

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

Language is a global communication tool that plays an important role in any field. In addition, without language, any form of communication will not be effective. Through the language that is expressed, something intended by the speaker will be understood by the listener or other person. Language is used in communication to support the realization of each person's goals and objectives. Based on the importance of Language in communication, language is needed by everyone worldwide. Without language, humans cannot do anything because language is a communication tool that connects humans. Language is the work of humans to communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings, and emotion because language is a tool in a continuous system between humans. Language can be said to establish a relationship between humans.

Language and communication have a very close relationship. As reflected by Mailani, in the definition of language, according to linguistic formulations and communication reviews, language is a communication medium that someone needs to interact with others. Conversely, communication requires a medium, namely language.<sup>1</sup> The relationship between the two is inseparable. With language as a means of communication, humans will find it easier to socialize with others. An ancient philosopher named Aristoteles said that humans are "Zoon Politicon" who always want to gather and socialize. With the existence of language, interaction between human beings plays a huge role in growing the richness of language.

Talking about language does not only refer to one type of language. The existence of English as a lingua franca bridge between people in the world. English is one of the most commonly used languages as well as one of the most studied languages in various countries around the world. Not only in the US and UK, but in other countries, there are also lots of people who speak and understand English. As stated by Aziza N, there are around 67 countries that use English as their official language

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<sup>1</sup> Okarisma Mailani et al., "Bahasa Sebagai Alat Komunikasi Dalam Kehidupan Manusia," *KAMPRET Journal* 1, no. 2 (2022): 1–10, [www.plus62.isha.or.id/index.php/kampret](http://www.plus62.isha.or.id/index.php/kampret).

and there are around 27 countries that use English as a second language. If it is estimated there are around 1 billion people who can speak English as a second language.<sup>2</sup> This proves that English is growing very rapidly in all parts of the world. Without English there will be no interaction between humans in various worlds.

Speaking is one of the language skills that must be learned and emphasized in communication. According to Boonkit, the most crucial skill to develop when learning a foreign language is speaking.<sup>3</sup> Speaking skill is the most important skill of the four main skills in English skills. Similar to what was expressed by Srinivas Rao, Speaking skills play an important role in foreign language learning.<sup>4</sup> Speaking is considered the most crucial of the four language abilities for learning a second language. Therefore, most people prioritize speaking skills over other English skills. The main key to learning English is speaking. If speaking can be mastered, other English skills must be adjusted. Speaking English allows people to communicate and convey ideas and opinions to others in different languages. Speaking English is not only for communicating and providing information, it can also broaden networking with other people in the world. Through communication, it will create social interaction and add relationships that can connect people around the world.

In the modern era, speaking English is a crucial skill to learn, especially for non-native English speakers or English as a second language learners. According to Sudarmo, Learning foreign language skills has many benefits for increasing competence both in writing and orally as a medium of communication in achieving learning activities and future careers.<sup>5</sup> With the ability to speak English, students will be able to communicate not only with local people but also with other people who speak different languages. In addition to communicating,

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<sup>2</sup> Niyozova Aziza, "The Importance of English Language," *International Journal on Orange Technologies* 2, no. 1 (2020): 22–24, [www.researchparks.org](http://www.researchparks.org).

<sup>3</sup> Kamonpan Boonkit, "Enhancing the Development of Speaking Skills for Non-Native Speakers of English," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2, no. 2 (2010): 1305–9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.191>.

<sup>4</sup> P. S Rao, "The Importance of Speaking Skills in English Classrooms," *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal* 2, no. 2 (2019): 6–18, [www.acielj.com](http://www.acielj.com).

<sup>5</sup> Sudarmo Sudarmo, "Importance of Speaking in English as a Foreign Language between Skillful and Thoughtful Competencies: Studying Sociolinguistics Perspectives," *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5, no. S1 (2021): 113–24, <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v5ns1.1321>.

