

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

These days, English is the primary language used for communication worldwide (Hanim, 2021). English is now a required subject in Indonesia from elementary school through university. Nonetheless, English is being studied as a foreign language by Indonesian students. Additionally, a significant portion of Indonesian students now recognize the value of English in global education and communication. The four components of learning English are speaking, writing, listening, and reading, as is widely recognized. These skills are divided into two groups: receptive skills and productive skills. While writing and speaking are examples of productive skills, reading and listening are examples of receptive skills.

Speaking is one of the essential abilities that should be acquired because it serves as a means of communication (Abdullah et al., 2019). Speaking is a crucial component of teaching and learning a second language, as noted by Rijal & Arifah (2017). This is because the primary goal of learning a language, particularly a foreign language, is to be able to communicate in that language. Speaking is a communication tool that uses spoken words to convey and illustrate thoughts from the human mind. According to Syarif & Muthmainnah (2017), speaking is oral communication used to convey ideas to others as conversation partners. This implies that speakers are able to express themselves verbally.

Speaking is emphasized in the learning process in Indonesian schools. It is now a weekly exercise for the students. When speaking English verbally, the majority of students experience anxiety (Haidara, 2016). When speaking English, they have trouble coming up with words and often appear at a loss for words. Among the foreign languages taught in Indonesia, English is unquestionably the most important and is given more weight than any other language (Haidara, 2016). In the spectrum of students, speaking is essential. Since then, the children have demonstrated a high level of speaking proficiency. They could find it easier to communicate with others as a result. According to Al-Roud (2016), speaking is regarded as the primary mode of communication. Additionally, speaking ability is the capacity to express ideas, intentions, reflections, and feelings to others using moral language in a way that ensures the audience members understand and fully comprehend the message. As a result, speaking has emerged as the main preoccupation of foreign language learners. Additionally, learning a language helps people become more proficient speakers of the target language (Barnard, 2002).

The researcher selects SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang for this research because the school is located in a tourism area called “Penyengat,” an island surrounded by the ocean and there hasn’t been many research done in this school studying student’s challenges in learning English. Click or tap here to enter text.. Even though some schools reduce the allocation of time for learning English, the teacher at this school emphasizes the importance of students developing strong English skills, particularly in speaking. They understand that speaking skills are essential as they live in a tourism area. Additionally, the unique location of the school made the

researcher curious about what it is like to study in an island area and the challenges students face while learning speaking skills as island students.

Students in the seventh grade at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang, an island area of Indonesia, are the subject of this study. Based on the researcher's interview with the English teacher of SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang, 7th-grade students are selected as subjects for this research because they have faced more challenges in speaking English than students in other grades as they did not study English in elementary school. This is supported by research by Candraloka & Rosdiana (2019) which stated that 7th grade students often encounter challenges in learning speaking skills due to limited time exposure of the language during their elementary time. These challenges include a lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation, grammatical issues, and psychological problems such as anxiety, shyness, and a lack of confidence. Additionally, students feel ashamed to speak English and express their ideas correctly because they worry about mispronouncing words. Furthermore, various factors impact students' speaking abilities. For instance, Hoang et al. (2015) found that several factors, such as a lack of student motivation, the use of the mother tongue during the learning process, insufficient vocabulary, and a lack of interest in teaching activities, all contribute to poor student performance in speaking.

Previously, several studies investigated speaking issues. Language challenges identified included limited vocabulary, poor pronunciation, grammar difficulties, fluency issues, and poor comprehension (Umam et al., 2023; Clarita & Hidayat., 2020; Fitriani et al., 2015; Manurung & Izar, 2019; Widyasworo, 2019;

Yumniamatillah, 2017). Psychological issues such as shyness, lack of confidence, anxiety, lack of motivation, having no ideas or nothing to say, uneven participation, inhibition, interference from the mother tongue, and fear of making mistakes were also noted (Mahmudin, 2023; Dalem, 2017; Fitriani et al., 2015; Widyasworo, 2019; Yumniamatillah, 2017). The study anticipated that, in addition to linguistic and psychological challenges, students would also encounter other challenges such as socio-cultural challenges, which have received relatively little notice until now. This encompasses elements like restricted exposure to English-speaking environments, local cultural standards, peer influence, and family or community attitudes toward learning English. This direction is inspired by and expands on the contributions of Sari and Yusuf (2019) and Rahmawati (2021), who began to highlight the role of cultural background and social expectations in shaping students' speaking abilities.

Therefore, to fill the existing gap in research, this study focused on three key areas: linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural challenges. In regards to linguistic challenges, this research explored challenges students face related to vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and comprehension, consistent with prior work from Umam et al. (2023), Clarita and Hidayat (2020), and Fitriani et al. (2015). Regarding psychological challenges, the study examined internal factors such as shyness, lack of confidence, anxiety, low motivation, and fear of making mistakes - issues previously analyzed by researchers including Mahmudin (2023) and Dalem (2017).

1.2 Identification of The Problem

Given the foregoing context, the researcher has developed the following challenges for this study:

1. Anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, and fear are among the psychological obstacles that prevent students from speaking English fluently.
2. Students' opportunities to practice speaking English are limited when the mother tongue is used during the learning process.
3. Due to a lack of repetition and stimulation in the classroom, students exhibit little interest in mastering speaking skills.
4. The school's position near the seaside is one example of an external circumstance that may present difficulties for children's phonological acquisition.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study looks at the challenges/difficulties which students encounter in improving their English-speaking skills at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang. In particular, it considers linguistic difficulties with vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar; psychological issues like anxiety, shyness, and low confidence, while also acknowledging environmental and socio-cultural conditions that may contribute to students' speaking challenges.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the limitation of the problem provided, the following question is the focus of the study:

1. What are the challenges faced by 7th grade students in learning speaking skills at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang?

1.5 The Study's Objective

Navigating the challenges SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang students on 7th grade encounter in learning English speaking skills is the aim of this study.

1.6 The Significances of the Study

The outcome of this study can be used theoretically and practically as follows:

1.6.1 Theoretically

This study adds to the body of knowledge already available on teaching and learning English as a foreign language, with a focus on speaking abilities. It sheds light on the difficulties encountered by students in coastal regions, who are underrepresented in the literature at the moment.

1.6.2 Practically

a) For Teachers:

The results of this study can assist English teachers at SMPN 9 Tanjungpinang and other comparable schools in creating efficient plans to deal with students' difficulties speaking the language.

b) For Students:

Students can improve their speaking abilities and become more conscious of their shortcomings by comprehending the difficulties they encounter.

c) For Policymakers:

Educational authorities can use the study's useful findings to create policies and initiatives that promote English language instruction in both rural and coastal locations.

1.7 Key Terms Definition

a) Speaking Skills:

The capacity to use the target language to clearly and coherently communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings orally.

b) Navigating:

The process of finding a way to move through or deal with something, such as challenges or difficulties. In the context of learning, it refers to managing or overcoming obstacles.

c) Challenges:

Difficulties or obstacles that require effort, skill, or determination to overcome. In learning, challenges may include language barriers, lack of confidence, or limited resources.

d) Island Students

In this study, “island students” refers to students who reside and attend school on small islands, such as Penyengat Island, which is geographically separated from mainland areas and characterized by coastal features.

e) English Language Learning

English Language Learning refers to the process of acquiring, developing, and improving proficiency in the English language.

