

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter involves the background of the study, which provides a brief explanation regarding the role of Zoom Meeting in mitigating EFL students' speaking anxiety. It also consists of research questions, the scope of the study, the purposes of the study and the last is the significance of the study.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

English has been known as one of the foreign languages taught in most Indonesian schools. A study by Lestari et al. (2019) found that students still faced several problems when it comes to speaking the English language. This leads to their statement that speaking is the most difficult skill for foreign language learners to master. According to Rahmi and Murtafi'ah (2022), speaking has been considered the hardest skill because students need to think of several things before they speak the language; ideas, context, situations, how to use grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation, and others, which trigger the emergence of anxiety when students are required to speak English. In fact, Syarif and Sunubi (as cited in Rahmi & Murtafi'ah, 2022) argue that one of the most widely-used skills during the academic process is speaking.

Recent research has highlighted the global prevalence and impact of speaking anxiety on EFL students. For instance, a study by Piechurska-Kuciel (2019) found that speaking anxiety is a widespread problem among EFL students in Poland, leading to decreased oral proficiency and participation in speaking activities. Similarly, a study by Öztürk and Gürbüz (2020) examined Turkish EFL students and revealed that high levels of speaking anxiety affect their classroom performance and willingness to communicate. These studies demonstrate that speaking anxiety is a universal challenge faced by EFL students, regardless of their geographical location, and underscores the need for effective strategies to address this issue globally.

There are many factors that trigger foreign learners' anxiety in learning and acquiring a foreign language, which makes it difficult for them to speak English. Not only because of the things that they need to consider before speaking the language, but it also can be the complexity of the foreign language that is being learned, the language speaking activity, the evaluation by the teacher, language test, other learners' comments, the environment, the learning media and other factors (Male, 2018). Those factors of students' anxiety relate to classroom activity.

Arifin (2017) states that psychological factors such as anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and embarrassment cause students to fail to speak English. These factors greatly influence the desire of students to learn to speak English. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), in the context of learning a new language, nervousness and heightened arousal have been termed "foreign language students' anxiety," or shortened as FLSA. Therefore, to help learners overcome their anxiety, strategies, and new methods are needed to decrease the students' speaking anxiety. One of the ways that can be a solution for that is through technology (Ahmadi, 2018). Technology or digital media is now being considered as a tool to help learners in their learning process, especially in overcoming students' anxiety in speaking (Makodamayanti et al., 2020). One of the most popular technologies is Zoom Meeting (Mansing, 2022; Rahmat, 2023).

Zoom Meeting is a communications platform and application that allows users to connect with video, audio, phone, and chat. In improving the teaching and learning process, Zoom Meeting has the potential as a platform that is easier and more practical compared to other platforms that can be used for teaching and learning (Laili & Nashir, 2021). Nowadays, most students and teachers are familiar with this application since it is used in academic activities such as the learning process. Furthermore, some studies argued that this particular technology, Zoom Meeting, can stimulate students' involvement, motivation, and success, including reducing students' speaking anxiety in the learning process.

Considering the explanation of the background of the story above, the decision was made to investigate the role of technology in reducing English for Foreign Language (EFL) students' speaking anxiety. Although some studies are

concerned with the role of technology in reducing speaking anxiety, they do not provide insight into the particular online platform, Zoom Meeting. The previous study regarding technology was intended to examine the role of M-Learning in decreasing speaking anxiety for EFL learners (Shamsi et al., 2019). The study indicated that M-Learning has significantly decreased the learners' anxiety in speaking English as a foreign language. The study itself used a mixed method of research. Another study reported on qualitative case study research was conducted to help to reduce students' anxiety in speaking English by using Zoom-storytelling, especially when they were required to learn from home (Rini et al., 2021). This study found that through this Zoom-storytelling activity, students were helped to learn face-to-face virtually even though they were not in school.