Speaking English also affects the careers and jobs that will be obtained in the future. Considering that English is an international communication, one can work internationally. Therefore, Guangwei Hu argues that English is called the world's social language, which is not only an academic necessity but also a medium of international communication.<sup>6</sup>

Speaking English certainly brings challenges for foreign language learners. According to Melough, speaking problems is one of the affective factors that has a significant impact and can create challenges for students' oral performance when learning a foreign language.<sup>7</sup> Speaking problems stem from a person's insecurity and fear of their abilities. People who have speaking problems are not caused by individual incompetence, but are often caused by negative thoughts that make them afraid to try. Someone with problems speaking will affect future learning. People who have speaking problems will isolate themselves from other people, so that the process of social interaction is also hampered. It takes the right solution to deal with students' speaking problems both inside and outside the classroom. Besides hindering learning, the problems also cause many people to believe that they are not capable even though the students are capable. Speaking problems makes students always think of themselves as inferior in ability compared to their peers.

According to Meihua Liu, speaking problems can affect students' language learning achievement, particularly when learning a foreign or second language in the classroom.<sup>8</sup> Speaking problems are usually caused by a lack of vocabulary, which limits their ability to express themselves. In addition, the structure of sentences or grammar is the most difficult English skill besides speaking, where students must pay close attention to the structure of word formation. This makes students feel dizzy, as well as the lack of students' willingness to speak communicatively in public. As stated by Theophilia, the problem is a reaction when someone

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<sup>6</sup> Guangwei Hu, "English Language Education in East Asia: Some Recent Developments," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 33 (July 1, 2012): 345–62.

<sup>7</sup> Asma Melouah, "A Case Study of First-Year LMD Students of English at Foreign Language Anxiety in EFL Speaking Classrooms," *AWEJ Volume 4 Number 1*, no. 1 (2013): 64–76, [www.awej.org](http://www.awej.org).

<sup>8</sup> Meihua Liu, "Anxiety in Oral English Classrooms: A Case Study in China," *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching* 3, no. 1 (2007): 119–37, <http://ojs.atmajaya.ac.id/index.php/ijelt/article/view/132>.

is afraid of something or specific activities. Speaking problems cause fear and disorder in the human mind, such as anxiety about the negative outcomes that may occur when students speak in front of the public. Furthermore, fear of making mistakes, being unable to communicate knowledge effectively and other problems brought them down mentally. Speaking problems often cause students to get stuck when they want to start a conversation. One thing that is often heard from students is “I know, and I understand English, but I cannot speak it.”

Based on these experiences, speaking English in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) can be a frightening and stressful prospect for some students, especially in front of the public. Suleimenova showed that the influence of speaking problems causes students’ slowness in speaking due to the mental blocks they face, students will become quiet and feel inferior to other people.<sup>9</sup> The feeling of panic that arises causes students to forget the sentences that they will convey, which reduces their interest in speaking English and makes them more likely to choose to be silent. Speaking English is a challenge, and learners must get used to speaking in front of the public. People who are not accustomed to speaking English will certainly think long and hard about doing it. It takes courage and high self-confidence to speak in front of the public. Not only that, vocabulary and pronunciation also influence when students want to speak English.

According to Diiab, Speaking English puts a lot of pressure on students who believe that foreign language learners are judged by how well they perform in public.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, many students prefer to be silent even though they are basically capable. But seeing the perception, many students choose to be silent. As said by Nash, Most students cannot avoid the fear of speaking in front of the public. They worry about other people’s comments. So, that proves students are not fully optimizing their speaking ability.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ziash Suleimenova, “Speaking Anxiety in a Foreign Language Classroom in Kazakhstan,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 93 (2013): 1860–68, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.131>.

<sup>10</sup> Samar Diaab, “Role of Faulty Instructional Methods in Libyan EFL Learners’ Speaking Difficulties,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232, no. April (2016): 338–45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.032>.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory Nash, Gail Crimmins, and Florin Oprescu, “If First-Year Students Are Afraid of Public Speaking Assessments What Can Teachers Do to Alleviate Such Anxiety?,” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 41, no. 4 (2016): 586–600,

Students with speaking problems may not absorb spoken discourse fast enough in language class because anxiety interferes with their ability to process information. Students' speaking problems can also affect the fluency and accuracy of their speaking skills. Same with Suleimoneva's argument that when students are worried, they may not be able to learn new words, phrases, syntax, because anxiety serves as a distraction. This worry can lead to a fear of misunderstanding something.<sup>12</sup>

Many studies have been carried out to determine the components causing anxiety while speaking. Researchers have indicated several factors that cause speaking problems. According to Rajitha, many variables influence and create second language problems, including linguistic, psychological, physiological and cultural aspects.<sup>13</sup> The findings showed that one of the most significant barriers to effective speaking is anxiety, namely the fear of making mistakes, which is linked to the fear of being laughed at. Fear of being judged negatively is also a widespread issue that EFL students encounter, and it compounds their anxiety when they are required to speak. EFL students may feel uncomfortable and stop speaking in order to preserve their faces, especially while being corrected and given feedback by the lecturer for poor language use.

