

**EFL STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND ANXIETY IN LEARNING SPEAKING  
ENGLISH**

**THESIS**

Submitted by

**YUDHA RIZQI**

NIM. 210203141

Student of *Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*

Department of English Language Education



**FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN  
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By:

**YUDHA RIZQI**

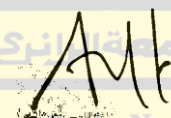
NIM. 210203141

**Student of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training**

**Department of English Language Education**

**Approved by:**

**Supervisor,**



**Azizah, M.Pd**

**Date:    /    /2025**

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On:

Tuesday,

August 12 , 2025

Safar 18, 1447 H

Board of Examiners,

Chairperson,

Azizah, S.Ag., M.Pd.  
NIP. 1977601092007012021

Secretary,

Rusmiati, M.Pd.  
NIP. 198611062018012001

Examiner I,

Siti Khasinah, S.ag., M. Pd.  
NIP. 1969042019970322002

Examiner II,

Rita Hermida, S.Pd.I., M.Pd.  
NIP. 198509082011012009

Certified by:

The Dean of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training  
UIN Ar-Raniry State Islamic University Banda Aceh



Prof. Saiful Mukti, S.Ag., M.A., M.Ed., Ph.D.  
NIP. 504021997031003

## SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN

(Declaration of Originality)

Saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Yudha Rizqi  
NIM : 210203141  
Tempat/Tanggal lahir : Medan/17 Oktober 2003  
Alamat : Tapaktuan

Menyatakan dengan sesungguhnya bahwa skripsi yang berjudul:

### **EFL Student Motivation and Anxiety In Learning Speaking English**

adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila kesalahan dan kekeliruan didalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikian surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 06 August 2025

a membuat pernyataan



Yudha Rizqi

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Author,

Yudha Rizqi



## ABSTRACT

Name : Yudha Rizqi  
NIM : 210203141  
Faculty : Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan  
Major : Department of English Education  
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This study examines the motivation and anxiety experienced by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in learning to speak English. The research used a qualitative method with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the students' experiences and perceptions. The population consisted of 140 English Department students at UIN AR RANIRY Banda Aceh, from which a sample of 6 students was selected for interviews. Data were gathered through structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in the participants' responses. The findings revealed that student motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include personal interest and enjoyment in speaking English, curiosity about the language, and self-confidence. Additionally, students are motivated by personal goals such as pursuing further education, working abroad, and establishing international relationships. External factors affecting motivation include supportive and inspiring teachers, the desire to emulate proficient English speakers, encouragement from family, and striving for higher social status. A structured learning environment and peer influence also contribute. On the other hand, students' anxiety in speaking English mainly arises from psychological factors, such as low self-confidence and fear of making mistakes. This fear is worsened by concerns about negative judgment from peers regarding pronunciation or grammar errors, causing hesitation to communicate. Participants reported anxiety about public speaking, mental blocks, and fear of being laughed at for their mistakes, which directly hinder their speaking ability. The study concludes that low self-confidence, feelings of inadequacy, and comparisons to more proficient peers are the primary causes of anxiety. These findings align with previous research on foreign language anxiety and self-determination theory.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter present the background of the study, research question, research aim, significance of study, and relevant terminology.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Speaking English needs bravery and confidence. Students will get those during the learning process in the classroom. The more they practice, the more confident they are. To reach fluency in speaking needs knowledge of grammar and an inventory of vocabulary to make them more flexible to talk Sugita and Takeuchi (2010). Furthermore, accuracy in pronouncing the words is also important. However, fluency and accuracy are factors causing students to be anxious and demotivated. It may be an impact of the learning process in the classroom. During speaking and reading activity in the classroom, students mostly mispronounce words which is not the big problem that needless to be corrected if they do not keep repeating the same mistakes all the time they speak and read. However, some teachers focus on accuracy and stop the student's fluency. This interrupting scheme impacts the students' anxiety which will affect their motivation lower. Students with low motivation should be allowed to speak with no interruption. If they keep being corrected that will make them more anxious Wu and Wang (2015).

According to Menggo (2018) motivation is one of the prime factors that influence the speed and amount of success of foreign language learning. In this case, this means that motivation ease the students to achieve the objective of the speaking

skill. In other words, it helps the students to be more confident to speak up. Usually, the students who have good motivation becoming more focused, do not easily give up, and decrease the feeling of bored with the subject.

Although the students could motivate themselves, the students at the elementary or even university level still have many problems while producing speaking skills. It can be said that the students found some difficulties in learn and practice speaking skills. Most of the students feel not confident to speak English even in the English class because they rarely use English speech in the daily activity to communicate with people around them. One of the factors that hold up the students to speak is the emotional factor. According to Tyng et al (2017) emotional factors can influence the cognitive process of the students including, learning, perception, and memory. This means that emotional factor is important to keep a good impact on conversation and the classroom activities. Therefore, if the students have an obstacle on keeping their emotions good, then, the students will lose their attraction to learning speaking skills.

