

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Speaking is one of the four language skills that students must master. This is an essential skill because in speaking, one can say what one wants to say. Parmawati (2018) states that the most crucial English skill is speaking because it is a tool for communication in daily life. Furthermore, as cited in Indrianty (2016), speaking is one of the important aspects of learning a second or foreign language (Nunan, 2000). Thus, students are asked to practice English, especially in the classroom. Learning to speak can help students get used to and become fluent in speaking, so they can improve their speaking skills because getting used to speaking will significantly improve their English skills (Putra, 2018).

Speaking in English, the students also face some problems. One of the problems that students often face is anxiety. Macintyre and Gardner (1989) state that anxiety is a feeling of worry and emotional reaction that arises when learning and using a second language. When students feel anxious to speak, it can be indicated that they are experiencing speaking anxiety. As cited in Suparmi (2018) speaking anxiety has a significant impact on a person's self-confidence because it often causes a person to feel like a failure when they are unable to speak and show what they understand (Nilsson et al., 2011). Speaking anxiety can occur in a subject that focuses on speaking (Mak, 2011). Especially in English class, speaking anxiety is one of the things that often happens to students and is very common. In reality, speaking in the classroom or in front of other students may create more anxiety since the learners will be afraid of making pronunciation errors or being laughed at by others (Price, 1991). Additionally, Ahmed (2016) mentions that speaking anxiety is an obstacle for many learners, and it affects their speaking ability negatively.

This can hinder students from trying to speak in class and ultimately affect students' speaking ability negatively. Thus, students' anxiety can influence their speaking ability, and it is an important issue to be solved.

There are many previous studies that have been conducted regarding what factors cause students to feel anxious when speaking English in class. Wartu et al. (2020) analyzed the factors that made students anxious when speaking English and determined the most common causes of anxiety. The study results show that there are factors that trigger anxiety among students when they speak English: rumination, fear of feedback, and avoidance. The most dominant factor was avoidance. In addition, Utomo (2018) also conducted research that focused on factors of students' anxiety in speaking English, primarily related to their internal and external factors. The results of the study showed that in all factors, such as lack of preparation, limited vocabulary, grammatical error, and friend/classmate. The number of embarrassments was the highest of all the factors. Another study investigated by Saputri (2017) students' speaking anxiety in the impromptu speech performance in the speaking class batch, and the results of this study indicate that speaking anxiety appears during performance seen from the indicators such as body reactions and students' behavior. The most common type of speaking anxiety experienced in impromptu speech activities was fear of negative evaluation, followed by communication apprehension and test anxiety. Besides that, according to Saputri (2017) those types of speaking anxiety were affected by four factors, namely cognitive factors, psychological factors, social factors, and physical factors. On the other hand, the researcher conducted preliminary observations in one of the junior high schools in Tasikmalaya. During the teaching and learning process in class, the researcher found some students when they were asked to speak English in front of the class or when students were asked to answer questions posed by the teacher, at that time they looked confused and just kept silent and avoided eye contact. In addition, they also often avoid and point at other friends because they are afraid to speak English improperly and incorrectly.

Related to previous research and phenomena, it makes researchers curious about what factors make them feel anxious when speaking English. The similarity of previous research with the present study is about the factors that cause students to feel anxious, and the difference is that researchers also want to know students' strategies about how to overcome their speaking anxiety.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problems**

This study addressed the following questions:

- 1) What are the factors that cause students to feel anxious when speaking English?
- 2) What are the students' strategies to overcome their anxiety in speaking English?

## **1.3 Operational Definitions**

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

**1.3.1 Speaking** : Speaking is an activity that junior high school students use to communicate with each other in an English classroom.

**1.3.2 Speaking Anxiety** : Speaking anxiety is a fear a person experiences before or during a presentation and communication. This fear is often accompanied by various physical disorders, and emotional reactions that can significantly impair a person's ability to successfully give a speech or presentation, including feelings of anxiety, worry, nervousness, shaking, and sweating.

## **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The main purposes of this research are to find out what factors cause students to feel anxious when speaking English and what are the students' strategies to overcome their anxiety in speaking English.

## **1.5 Significances of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Use**

The theoretical contribution of this study is to support the theories about factors that cause students to feel anxiety when speaking English and students' strategies to overcome their anxiety in speaking English.

### **1.5.2 Practical Use**

The results of this study are expected to provide information to English teachers about the factors of student anxiety and students' strategies to overcome anxiety when speaking English.

### **1.5.3 Empirical Use**

This study will provide empirical knowledge for the researcher about how students can better understand the factors that cause anxiety in speaking English and what strategies students use to overcome anxiety when speaking English. That they will gain more awareness related to anxiety.