As previously stated, the other students' evaluations frequently produce speaking problems among the students themselves. Another finding that causes the students' speaking problems is communication apprehension, or students' capacity to speak in the target language. In this case, many students experience speaking problems due to their lack of aptitude. Relevant research conducted by Diaab showed that many students appear terrified of and embarrassed by their mistakes.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, their nervousness made them unable to recall what they wanted to say, preventing them from speaking appropriately. Besides, In line with what was expressed by Karatas, gender differences in foreign language anxiety were investigated. Female

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2015.1032212>.

<sup>12</sup> Suleimoneva, "Speaking Anxiety in a Foreign Language Classroom in Kazakhstan."

<sup>13</sup> K. Rajitha and C. Alamelu, "A Study of Factors Affecting and Causing Speaking Anxiety," *Procedia Computer Science* 172, no. 2019 (2020): 1053–58, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.05.154>.

<sup>14</sup> Diaab, "Role of Faulty Instructional Methods in Libyan EFL Learners' Speaking Difficulties."

university students were shown to be more anxious than males.<sup>15</sup> As the World Health Organization (WHO) says, that The prevalence of anxiety in adolescents ranges from 65-78%, with the prevalence in the female group being higher than in the male group.<sup>16</sup> Anxiety can cause physical and psychological changes. The anxiety experienced when speaking in public is something that can interfere with concentration when conveying the goals to be achieved.

As for researcher to explore the EFL students' experience in the speaking class. The main reason for conducting research is because many students choose to be silent when it comes to learning English speaking. Another reason that attracts researcher to conduct this study is that some student characters are caught being afraid of speaking in EFL learning, especially in speaking class. The most important aim of this research is to give attention to the speaking problems in speaking class based on students' experiences to find out what elements students thought contributed to speaking problems and what the key effect, consequences and how to overcome speaking problems for students in the speaking class. It can bridge the gap in the literature by providing insight on how the experiences from Islamic higher education institutions might surmount their problems in speaking class. Taking the preceding statement into reference, the researcher is expected to investigate the speaking problems based on the student's experiences. According to the previously stated explanation, the researcher attempts to evaluate and interpret it under the title "I am Afraid to Speak English: Exploring EFL Students' Learning Experiences During Speaking Class at the Islamic Higher Education Institution"

## B. Research Focus and Scope

This study focuses on students' experiences with speaking problems during speaking class at an Islamic higher education institution. To limit the score of the research, the author limits it to

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<sup>15</sup> Hakan Karatas et al., "An Investigation into University Students' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232, no. April (2016): 382–88, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.053>.

<sup>16</sup> Vini Oktaviani, Meilanny Budiarti Santoso, and Santoso Tri Raharjo, "Pendampingan Pada Remaja Dalam Mengatasi Cemas Saat Public Speaking Menggunakan Emotional Freedom Technique, Relaksasi Imajinasi Dan Olah Tubuh," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat (JPPM)* 2, no. 2 (2021): 291, <https://doi.org/10.24198/jppm.v2i2.35130>.

the degree of speaking problems by students' experiences in the fourth and sixth semester. As a result, it is critical to portray fear in their English activities.

### **C. Research Problems**

Based on the identification and limitation of the problems described above, the researcher formulates the problem as follows:

1. What are students' speaking problems in their EFL learning experiences?
2. Why do students' experience speaking problems in their EFL learning?
3. How the speaking problems affect students' experiences in speaking class?
4. How the students overcome speaking problems in their EFL learning?

### **D. Research Objectives**

In line with the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of this study are:

1. This study aims to describing students' speaking problems in their EFL learning experiences.
2. This study aims to finding out the cause of speaking problems in their EFL learning.
3. This study aims to finding out the consequences of speaking problems based on students' experiences in speaking class.
4. This study aims to describing how to overcome speaking problems in their EFL learning

### **E. Research Significances**

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits and contributions to the world of education both theoretically and practically, as follows:

#### **1. Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, this research is intended to provide an overview of students' experience regarding speaking problems. The result of the study is practically expected to give the reader a contribution to developing speaking skills regardless of students' speaking problems. The outcomes can be utilized as a reference for people who want to do research on English activities during speaking class.

