

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The ability to use language to communicate with others is one of the signs of success in the learning process. Language is the primary and most important communication tool used to convey thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Through language, humans can communicate a wide spectrum of complex emotions ranging from happiness, sadness, anger, to longing which might be difficult to express through other means. Language also doesn't just play a role in information transactions, but also in building and maintaining interpersonal relationships. When someone expresses their feelings through language, they are not just sharing information about their emotional state, but also inviting empathy, understanding, and emotional responses from their conversation partners. Thus, the use of language to express feelings becomes the foundations for creating deeper and more meaningful social relationships.

Anxiety when speaking makes it difficult for students to express their opinions, ideas, or thoughts. When someone feels anxious, they feel restless, tense, and worried. This makes students feel uncomfortable and difficult to focus when speaking in English. This feeling of anxiety is often experienced by students. It is supported by the statement of Marpaung & Fithriani (2023) that typically, students learning a foreign language often express feelings of stress, unease, or worry when trying to speak the new language. Therefore, anxiety is the

main problem of learning process in foreign language especially in oral communication (Amini, 2019). Speaking anxiety can have a significant impact, as it can hinder students speaking skill and negatively affect their academic performance (Adnan Oflaz, 2019).

Putri and Marlina (2019) categorized speaking anxiety into three parts. First, communication apprehension is the feeling of fear or nervousness when speaking. This usually happens because students don't feel confident about their speaking skills or are unsure if they can express their ideas correctly. For example, when a teacher suddenly ask a question in English, a student might feel nervous, their heart beats fast, and even though they know to answer, they can't say it. And the second, fear of speaking test, students feel when they have to take a speaking test. This often happens because of the pressure to be judged or the need to perform perfectly in a short time. For instance, a student are asked to give a presentation in English, but because they know it will be grade, they feel stressed, confused, and even go blank when they start to speak. The last fear of feedback is the fear or worry about the reaction or comments from teachers or classmates after speaking. Students are afraid of being criticized, laughed, or seen as not smart if they make mistakes. For example, after doing an English conversation practice in class, a student did not want to ask questions or give comments because they are afraid their classmates will laugh or the teachers will get angry if they say something wrong.

According to Rao (2019), speaking skill is the most important skill for all learners who want to learn english. Although english larning encompasses four

basic skills such as speaking, writing, reading and listening, speaking ability is considered the most crucial. Through speaking, learners can directly apply their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that they have learned. This skill also becomes the most visible benchmark for successful language learning. Although speaking ability is very important for students, the fact is that some students think that speaking is difficult. Speaking is also considered as a difficult skill and has been proven by several studies (Butler, 2004; Yang & Chang, 2008). Experts reveal that speaking is a challenging skill because it involves various aspects such as choosing appropriate vocabulary, applying correct grammatical structures, accurate pronunciation, and the ability to respond spontaneously in interactions. This difficulty is particularly felt by second or foreign language learners, who must process all these elements quickly while maintaining fluency and coherence of the message. Research conducted by Butler (2004) and Yang and Chang (2008) confirms this challenge through empirical studies showing the higher level of difficulty experienced by learners in mastering speaking skills compared to other language skill such as listening, reading, or writing.

Meanwhile, Hughes (2011) says that the problems in speaking are that learners are afraid to express their ideas, how to use grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation in their communication with people. According to Hughes, the first problem is learners fear of expressing their ideas, often referred to as language anxiety. The second problem relates to difficulties in using proper grammar when communicating directly. Furthermore, vocabulary limitations also become a

significant obstacles that hinders speaking fluency, as learners often struggle to find the right words to express their thoughts. Finally, Hughes identifies pronunciation as a distinct challenge, where many learners face difficulties in pronouncing words with the correct accent or intonation according to target language standards. These four factors are interconnected and collectively can reduce self-confidence and impede the effective communication skills of language learners in real interaction situations.

Besides the problem mentioned above, other speaking difficulties are caused by anxiety in students. According to Diah (2022), the demand for mastery of skills in English has a negative effect, that is the anxiety that is experienced when students are faced with activities or tasks related to mastery of four English skills. Anxiety is a negative factor that can decrease students' academic values and achievements. Students who have anxiety will experience tremendous fear and doubt. They will be nervous and unable to think clearly. This condition makes students afraid to speak. They are afraid that they will make mistakes. Besides that, rarely speaking in public or in front of many people is also a factor in causing anxiety because they are not confident. In addition, lack of self-confidence also causes students to experience anxiety. They think that they cannot speak well. This anxiety ultimately can decrease students' learning motivation, so when the learning process takes place, students feel bored. Many students choose to be silent when learning. Anxiety makes students feel unsure of themselves. When they feel anxious and are asked to speak, they become confused, scared of making mistakes, and sometimes just stay quiet without saying a word.

Based on the research by Rahayu, Soeod, and Kalukar, the study shows that one male student has a high level of anxiety, while other male and female students have a moderate level. This anxiety occurred because they were not used to speaking or interacting with others through oral communication. They were afraid of negative reactions, such as being laughed at, and felt very embarrassed when speaking in front of class or public.

