

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Background of the Study

Anxiety in language education can manifest in many ways, such as feeling nervous speaking in front of other people, worrying about making mistakes, or feeling pressured to do well in language class. According to (Horwitz et al., 1986) anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. This feeling can be very common for students learning a new language, as they may not yet have a solid foundation in the language and may be self-conscious about their abilities. This was also seen during the initial observations at the grade two students of the SMPN 3 Medan when learning English, some students were seen to experience anxiety in speaking English in front of the class when they were presenting their assignments. This relates to what (Horwitz et al., 1986) said that anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language, and several recent approaches to foreign language teaching, such as community language learning and suggestopedia, are explicitly directed at reducing learner anxiety.

Experiencing anxiety in speaking English can cause students to not be able to achieve the expected learning outcomes, it will be a very serious problem for students. The researcher chose a public school, namely SMPN 3 Medan because the researcher had made initial observations while carrying out PLP II activities at that school. Meanwhile, while the researchers were making observations at

SMPN 3 Medan, the researchers found many signs of students speaking anxiety in learning.

Many students become restless and avoid participating in class when they have difficulty speaking in class. This often occurs due to a lack of self-confidence which can lead to decreased motivation and passive behavior in learning to speak. There are also those who think that learning English is a very difficult subject and when asked to speak English during a presentation they stutter. It can also create anxiety for students when they are forced to speak in class. Some of them feel afraid and embarrassed to speak English in front of their friends for fear of being ridiculed and laughed at. There are also those who think that learning English is a very difficult subject and when asked to speak English they don't speak at all even after being given an example by the teacher how to pronounce the sentence, this is because they are not sure whether they can speak English well.

In fact, the introduction of English has been taught since elementary school, even so students still experience difficulties in learning English especially problems in the speaking skills section. While the main purpose of learning English itself is to enable students to be able to communicate in English. Therefore, students must be able to use English to communicate and convey messages accurately and fluently, so that messages can be received correctly. In short, they must be able to use English in their daily lives. Even many students who have graduated but can not speak English well, then there is a gap between expectations and reality.

Speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations (Brown and Yuke cited in Rao, 2019). This shows that knowing English well can greatly enhance one's career opportunities and potential for success in a globalized world. In addition, being proficient in English can open up wider educational and cultural experiences, as it allows for better access to information and resources.

Speaking skill is the most important skill to acquire foreign or second language learning. Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a Foreign or Second Language (Rao, 2019). Furthermore, it is also important for personal communication and social interactions, allowing one to build deeper connections with people from different backgrounds.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), speaking English can be very intimidating for students especially in public places. In class, students are asked to be able to speak in front of their friends to present their assignments. Considering that presentation has become a routine feature in academic assignments, it can be seen here that mastering public speaking is really needed by students, but there are still many students who are afraid to speak in public compared to speaking face to face. However, it is generally believed that face to face communication can reduce anxiety than public speaking as it is usually a more informal and intimate setting. Additionally, in face to face communication, there is often more opportunity for nonverbal cues and immediate feedback, which can help reduce anxiety.

Due to the significance of public speaking for educational purposes, students are expected to have good public speaking skills. Public speaking can have various interpretations depending on the context. Generally, it is a form of interpersonal communication that involves the delivery of a speech in formal or informal settings, with the goal of informing, convincing, or entertaining a large audience. (Bodie, 2010) public speaking is a crucial part of leadership communication, an essential workplace skill, and the ability to make good presentations is frequently becomes a substantial part of work responsibilities. Public speaking is very important for students in EFL, but there are still many students who experience anxiety in public speaking. Public speaking anxiety is defined here as a situation-specific social anxiety that arises from the real or anticipated enactment of an oral presentation (Bodie, 2010).

The EFL classroom is a place where students develop their speaking skills most of the time, but they don't take the opportunity to improve their speaking skills. This is caused by many factors, one of which is student anxiety and feeling uncomfortable when speaking in front of their classmates. Anxiety will have a negative influence on student behavior. Lack of courage in speaking will definitely hinder students from succeeding in foreign language classes.

Based on previous researchers, there are still many factors that cause students to face difficulties in speaking English, one of which is anxiety. According to (Macintyre & Gardner, 1991) indicates that speaking is the most anxiety provoking of second language activities. This anxiety stems from a lack

of confidence in our general linguistic knowledge, but when only this element is involved, all skills are equally affected.

In response to the student problems described above, the researcher is interested in analyzing student anxiety during class presentations. Therefore, the researcher raised the title "Students' Public Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom at The Grade Two SMPN 3 Medan".

## **2.2. The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background above, the researcher formulated the problem statements as follows :

1. What are the levels of students' anxiety in English classroom at grade two of SMPN 3 Medan?
2. What are the factors that influence students' public speaking anxiety in English classroom at grade two of SMPN 3 Medan?

## **2.3. The Objectives of the Study**

This study aimed to find out:

1. The level of students' anxiety in English classroom at grade two of SMPN 3 Medan
2. The factors that influence students' public speaking anxiety in English classroom at grade two of SMPN 3 Medan?

## **2.4. The Scope of the Study**

Due to time limitations and the ability of researcher, there are several limitations in this study. First, the researcher only explored the exposure to grade two students of SMPN 3 Medan. Second, the researcher limits this study

which focuses on analyzing students' public speaking anxiety in grade two activities during the learning process and their experiences.

### **2.5. The Significances of the Study**

The findings of the research expect to be advantageous and can give a contribution theoretically and practically:

1) Theoretically: Through this study, the researcher can add new knowledge about the level and factors that contribute to students' public speaking anxiety.

2) Practically:

a. For students: Through this study, students can increase their knowledge about the level and factors that contribute to their anxiety and how to minimize anxiety in the classroom

b. For teachers: Through this study, teachers can increase knowledge about the factors that contribute to students' anxiety. By knowing these factors, the writer hopes the teachers can help students reduce their anxiety when learning foreign languages.