## 2. Practical Significance

Practically, the researcher hopes that this research will be useful for:

### a. For Students

After this study, students can manage their speaking problems during speaking class. Increase self-confidence and not have to worry to speak in front of people, also learn from the experiences described in this study.

### b. For Researchers

This research can provide many experiences related to speaking problems and expand the author's knowledge of the causes, the consequences, and also how to overcome speaking problems. This study can be used as a reference for the next researcher related to this topic.

### c. For Lecturer

This study can be used as a reference and sources of information about students' speaking problems. A lecturer can make a strategy for dealing with speaking problems during speaking class.

### d. For Future Researchers

The researcher hopes that this research can become a reference for future researchers and develop more in-depth research related to the effect of speaking problems during speaking class.

## F. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstandings in the interpretation of meaning, the researcher tries to describe the terms that are relevant to this research:

### 1. English Foreign Language (EFL)

EFL is abbreviated from English as a Foreign Language. Foreign language refers to the language spoken outside of the country. Learning a foreign language is useful for tourism, communicating with native speakers, reading foreign journals, and so on.<sup>17</sup> This is mainly used to talk about students (whose first language is not English) learning English while living in their own country.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Peng Si, "A Study of the Differences between EFL and ESL for English Classroom Teaching in China," *IRA International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies* 15, no. 1 (2019): 32, <https://doi.org/10.21013/jems.v15.n1.p4>.

<sup>18</sup> Rizky Yolanda, "Code Switching in English As a Foreign Language (Efl)



2. Learning Experiences

Learning experiences are the processes and activities that each individual engages in the classroom in accordance with the learning technique or strategy supplied by each educator.<sup>19</sup> Learning experiences describe the interaction between the learner and the environmental factors where the learner begins his activities.

3. Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology that tells stories to convey the personal human aspect of lived experiences by present narratively.<sup>20</sup> Narrative inquiry not only aims to convey an experience to the reader, but also provides knowledge and gives stories meaning in real-life situations.

4. Islamic Higher Education Institution

Islamic higher education is the highest level of Islamic education. The existence of Islamic education in various fields of education is extremely important as a pillar for comprehensive Islamic education. This Islamic education has an excellent mission to produce scholars who will benefit the education of the ummah.<sup>21</sup>

**G. Organization of Thesis**

Writing systematics is useful for providing a clear picture and not deviating from the subject matter of the proposal. Systematics of this thesis is as follows:

**Chapter I is an introduction.**

This chapter explains the background of the research, the research focus and scope, the problems to be researched, the research objectives, the significance of the research, the definition of key terms and the systematics of writing.

**Chapter II is a review of related literature.**

This chapter describes the theoretical basis relevant to the research

Classroom,” *Vision Journal* 16, no. 1 (2020): 62–72, <https://doi.org/10.30829/vis.v16i1.712>.

<sup>19</sup> Putu Wahyu Sudewi, “Learning Experiences Using Blended Learning on Efl Learners At Sulawesi Barat University,” *Jurnal Basis* 7, no. 1 (2020): 121, <https://doi.org/10.33884/basisupb.v7i1.1787>.

<sup>20</sup> Mukhlash Abrar, “Re-Telling: A Narrative Inquiry of Indonesian Graduate Students’ Speaking Experiences in a United Kingdom University,” *Jurnal UPI* 8, no. 3 (2019): 588–96, <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v8i3.15257>.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Bahrowi, “Management Concept of Islamic Higher Education and The Challenge in Global Era,” *QALAMUNA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial, Dan Agama* 14, no. 1 (2022): 35–48, <https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v14i1.1131>.

discussed, previous research and the theoretical framework.

**Chapter III is a research methodology.**

This chapter describes the method or type of approach used, research settings, subjects or participants in research, instruments and data collection techniques, research data validity, and data analysis techniques.

**Chapter IV is findings and discussion.**

This chapter contains the results of the research and discussion or explanation of the data analysis.

**Chapter V is conclusions, implications, and recommendations.**

As the last chapter, this chapter will summarize a brief conclusion obtained from the discussion and also contains suggestions for the development of further research.