To help students deal with their anxiety, using Project based learning is one of the strategy that can be used to help students overcome their fear of speaking. Bell (2010) said that Project based learning creates a fun learning environment and helps students become creative, active, collaborative, and more involved. Because of this, students can feel more confident when speaking and can manage their anxiety better. The teacher create interesting projects, can motivate and energize students and also improve their ability to interact with other students. According to Larsson (2001), when learning a language, understanding is of course important. When students are asked to work on project, they have the opportunity to improved their communication skill. In project work, students must be able to gather information and communicate a lot to exchange opinions and ideas because communication is the key to completing projects. This can reduce speaking anxiety in students.

Based on the research by Maulana and Suparmadi (2024) the results of this study discussed the influence of Project based learning on improving speaking skill. Project based learning provides numerous opportunities for communication and also improves pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Furthemore, project based learning helps students develop greater self-confidence and become more active participants in the learning process.

The implementation of project based learning has not been fully effective in overcoming anxiety in students and improving students speaking abilities. This is because when students work on the given projects, many students are less participative, afraid to express idea, opinions, and when making presentation related to the project made, many students still have lack vocabulary and grammar, so when speaking in front of the class, they feel nervous and afraid. In SMAN 3 Medan, speaking was difficult skill for students. This was obtained from the observations of researcher at SMAN 3 Medan concluded that there are several factors that made speaking was a difficult skill for students. Several factors such as the learning environment at SMAN 3 Medan that does not adequately support intensive speaking practice, so students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop this skill. Another factors is that the teaching methods implemented at SMAN 3 Medan emphasize passive skills like reading and writing, so active skills such as speaking receive less attention. Furthermore, many students lacked mastery of vocabulary, and makes them to feel difficulty to arrange correct words in english. Another difficulty experienced was students anxiety because of the lack vocabulary and grammar, students became confused and nervous when asked to speak english.

Based on the study conducted by Laia (2022) found that students experiences various type of anxiety, such as fear of communication, anxiety during exam, and fear of negative assessments. There are several causes behind

the anxiety experienced by students. First, there are internal factors, including low self-confidence, shyness, lack of motivation, and fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, external factors are caused by lack of preparation, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, interaction with classmates, and embarrassment. Learning strategies are tools to help students understand information more quickly and gain understanding (Sukmawati and Sabillah, 2020).

Based on the result of the researcher observations, there is a significant gap between the theoretical concept by Lucas (1984) and the reality of learning practices in the field. Theoretically, Lucas emphasized the importance of implementing specific strategies to overcome students speaking anxiety in learning english, especially through two main approaches namely creating safe learning environment and involving students in classroom actively. According Lucas theory (1984), a safe learning environment allows students to feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of negative judgment or embarrassing criticism, while active involvement of students in classroom activities can help them build self-confidence and reduce anxiety levels when speaking english. These two strategies are considered fundamental in creating a conducive learning atmosphere and supporting the development of students speaking skills. However, the fact in the field show a different reality, where the result of observations reveal that teachers have not implemented both strategies. This is what causes speaking anxiety to still occur in students during the english learning process. Students still experience anxiety, doubt, and fear of speaking

english, which ultimately hinders the development of their communicative abilities.

Based on the researcher experience when implemented PLP 2 at SMAN 3 Medan, the researcher found several obstacles and constraints in learning english such as lack mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Many students were afraid to speak english and many have anxiety experience. Therefore, the researcher is interested in observing and conducting research entitled “ Teachers Strategies in Overcoming Students Speaking Anxiety Through Project Based Learning for Twelve Grade Students at SMAN 3 Medan” because the researcher intends to analyze what strategies are used by teachers in teaching speaking to students using project based learning to overcome students speaking anxiety.

1.2 The Problem of the Study

Considering the background of the study above, the research problem is formulated as follows: “ How are strategies used by teachers in overcoming students speaking anxiety through project based learning for twelve grade students at SMAN 3 Medan?”.
Character Building

1.3 The Objective of the Study

Based on the research problem above, the objective of the study is as follows: To analyze the strategies used by the teachers in overcoming students speaking anxiety through project based learning for twelve grade students at SMAN 3 Medan.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The scope of this study includes the English teachers and students in the twelve grade at SMAN 3 Medan. This research is limited and focused on the teachers strategies in using project based learning to overcome students speaking anxiety for twelve grade students at SMAN 3 Medan.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The significances of this research are:

1. Theoretically

Theoretically, this study provided knowledge about strategies to overcome speaking anxiety through project based learning. This research provided evidence about the effectiveness of various Project-Based Learning approaches in reducing foreign language anxiety among high school students.

2. Practically

Practically, the significance of this study are for:

a. For the teachers

This study provided practical strategies for english teachers and helped teachers design more effective project-based learning activities that specifically reduce speaking anxiety, potentially improving teaching practices and students learning outcomes.

b. For the students

Students benefited from this research because the identified strategies can help reduce their anxiety when speaking in English classes. Lower

anxiety levels increased participation, improved speaking performance, and increased confidence in using english for communication, which are essential skills for their academic and professional future.

c. For other researchers

This study served as a reference for other researchers interested in language anxiety and project-based learning. The methodology and findings provided a basis for further research in similar educational contexts or with different variables related to language learning anxiety.

