

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a description of the study. It consists of the background of the study, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, the aim of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Many students in Indonesia consider spoken English learning frustrating and complicated. Hinkel (2005) said that speaking skills are considered difficult and the most complex and challenging to master. This happens because they are unfamiliar with speaking English, feel terrified to speak English, and are worried about grammatical errors. This was also discovered through research conducted in Saudi Arabia and China. They found that inappropriate teaching methods, uninteresting topics, insufficient study time (Al-Hassaani and Al-Saalmi 2022), and psychological factors (Amoah and Yeboah 2021) were the causes. Meanwhile, speaking skills are 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).

The phenomenon (considering spoken English as a frustrating and complicated skill) was discovered at one of the universities in Indonesia. According to the preliminary interviews with three first-year students (informal preliminary interview, 10 September 2023) who took the speaking class (Survival English Course), it was found that they also experienced difficulties in learning to speak. They were passive in speaking English, which was caused by a lack of grammar and vocabulary. But, some of them said they enjoyed learning survival English because they were interested in the course.

Previous studies in Indonesia have carried out research related to challenges in learning to speak. Wahyuningsih and Maisyanah (2021) found that the problems mostly encountered in speaking English include a need for grammar mastery, vocabulary mastery, correct pronunciation, and confidence.

Another research conducted by Chand (2021) also found that the learners mainly get four significant speaking difficulties: personal, linguistic, social, and environmental problems.

Of the studies presented, they only focus on challenges in learning speaking skills in general courses. Meanwhile, this research focuses on challenges and opportunities Survival English Course that has yet to be studied by other researchers.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, in this study, the researcher addresses the following question, “What are the challenges and opportunities students face in Survival English course?”

1.3 Operational Definitions

Challenges refer to the obstacles and opportunities faced by first-year semester students in the Survival English Course. In the context of language education, these challenges encompass a variety of factors, for example, lack of components of speaking including linguistics, differential opinion, teaching methods, uninteresting topics, and grammatical errors. Meanwhile, opportunities such as developing strong speaking skills can open up various opportunities in both personal and professional life

1.3.1 Survival English Course

Survival English course is a course to explore effective learning designs for English as a lingua franca in real-life contexts, offering engaging spoken texts and features of spoken grammar; it focuses on current authenticity trends to enhance communicative competence and learning engagement. This course aims to encourage students to participate in various guided speaking assignments as a gateway to communication practice in the context of everyday life.

1.3.2 Challenges in Learning Speaking Skills

A challenge is a situation, task, or problem that is difficult but presents an opportunity for growth, learning, and development. It often requires effort, skill, and determination to overcome, and can lead to personal or professional improvement. Challenges can be motivating and can help individuals build resilience and acquire new abilities.

1.3.3 Opportunities in Learning Speaking Skills

The opportunity has a positive effect on learning speaking, such as increasing motivation to learn speaking for those interested and those who want to pursue speaking. This can involve a variety of opportunities that can increase proficiency and fluency in the target language.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The study aim to investigate the challenges and opportunities in the Survival English course at one of the universities in Indonesia.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

The study contributes to the challenges and opportunities of learning to speak English in Survival English.

1.5.2 Practical Significance

The present study contributes to the Survival English learners in Survival English course regarding the challenges and opportunities that can occur in Survival English course at one of the universities in Indonesia.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

This study intends to provide the researcher with empirical understanding and awareness regarding the challenges and opportunities faced during a Survival English course at one of the universities in Indonesia.