Motivation and anxiety are two of the most important factors that can affect the success of students in learning English as a foreign language. Motivation is crucial factor that can influence a student's success in learning a foreign language. Motivation can be defined as the drive to learn and achieve goals in language learning (Wang, 2019). Motivation can come from internal factors, such as personal interest in the language, or external factors, such as the desire to obtain a good job or to communicate with native speakers. Motivated students are more likely to engage in language learning activities, such as reading, writing, listening, and

speaking. They may also be more willing to take risks and make mistakes, which can lead to increased language proficiency over time.

Apart from motivation, speaking anxiety is a common problem that many students face when learning a foreign language. It is a feeling of nervousness or discomfort that arises when a student must speak in the target language. There are several reasons why students may experience speaking anxiety. Firstly, they may be afraid of making mistakes and being judged by others. Secondly, they may lack confidence in their speaking abilities. Finally, they may feel intimidated by the language and the culture of the native speakers. Speaking anxiety can have a negative impact on a student's language learning progress. When a student is anxious, they may have difficulty expressing themselves, and their language production may become limited. They may also avoid speaking altogether, which can lead to a lack of practice and hinder the development of their language skills. (Lei, 2019).

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), the primary goal of speaking is to enhance communicative language proficiency. Many EFL students believe that speaking issues can be resolved by boosting and practicing vocabulary in a wide range of international contexts, techniques, studies, and knowledge that they already have. In reality, mastering foreign proficiency is a challenging task. Students are expected to not only have correct grammar and pronunciation but also to have a thorough understanding of the language's vocabulary and how to use it Hinkel (2005). Therefore, difficulties in speaking proficiency should be identified

so that students can be motivated to learn new vocabulary, use different terms, and converse in different contexts.

There are some previous researchers conducted by researchers was an attempt to investigate the degree of anxiety among EFL learners and its relation to their motivation. A journal that was written by Tahernezhad et al. (2014) about “The Relationship between Language Learning Anxiety and Language Learning Motivation among Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners”. They concluded that the majority of the participants experienced a mid to high level of language learning anxiety. Besides, it was found that the participants with lower levels of the language learning anxiety were more motivated to learn English while those with higher levels of the language learning anxiety were less motivated to learn English.

### **B. Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study above, the writer has formulated some research questions as follows:

1. What factors influence student motivation in learning to speak English?
2. What factors influence student anxiety in learning to speak English?

### **C. Research Aims**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the diverse factors that contribute to student motivation in learning to speak English
2. To identify and analyze the diverse factors that contribute to student anxiety in learning to speak English

#### D. Significant of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to offer both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of English language education, particularly in understanding how motivation and anxiety interact in EFL speaking contexts. Theoretically, this study contributes to contemporary discussions on affective factors in second language acquisition by highlighting how learners' motivation and anxiety dynamically influence their speaking performance. Recent studies, such as Pei and Zhang (2022), emphasize that motivation is not a fixed trait but a fluid, context-sensitive process influenced by learners' personal goals, identity, and social environment. At the same time, anxiety has been identified as a critical affective filter that can either hinder or facilitate language learning depending on how it is managed Xu, Zhang and Sukjairungwattana (2022).

Furthermore, the study aligns with the evolving perspectives in second language motivation research, particularly the *Motivational Self System* and *Self-Determination Theory*, which are increasingly used to explain learners' sustained effort and emotional engagement in language tasks (Alamer & Lee, 2021). By examining how these constructs operate in the context of speaking skills, this study adds to the growing body of literature that integrates psychological, emotional, and contextual dimensions of language learning.

## **E. Terminologies**

To clarify the key terms used in the study, definitions of terminologies related to this study are provided below:

### **1. Motivation**

Motivation in the context of learning to speak English is an internal or external drive that encourages students to actively participate and try to improve their speaking skills. According to Ryan & Deci (2020), “Motivation involves the processes that give behavior its energy and direction. It is concerned with the activation and persistence of goal-directed behavior.”

### **2. Student Anxiety**

Student anxiety in English language learning, particularly in speaking skills, refers to the emotional state of tension, fear, or worry that students experience when they are required to speak in English. Recent studies have shown that language anxiety is not merely a reaction to difficult tasks, but a complex emotional construct influenced by learners’ self-perceptions, fear of negative evaluation, and classroom context.

According to Papi and Khajavy (2023), foreign language anxiety is one of the most significant affective variables in second language acquisition, and it can greatly impact learners’ willingness to communicate, especially in speaking tasks. This anxiety can manifest in various forms, such as fear of making mistakes, fear of being negatively judged by peers or teachers, and a general sense of insecurity during communication. Similarly, Xu Zhang & Sukjairungwattana (2022) explain that learners often experience high levels of

speaking anxiety due to a combination of linguistic self-doubt and performance pressure in formal learning environments.

### 3. Speaking

Speaking ability can be defined as productive ability in oral communication, which involves complex interactions between cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural factors. Brown and Lee (2015) view it as an interactive process of meaning-making, while Bygate (2001) emphasizes the need for a balance between accuracy and fluency in the teaching process. Additionally, McCarthy and Carter (2015) emphasize that speaking also involves pragmatic competence—the ability to adapt to various social contexts in order to achieve successful communication. In this study, motivation acts as an internal driver that motivates learners to communicate actively, while anxiety is a significant barrier that can reduce self-confidence and trigger fear of making mistakes, thereby affecting fluency. Thus, speaking is not merely viewed as a linguistic skill but also as a socio-psychological competence involving the interaction between language knowledge and the learner's emotional state.