels, as stated

by (Lestari Basri et al., 2022). By understanding these methods, it is hoped that educators can make a more friendly learning approach and pay attention to the emotional needs of students. This has the potential to increase students' confidence and the quality of speaking ability in English learning at the English Education Study Program of the Raja Ali Haji Maritime University.

Earlier studies have looked at speaking anxiety in general EFL classrooms and found many internal and external factors that affect students' anxiety levels. Some research has also looked at speaking anxiety in microteaching settings (Casanova & Kalisa, n.d. 2026) and studied the methods students use to deal with it (Zahra & Ciptaningrum, 2025). These studies show that speaking anxiety can come from things like not feeling confident enough, not knowing enough words, worrying about making grammar errors, and being afraid of being judged negatively. It might also influence how much students take part in speaking activities.

Based on a preliminary study conducted through a questionnaire distributed to students in the English Language Education Program at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji who were taking the English Microteaching course, a total of 35 students participated as respondents. These preliminary findings indicate that speaking anxiety is still experienced by some students during Microteaching activities. Most learners concurred that they experienced anxiety about making errors in grammar or pronunciation while addressing their instructor and peers. Additionally, numerous students voiced concerns about being criticized and receiving unfavorable evaluations from others during their teaching demonstrations.

Moreover, several students noted that they felt anxious and struggled to articulate their thoughts effectively in English. These observations suggest that anxiety related to speaking remains a frequent issue for students during microteaching sessions.

Although many previous studies have discussed speaking anxiety in English language learning, most of them focus on general English learning contexts or on secondary school students. Studies that specifically examine speaking anxiety among university students in the context of the English Language Microteaching course are still limited. In fact, microteaching courses have different characteristics because students are not only language learners but also prospective teachers who must practice teaching skills using English in front of the class.

According to the Foreign Language Anxiety theory proposed by (Horwitz et al., 1986), anxiety in language learning may arise due to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. In the context of microteaching, these aspects may occur simultaneously since students are required to speak English while demonstrating their teaching skills in front of lecturers and classmates.

Based on the issues described above, this study aims to analyze speaking anxiety experienced by students in the English Language Microteaching course at the English Education Study Program of Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji. Specifically, this study aims to identify the factors that cause speaking anxiety, examine how speaking anxiety affects students' participation in speaking activities, and explore the strategies used by students to overcome speaking anxiety.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the research background, the identification of the problem is as follows:

1. College students often feel anxious when they have to speak in English, especially during presentations and microteaching activities.
2. Fear of making mistakes and worrying about negative evaluation make students hesitate to express their ideas orally.
3. It's important to investigate the causes, effects, and strategies used by students to overcome speaking anxiety in the English Language Microteaching course.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem.

To maintain the focus of the research, this study was limited to the problem of speaking anxiety experienced by students of the English Education Study Program, Raja Ali Haji Maritime University. Research highlights the causes of anxiety related to psychological and linguistic factors, such as fear of making mistakes, worries about negative judgments, and low self-confidence. The impact of anxiety reviewed included its effect on students' participation and ability to speak English. In addition, the study only examined the strategies used by students to manage speaking anxiety in the context of learning, especially in activities such as presentations, discussions, and microteaching.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What factors cause speaking anxiety among students in the Microteaching course at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji?
2. How does speaking anxiety affect students' participation in speaking activities in the Microteaching course at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji?
3. What strategies do students use to overcome their speaking anxiety in the Microteaching course at Universitas Maritim Raja Ali Haji?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to identify the factors that cause speech anxiety in students of the English Education Study Program at Raja Ali Haji Maritime University, then analyze how speaking anxiety affect students' participation and speaking ability in learning and find out the strategies used by students to overcome speech anxiety in various academic activities, such as presentations, discussions, and microteaching.

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of speaking anxiety in the context of learning English as a foreign language. The findings of this study can provide a deeper understanding of the causative factors, impacts, and strategies used by students in dealing with speech anxiety. In addition, the results of this study can be a reference for future researchers in developing a more effective model or

approach to explain the phenomenon of speaking anxiety in higher education environments.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For lecturers: This research is expected to help English lecturers in designing and implementing teaching methods that can reduce students' fear of speaking, as well as guide them to make more supportive speaking activities and encourage students to participate actively.

b. For Students: Help students recognize emotional challenges such as speaking anxiety and build effective strategies to increase confidence in verbal communication using English.

c. For Future Researchers: This research can serve as a reference how understanding anxiety affects university students' speaking ability.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

1. Analysis

Analysis is the process of observing, understanding, and explaining data on a regular basis in order to find patterns, causes, or relationships between things. In this study, analysis means that the researcher tries to research and explain in detail the causative factors, impacts, and strategies used by students of the English Education Study Program in overcoming anxiety when speaking English.

2. Speaking

Speaking is an important language skill, used to convey thoughts, feelings, and opinions orally in order to communicate with others properly. In this study, speaking specifically refers to the ability of students of the English education study program to use English orally in interacting in class and communicating academically, especially in activities such as presentations, discussions, and microteaching.

3. Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotional condition that makes a person feel nervous, afraid, or tense, and can interfere with their ability to perform certain activities. In this study, anxiety specifically refers to the feeling of discomfort experienced by students when they have to speak in English in front of a crowd or in academic situations that require oral speaking skills.

4. Speaking Anxiety

Speaking Anxiety is a special type of anxiety that occurs in language learning when students are involved in verbal communication using a foreign language. In this study, the focus is on the psychological feelings experienced by students, such as fear of making mistakes, feeling embarrassed, or lacking confidence, when they participate in various English-speaking activities in the English Education Study Program.