However, previous studies regarding the role of technology in reducing students' speaking anxiety indicated some research limitations, especially in terms of the different tools used. Therefore, the present study is expected to make a contribution towards addressing the role of technology by providing Zoom Meeting to EFL students' speaking anxiety issues. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of technology, particularly Zoom Meeting, in reducing EFL students' speaking anxiety and how it could reduce EFL students' speaking anxiety in language learning. The association between EFL students' speaking anxiety and the existence of technology was made in order to see whether the particular technology would be beneficial to mitigating speaking anxiety in EFL students.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. How does the Zoom Meeting platform reduce EFL students' speaking anxiety in English presentations?
2. What are the students' attitudes toward the presentation via Zoom Meeting?

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The purposes of this study are divided into two, based on the research questions stated above, namely:

1. To investigate the role of Zoom Meeting platform in reducing EFL students' speaking anxiety.
2. To observe students' attitudes toward the presentation via Zoom Meeting in order to reduce EFL students' speaking anxiety.

#### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study highlights the implementation of technology, particularly the Zoom Meeting platform, in mitigating EFL students' speaking anxiety. Furthermore, this study is also aimed to reveal the contribution of the use of Zoom Meeting as an online platform on EFL students' speaking performance.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

It is hoped that this research contributes to English teaching and learning. To be more precise, it has two major significances: practical and theoretical significances:

a. Theoretical Significance

Theoretically, this study is aimed to contribute to a future study that concerns the EFL students who encountered speaking anxiety issues in the English language teaching field. Moreover, to give a solution to finding out the appropriate strategy for reducing EFL students' speaking anxiety.

b. Practical Significance

1) For the Students

The result of this research can be utilized as a reference or idea to improve EFL students' ability to understand more about how to reduce speaking anxiety using Zoom Meeting.

2) For the Teachers

Practically, the results of the study are expected to give brief and useful information for the educator on the role of technology,

particularly the Zoom Meeting, in mitigating EFL students' anxiety so that they can consider using the platform as the strategy.

### 3) For the Researchers

To give additional information to other writers or researchers who desire to conduct similar research on the related field, especially in English teaching and learning.

## 1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, some terms used in this research are defined as follows:

### a. Speaking Anxiety

In the context of this research, speaking anxiety is a key factor that impacts students' performance in English presentations during Zoom Meeting. Since the study focuses on how Zoom Meeting can mitigate speaking anxiety, understanding speaking anxiety is crucial. According to Gardner and MacIntyre (as cited in Male, 2018), speaking anxiety refers to a fear or apprehension when using a foreign language—a worrying feeling about speaking and performing the language that the learner learned.

### b. English for Foreign Language (EFL)

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is the term used to describe non-native speakers who actively study English in countries where English is not the dominant language (Susanto et al., 2020). Speaking anxiety is often heightened in EFL learners because they are required to perform in a language that is not their mother tongue.

### c. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

Foreign language anxiety, also known as *xenoglossophobia*, is the feeling of unease, worry, nervousness, and apprehension experienced in learning or using a second or foreign language (Gregersen, 2003). The research specifically focuses on whether the use of Zoom helps alleviate FLA by creating a more flexible, low-pressure environment, thus enabling students to focus more on their performance and less on their fears.

### d. Instructor

The term ‘instructor’ in this research used to name the one who is in charge of teaching in English Class program in the institution where the study was conducted. In both settings, the instructor plays a central role in creating a positive learning atmosphere that promotes engagement, reduces anxiety, and fosters effective language acquisition. The balance between guidance, encouragement, and structured activities helps build a relationship of trust, where students feel comfortable practicing and improving their skills (Aliyu et al., 2019).

### **1.7 Structure of The Paper**

The writer organizes this research proposal in order to make the research content clear. This research proposal is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 shows the background of the study, research question, objectives of the research, significance of the study, the scope of the study, definition in terms, and the organization of the proposal’s chapter. Chapter 2 reviews the issue of technology and related literature, and it also includes the issue of speaking anxiety. Chapter 3 discusses the method that was used in the research. It includes the design, site, participants, data collection technique, and data analysis.

### **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has discussed the introduction of the research. It includes the background of the study, research questions, and purposes of the study, also the significance and the definition in terms. The following chapter will review the relevant literature of the study, which involves the concept of technology, Zoom Meeting, in language learning and its relation with students’ speaking anxiety.