

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents and explores information related to the research context. It covers several topics, including an examination of the rationale behind the research, formulation of research questions to be addressed, articulation of the research purpose, specification of research limitation, and the research significance.

### **1.1 Research Background**

Speaking is often regarded as one of the most essential skills for communication. According to Zakaria (2019), it plays a central role in sharing knowledge and connecting with others. Fulcher (2003) and Gayratovna (2021) defined it as a form of verbal interaction in social contexts, making it key to everyday conversations and the exchange of information. However, in the context of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classrooms, speaking is often seen as one of the most difficult skills to perform. As Qasim (2021) explains, speaking requires the coordination of various articulatory devices to produce meaningful language. This can be challenging for EFL learners, especially when faced with limited exposure to English, insufficient vocabulary, and lack of confidence (Hashim & Isa, 2012).

Despite its importance, performing speaking skills in an EFL classroom presents several unique challenges for learners. One of the main obstacles is anxiety. Many students feel nervous or uncomfortable speaking in a foreign language, especially in front of their peers, which can hinder their ability to express themselves clearly (Hashim & Isa, 2012). This anxiety is often linked to a lack of confidence in their language abilities, as learners fear making mistakes or being

judged by others. Furthermore, limited exposure to English outside the classroom exacerbates this issue. In non-English speaking environments, students have fewer opportunities to practice speaking in real-life situations, leading to slow progress in fluency and pronunciation (Dewi & Wilany, 2022). Additionally, the challenge of insufficient vocabulary makes it difficult for students to find the right words during conversation, causing hesitation and reducing the effectiveness of communication (Afdal et al., 2022). These factors, combined with difficulties in mastering grammar and pronunciation, make speaking one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners to acquire. Despite these difficulties, several teaching methods have been developed to help students overcome these obstacles and improve their speaking abilities.

To overcome these challenges, various methods have been introduced to enhance speaking abilities in EFL classrooms. Methods such as discussions, role-plays, and speeches encourage active participation and provide learners with opportunities to practice speaking in diverse contexts. Align with the statement of Celce-Murcia (2001) that to promote and increase students' speaking performance, discussion, speeches, role-plays, conversation, audiotape, oral dialogues, and another accuracy based activities can be implemented. For instance, role-playing allows students to simulate real-life situations, promoting spontaneous use of language and enhancing conversational skills. Discussions, on the other hand, create a collaborative environment where students can express their opinions and ideas, fostering critical thinking and fluency. Additionally, the implementation of speeches, including impromptu and prepared speeches, helps students develop public speaking skills and confidence. These methods aim to create a dynamic and

interactive learning experience, enabling students to improve their oral communication skills effectively.

Impromptu speech is recognized as one of the methods that can be implemented by lecturers to enhance the speaking performance of students learning English as a foreign language. In this activity, speakers are asked to deliver a speech on a given topic without any prior preparation, with the goal of speaking spontaneously within a set time limit. Additionally, Gumartifa and Syahri (2022) have noted that teachers usually assign impromptu speaking topics to students without prior consultation. Afterward, students are given a limited amount of time to prepare. This method is believed to be a valuable medium for enhancing students' critical thinking and their ability to speak in English, as it requires them to get used to speaking in English.

Research by Jef Menguin, as cited in Munawarah (2012), highlights the diverse benefits of impromptu speaking. One of its primary benefits is that it helps individuals to improve their oral expression. Additionally, impromptu speaking can help individuals build confidence in public speaking by providing them with an opportunity to practice their skills in front of others. It also helps individuals develop quick thinking abilities, as they must be able to come up with ideas and articulate them on the spot. Then, impromptu speaking can enhance leadership and communication abilities by requiring individuals to think critically and communicate effectively with others. Finally, impromptu speech provides a unique learning experience for students. While pushing them to think on their feet and express themselves confidently, this method also unlocks their creativity and imagination.

Despite its potential benefits, impromptu speech still faces some challenges as a teaching method in the classroom. The main issue is that it limits the preparation time for students. While this can help to build their self-confidence, it can also lead to a decrease in their confidence when it comes to performing in front of the class. Additionally, the time management and organizational skills required for impromptu speech can be difficult for some students, resulting in performances that are either too short or too long, and lacking in structure. Lastly, in the case where students have lack of vocabularies, they might have difficulty thinking of what to say or formulating sentences.

Some previous studies have raised this issue; Sekkal (2020) the study emphasizes that impromptu speech is more effective to large cohorts for enhancing oral communication skills. It improves their creativity in developing logical ideas and arranging well-formed sentences. Then, Munawarah (2012) study results showed that the use of impromptu speech as a teaching method can improve students' speaking ability better than without using it. However, Rahayu (2015) the study showed that the students' ability in delivering the impromptu speech was average since 18 students (54,54%) had the average score. 14 students (42,42%) had the fair score. And 1 student had the poor (3,03%).

In English Education program at Jambi University, impromptu speech had been implemented in Listening and Speaking class as one of the methods to assess students' speaking proficiency. Besides its expected advantages to improve students' speaking performance, there are still many students who performed impromptu speech with lack of clarity both in structure and content. Moreover, students seem to have problem with their self-confidence to speak in front of the class.

Based on the explanation above, it is worthwhile to investigate the undergraduates' attitudes towards the performance in impromptu English speech in English speaking class at Jambi University.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

Based on the background mentioned above, the research questions are formulated as follow:

What are the EFL undergraduate students' attitudes toward the implementation of impromptu speech method in speaking classroom activities?

## **1.3 Research Purposes**

The purposes of the research are stated as follow:

To investigate the EFL undergraduate students' attitudes toward the implementation of impromptu speech in speaking classroom.

## **1.4 Limitation of the Research**

The limit of this thesis is that the sample was chosen through purposive sampling to represent the entire population. This means the findings are specifically applicable to the selected group and may not be generalizable to a broader context. The scope of the research is thus confined to the experiences and responses of the purposively selected participants.

## **1.5 Research Significance**

This research, which analyses students' attitudes towards impromptu speech in speaking classes, holds significant value for lecturers, students, and general readers of this paper.

For Lecturers, this study offers important insights into how students perceive impromptu speech as a learning activity in speaking classes. By

understanding these attitudes, lecturers can better assess the effectiveness of impromptu speech as a teaching method and adjust their instructional strategies accordingly. This understanding can help lecturers design activities that not only challenge students but also boost their confidence and engagement in speaking tasks.

For students, this research is particularly relevant for students, as it sheds light on their own attitudes towards impromptu speech and how these attitudes may impact their speaking performance.

For general readers, this paper provides a detailed analysis of the dynamics between student attitudes and performance in the context of impromptu speech. The insights presented in this research can serve as a foundation for further studies on the role of student perceptions in language acquisition, as well as guide educators in refining their approaches to teaching speaking skills.

## **1.6 Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misinterpretation of the title which is adopted in this study, the researcher here explained some terms with the title as follows:

### **1.6.1 Speaking Performance**

Speaking performance is the ability to use the target language orally in ways that are both contextually appropriate and linguistically accurate (Luoma, 2004). In this research, it refers to ability of students to speak in English using impromptu speech method.

### 1.6.2 Impromptu Speech

Impromptu speech is a speaking method where the individual speak with little to none of time preparation. In impromptu speech, people tend to do it without thinking in their daily lives (Leon, 2023).

### 1.6.3 Students' Attitude

Student's attitude can be defined as a tendency of a student to respond positively or negatively towards something (idea, object, person, situation) based on their feelings, beliefs and predisposition (Zulfikar et al, 2019). In this research attitude refers to one's tendencies toward their effort in learning languages, especially in impromptu speaking techniques.