CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The introduction contains background to the problem, research questions, operational definitions, objectives, and research uses.

1.1 Background of Study

Speaking is not just a communication skill but a significant bridge to interact across cultures and share ideas at the international level. Speaking is recognized as the dominant language skill in various language settings, emphasized by its widespread use in communication. Moreover, it is also widely acknowledged that in almost all language settings, speaking is the most frequently used language skill (El et al., 2022). As such, speaking becomes a more complex skill, requiring a deep understanding of context and the ability to communicate messages clearly and effectively. According to Abrar et al. (2018), speaking refers not only to saying words and sentences through the mouth but also more deeply to the ability to express communication messages through these words and sentences. In other words, speaking involves expressive aspects that include word choice, intonation, and facial expressions to communicate meaning and intention precisely.

Students need help with speaking skills. Some common problems in speaking skills are that students need more vocabulary mastery, utilizing appropriate grammatical rules, pronouncing English words accurately, excessively using filler words, speaking in front of a large audience, and choosing the appropriate accent. In a study conducted by Tantri et al. (2023), the ability to speak English effectively largely depends on the extent of one's vocabulary, as the richer one's vocabulary, the more actively they can participate in conversations. Furthermore, Riadil (2020) argues that despite having studied English in formal educational contexts for many years, Indonesian EFL learners still need to learn to master speaking English fluently.

At one university in Indonesia, some students need help in speaking English after conducting initial interviews with some 3rd-semester students who have taken a public speaking course and have yet to complete a variation of the speaking course in the following semester. Of course, they are students who need help speaking, which causes them to get unsatisfactory grades (C) in speaking courses. Public speaking here is a compulsory course that must be completed by students in order to continue to the speaking stage in the coming semester.

Some previous researchers have explored issues in speaking. Research conducted by Suchona and Shorna (2019) involved eighty-one undergraduate students in Bangladesh who were given a questionnaire to identify problems in speaking in class. The findings from the survey showed that the students experienced various obstacles, including anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation in using English. In addition, Ria et al. (2022) based on the results of their observation, they highlighted English speaking difficulties at SMA Negeri 1 Selayar, including limited vocabulary, confusion in choosing words, lack of motivation, low confidence, and shyness. The dominant factors were speaking anxiety, unsupportive environment, and lack of vocabulary. Meanwhile, to overcome the research gap with previous studies, it can be determined that the gap of this present study is in the research instrument, which uses semi-structured interviews and data analysis by Miles et al. (2014) to analyze the data.

1.2 Formulation of Problem

The problem of this study is formulated as "What are speaking problems faced by Indonesian EFL students in developing English speaking skills?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

1.3.1	Speaking Problems	Students face challenges during classroom oral communication activities. These difficulties can manifest as lack of vocabulary mastery, utilizing appropriate grammatical rules, pronouncing English words accurately, overuse filler words, which may impact the student's communication ability.
1.3.2	EFL Students	University students who are enrolled in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs are encountering challenges related to their ability to engage in spoken communication effectively.
1.3.3	Speaking skills	Communicating effectively in verbal English requires fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and an extensive vocabulary.

1.4 Aim of Research

This research aims to "Investigate the problems faced by students in Indonesian universities in developing English speaking skills."

1.5 Significance of Study

1.5.1	Theoretical Uses	This study will provide theoretical benefits in the understanding of speaking problems faced by EFL students.
1.5.2	Practical Uses	This research will provide an overview of problems in speaking skills, which can raise students' awareness of their speaking skills so that

they can formulate an appropriate strategy to overcome their speaking difficulties.

| 1.5.3 | Empirical Uses | This research will have empirical implications. This means that the study will provide concrete data and findings that can be used for decision-making in an educational setting. |