

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Communicating or speaking is an essential part of our everyday life since it allows us to express our thoughts to others. Language serves as a means for interacting with people and exchanging ideas, opinions, and feelings, therefore communication can take place through language use (Riadil, 2020). English is the language most often used when people from different countries come together and also English plays another important role in our lives (Zuparova et al., 2020). Learning English is now essential since it is an international language usually used to communicate with people from various nations.

The ability to speak becomes a very basic difficulty for English language learners because of the obstacles experienced in both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects (Franscy & Ramli, 2022). In this case, students' challenges are frequently caused by more than just language barriers; if they struggle to speak English, it could be because of cognitive or psychological issues (Pratiwi & Andriani, 2021). That are part of psycholinguistic studies.

Psycholinguistics aims to explain how people learn language and the brain processes that take place when they pronounce the phrases they hear when speaking (Slobin in Rosmanti & Rukiyah, 2023).

In Indonesia, English is one of the compulsory subjects that must be mastered by every student from junior high school to university level (Febriana, M., Burhansyah, B., Marhaban, S., & Bahri, 2024). Though being taught in schools, many kids still struggle with effective communication. Even after years of official English language training, students frequently struggle to have meaningful interactions. Their reluctance to use

English in everyday contexts is caused by some psychological causes, including low self-esteem, social anxiety, and fear of making mistakes. Additionally, traditional language training methods may prioritize writing and grammar over speaking practice, leaving students unprepared for true interaction. Because of this, kids may learn passive language skills but lack the confidence and fluency needed to express themselves effectively. It is necessary to comprehend how these psychological barriers impact language competency in order to develop strategies for helping learners overcome communication barriers and improve their language proficiency. Research (Zulfitri, 2019) shows that although fifth-semester students have a good interest in learning English, They have a variety of communication challenges. Factors such as psychological, poor vocabulary, difficulty finding interlocutors, pronunciation, grammar, and monotonous teaching methods contribute to these difficulties. This is in line with the findings in the journal "Language Disorder In Speaking English At Islamic Boarding School" by (Nasution & Daulay, 2023), which also identified linguistic and psychological issues as the main causes of English speaking difficulties among pesantren students.

Students' ability to speak effectively in English was hampered by their linguistic issues, which included poor pronunciation and a small vocabulary. When speaking in English, students may feel insecure, particularly if they lack the language to adequately convey their thoughts. This is made worse by the challenge of locating practice interlocutors both inside and outside of the classroom. Research by (Nasution & Daulay, 2023) emphasized that female students at Darul 'Adaalah pesantren have difficulty speaking English because they feel anxious and afraid of mispronunciations, as well as worrying about being ridiculed by their friends.

Psychological factors, such as lack of confidence, anxiety, and shyness, also contribute to students' difficulties in speaking English. Research by (Buansari et al., 2023) shows that foreign language speaking anxiety is a common problem encountered by international students, which can be influenced by social and cultural factors. Support from classmates and instructors can help reduce anxiety and increase students' motivation to participate in discussions.

This is in line with the findings in the journal "The Psycholinguistic Analysis of Student Problems in Speaking English" by (Aras et al., 2022), which identified that third-semester students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar experience feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and lack of confidence when learning to speak English.

There are several psychological factors according to experts contained in (Dewi et al., 2024) highlight anxiety, lack of confidence, low motivation, and fear of making mistakes as key psychological obstacles. Similiary (Tran & Tran, 2020) psychological factors such as anxiety about getting negative feedback or criticism from others when speaking, feeling embarrassed to speak in front of the class, or feeling laughed at when making mistakes are the main causes of speaking difficulties.

Students' difficulties in communicating using English can be analyzed through five hypotheses in Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition (Krashen, 2007). Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, since children usually study more purposefully (learning) than they do spontaneously (acquisition), communication does not develop naturally. Monitor Hypothesis, the excessive usage of monitors causes students to halt and worry about speaking incorrectly. Natural Order Hypothesis, since the order in which language acquisition is taught does not necessarily match the order found in nature, there

is doubt. Input Hypothesis, the linguistic input that students receive is often insufficient and inappropriate for their proficiency level, which hinders their communicative development ($i+1$). Affective filters, that hinder language learning are exacerbated by emotional issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and lack of motivation. Therefore, this study uses a psycholinguistic technique to extensively assess students' communication barriers in English based on these five hypotheses.

Based on previous research, this study needs to be conducted because even though English has been taught in schools for decades, there are still very many students who are not able to communicate in the language. In order to understand how students speak and understand English, and research the challenges of the students such as vocabulary, and pronunciation, which are hindrances for them to communicate in English, and also understand how psychological factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence affect the skill of students to speak and understand English, which is a barrier for their easy communication.

The psychological and linguistic elements that affect English communication abilities have been the subject of several research, but the majority of them concentrate on college students or those pursuing higher education. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate how these factors affect the English communication abilities of junior high school pupils.

It is hoped that this research can add new knowledge on the difficulties or problems students encounter when speaking English and will also identify more effective strategies to help students become more confident language learners.

1.2 Research Problems

Based on the above statement, the purpose of this research is in accordance with:

1. What are the psycholinguistic factors affecting student's communication skills the most?
2. How do psycholinguistic factors affect students' difficulties communicating in English?

1.3 Research Objective

1. To find out what psycholinguistic factor is the most dominant in influencing students' communication skills.
2. To find out how psycholinguistic factors play a role in causing students difficulties in communicating using English.

1.4 Benefits of Research

This research is expected to provide several benefits for English language teaching, especially for students, teachers, and researchers.

1. Students

This research can provide an understanding of the problems students encounter when communicating using English and how they solve them.

2. Teachers

With this research, it is hoped that teachers can find out the factors that hinder students' development in communicating using English.

3. Researchers

This study can provide new knowledge for researchers about the challenges students encounter in communication using English.