

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English is an international language and is one of the compulsory subjects that must be followed at the secondary education level in Indonesia. Eighth grade students at SMP Negeri 2 Kibin have been learning English since entering elementary school, ideally they have been learning English for approximately 6-7 years. At this level, they are expected to have basic skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. In particular, in speaking, they should be able to engage in simple conversations, describe things, express opinions, and actively participate in class discussions using English.

However, reality shows that many students in grade 8 at SMPN 2 Kibin still struggle to speak English confidently and fluently, they often face difficulties in (grammar) sentence structure, tense, and proper use of verbs or phrases are all aspects of mastering grammar in speaking, (vocabulary) the ability to use the right vocabulary, (pronunciation) the ability to pronounce language in a way that conforms to standard English pronunciation, (fluency) the ability to speak smoothly and continuously without frequent pauses or hesitation, and (expression) the ability to convey feelings or emotions appropriately through tone, gestures and

facial expression. Coupled with the worry of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation from the teacher or even fear of being ridiculed by peers, this is seen in their low ability to actively participate in class, especially in speaking activities. Failure to master speaking ability is often caused by psychological factors, one of which is anxiety.

According to Brown, speaking is an interaction process that involves spoken language as the main communication tool.¹ In English language learning, speaking not only functions as a means of conveying an idea, but also as a means of making transactions and interactions.

Speaking ability is an essential skill in learning a language, especially English which is considered an international language. For students, the ability to communicate effectively in English is essential, especially in transactional and interactional contexts. Transactional speaking refers to the use of language to obtain goods or services, while interactional speaking involves social interaction and building relationships.² These skills are essential for achieving real communication proficiency, especially for junior high school students, as they form the basis for more complex language tasks.

¹ H Douglas Brown, *PRINCIPLES of LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING*, n.d.

² R A Brown, "Motivation for Learning English among Japanese University Students," no. 1 (2003): 1–12.

Horwitz and Cope define that speaking a foreign language in front of large groups can generate anxiety.³ In speaking activities using a foreign language in class, students try to familiarize themselves with communicating even though their English skills are still limited. In this activity, students feel afraid of negative evaluations from teacher and peers who have more English skill than them. In addition, the fact is that most students laugh at their friends who make mistakes in speaking foreign language. Therefore, students feel fear and anxiety when they are instructed to speak, students feel afraid of making mistakes. These causes make students afraid and discouraged to practice their foreign language, so students choose to be silent. In fact, one of the most frequent sources of worry among students is the fear of being ridiculed by others.

Anxiety is a psychological condition characterized by excessive feelings of worry, fear, and anxiety about certain situations or objects. Anxiety can arise in response to feelings of stress or threat, either real or perceived. Anxiety can develop in response to feelings of threat, fear, concern, and tension. Anxiety is a natural response of the human body to various situations. Anxiety can affect people of different ages.

³ Elaine K, Michael B. Horwitz Horwitz, and Cope Joann, "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety," *The Modern Language Journal* 70, no. 2 (1986): 125–132.

Anxiety in learning English is more often found in the speaking aspect, because this aspect involves direct interaction with others, so students often feel afraid that they will make mistakes, not confident, and even afraid of being judged poorly by others. In grade 8 students of SMPN 2 Kibin, students' anxiety is more dominant when they are asked by teachers to speak English, especially on tasks such as describing something.

However, anxiety is one of the main challenges for students when speaking English. As defined by Horwitz, and Cope, language anxiety refers to feelings of uneasiness and worry associated with a second language, such as speaking, listening, and learning.⁴ Students at SMPN 2 Kibin at grade 8 level often experience anxiety that can hinder their ability to speak confidently using English. Students show this clearly when they are asked by the teacher to describe something such as describing a person. This requires students to communicate ideas in a clear and cohesive way, which can be challenging for students who feel anxiety.

In addition, anxiety can impact on students' speaking ability in various ways, such as increasing hesitation, reducing fluency and decreasing vocabulary use. Anxiety interferes with cognitive processes

⁴ K, Horwitz, and Joann, "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety."

and communication outcomes, affecting language learning.⁵ Besides affecting students' academic performance, these factors also affect their drive and their confidence in learning English.

To overcome this problem, it is essential for teachers to know and learn appropriate strategies to improve students' speaking skills and lower their anxiety. Examples such as creating a supportive learning environment, applying fun communication approaches and engaging in collaborative activities can significantly reduce anxiety. Teachers can help students overcome their anxiety so that they can become more confident when speaking English.

The objective of this research is to investigate how anxiety influences students' ability in English speaking at SMP Negeri 2 Kibin, with an emphasis on speaking in transactional and interactional contexts as well as speaking descriptive texts. In addition, this study also aims to find appropriate strategies to reduce students' anxiety so that they can improve their speaking ability and their overall learning outcomes.

B. Statements of the Problem

The researcher questions for the study are as follows:

Is there any influence between students anxiety towards speaking ability?

⁵ R. C. Gardner, "The Effects of Induced Anxiety on Three Stages of Cognitive Processing in Computerized Vocabulary Learning," *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 16, no. 1 (1994): 1–17.

C. The Aims of the study

The literature review explain the goal of this research is:

To find out whether students anxiety influence towards speaking ability.

D. Framework and Hypothesis

1. Framework

In English language learning, speaking ability is one of the most challenging aspects for students. To be able to speak well and fluently, students must master three main components of language: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and expression. Grammar helps to construct correct sentences, vocabulary enriches the vocabulary so that the message is conveyed clearly, and pronunciation ensures proper pronunciation so that it is easily understood by others.

However, the success of students in speaking English does not only depend on technical factors such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and expression does not guarantee students to be able speak English well. However, there are non-technical factors that can be the main obstacle in speaking, namely anxiety. Many students experience fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence when they have to speak in English, especially in formal situations or in front of

many people. Anxiety can make students feel pressured, which in turn interferes with their ability to express ideas fluently and clearly.

Anxiety can arise for various reasons, such as fear of making mistakes, worrying about being ridiculed by friends, or feeling a lack of mastery of English. As a result, although in theory they understand the structure of the language, in practice they still have difficulty speaking fluently.

Thus, it can be assumed that there is an influence of anxiety variable (X) to the speaking ability variable (Y). The higher the students' anxiety level, the more likely they are to experience obstacles in speaking English. Likewise, if students' anxiety can be controlled, then students will be more confident and able to speak better.

2. Hypothesis

- a. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is a significant correlation between anxiety and English speaking ability at the Eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kibin.
- b. Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between anxiety and English speaking ability at the Eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Kibin.

E. Clarification of the Term

1. Anxiety is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of tension, worry, and fear that can hinder students learning process, especially in speaking a foreign language.
2. English speaking ability is the skill to convey ideas, thoughts, or feelings in English orally which includes aspect of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and expression.

F. Organization of Writing

The researcher will create three chapters, each with specific aspect to explain.

1. Chapter I : Introduction

This chapter contains: Background of study, statements of the problem, the aims of the study, framework and hypothesis, clarification of the term and organization of writing.

2. Chapter II : Theoretical Foundation

This chapter consists of related theories as the basis of investigation the research problems.

3. Chapter III : Research Methodology

This chapter contains conceptual definition, operational definition, research method, place and time of research,

population and sample, instruments, data collection and data analyzing, the scoring system.

4. Chapter IV : Result and Discussion

This chapter summarizes the research result and discussion of the study. The report presents the result of data collection and analysis, and a discussion of the theoretical framework.

5. Chapter V : Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter presents conclusions of the results findings obtained and recommendations for readers, especially for researchers who will conduct the same research.