

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

Speaking is one of the essential skills in English language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, exchange information, and express opinions effectively. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires learners to produce language spontaneously while integrating grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Therefore, students are expected not only to master linguistic knowledge but also to use English confidently in authentic communication.

According to Brown (2004), speaking is a productive skill that involves meaningful interaction and the real-time production of language, enabling learners to produce language in an engaging and interactive manner. Therefore, speaking ability is one of the most important skills that students need to develop during the learning process. Therefore, speaking ability is one of the most important skills that students need to develop during the learning process.

In higher education, speaking activities are frequently used in the learning process, Mercer and Dornyei (2020) argue that students active engagement in speaking activities is essential because it improves motivation, participation, and language learning outcomes. through discussions, presentations, conversations, question and answer sessions, and group work. These activities provide students with opportunities to develop

communicative competence, improve fluency, and actively engage in meaningful interaction (Mercer et al. 2021).

Recent studies have also shown that learner engagement plays an essential role in improving students' speaking performance. Students who are actively engaged are more willing to communicate, participate in classroom discussions, and practise speaking more frequently. Through these activities, students are expected to participate actively and use English to communicate.

However, in reality, students display a variety of responses during speaking activities. Some students participate actively and confidently express their opinions, whilst others tend to remain silent, feel nervous, or are afraid of making mistakes when speaking in English. These differences indicate that students have varying levels of engagement in speaking activities.

Learner engagement is a key concept in education. Hiver et al. (2021), explain that learner engagement consists of behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions that work together to support successful language learning. as it describes how students participate and support their own learning throughout the learning process. According to Fredricks, et al. (2004), there are three types of engagement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioral engagement relates to students' participation in learning activities.

Emotional engagement relates to students' feelings, motivation, and emotional responses during the learning process. On the other hand, cognitive engagement relates to the methods, strategies, and processes students use to understand the learning material. In language learning, particularly in speaking activities, engagement plays a vital role because speaking requires active participation, self-confidence, attention, interaction and communication. Students with a high level of engagement typically attend speaking classes actively, participate in group or pair discussions, answer questions, speak with confidence, complete speaking tasks, practice pronunciation, give presentations, and respond well to the teacher's instructions.

Conversely, students with low engagement tend to avoid speaking activities, feel anxious, adopt a passive attitude, or show little interest in participating in class. In addition to behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement, this study also focuses on social engagement. Social engagement relates to students' interactions and cooperation with others during the learning process.

In speaking classes, social engagement can be observed when students collaborate with classmates, offer support to peers, ask peers for help, respond to feedback from peers, interact with the lecturer, and participate in group speaking tasks. Thus, engagement in speaking activities is not only related to individual participation but also to students' social relationships during the learning process. Several previous studies, such as

Aubrey, et al. (2020), have examined learner engagement during speaking tasks, they found that learner engagement during speaking tasks is influenced by learner confidence, task characteristics, and classroom interaction.

Their study showed that students who actively engage in speaking activities are more likely to improve their communication skills and speaking performance in English language learning. Aubrey et al. (2020) explain that learner engagement is closely linked to active participation, attention, and students' involvement in language learning activities. Students who are actively involved in speaking activities tend to be more motivated, confident, and willing to communicate in English.

However, students who experience anxiety, a fear of making mistakes, and a lack of confidence often become less active during speaking practice. In the context of Islamic education, communication is an essential aspect of human life. Islam encourages people to communicate respectfully, interact positively, and build good relationships with others. This is explained in Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 13 of the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْتُم مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ  
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

The values contained in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13 are consistent with the principles of Islamic education, which encourage learners to develop respectful communication, cooperation, mutual understanding, and positive social interaction. These values support the development of

students' engagement in learning activities, particularly in speaking classes, where interaction and communication play a central role (Halstead, 2004). This verse emphasises that Allah created human beings from diverse backgrounds so that they might come to know and understand one another.

This principle encourages meaningful interaction, mutual respect, and cooperation among people. mutual respect and effective communication amongst fellow human beings. In an educational context, students are expected to participate actively in discussions, express their ideas with confidence, and respect diverse viewpoints throughout the learning process. Therefore, speaking skills are not only important for academic purposes, but also for building effective communication and positive social relationships in everyday life.

This research was conducted at the Language Development Unit (UPB) of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. UPB is a language learning programme that helps students improve their English language proficiency, particularly their speaking skills. Students participating in this programme come from various faculties and different learning backgrounds, meaning they have varying levels of English proficiency, self-confidence, motivation and learning experience. During the ongoing speaking activities, students demonstrate various forms of participation.

While some students participate actively in discussions, others tend to be passive, shy, anxious, or lack confidence when speaking in English. Based on initial observations, the researcher found that the level of student

engagement during speaking practice at UPB varied. Some students regularly participated in speaking classes, actively discussing topics, answering questions and engaging in lively conversation.

However, some students still experienced difficulties related to nervousness, shyness, fear of making mistakes, low self-esteem and a lack of motivation when speaking. Students also demonstrated varying levels of cognitive and social engagement during classroom interactions, such as learning vocabulary before class, seeking feedback, offering encouragement to fellow students, and interacting with classmates during speaking practice. Although previous studies, such as Maimunah (2022) and Astriani (2023), have focused on English speaking activities and students' learning experiences, there remains a lack of research specifically examining behavioural, emotional, cognitive, and social engagement in speaking activities at the Language Development Unit (UPB) of UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. This study therefore addresses this gap by exploring students' learning engagement and the factors influencing their engagement during speaking practice.

Previously, most studies have focused more on speaking performance or classroom activities in general rather than on student engagement and experiences during ongoing speaking practice. For this reason, this study focuses on examining students' engagement in speaking practice at UPB UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The aim of this study is to understand how students experience behavioural, emotional, cognitive and

social engagement during ongoing speaking activities, and to identify the factors that influenced students' engagement in speaking practice at UPB.

## **B. Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Learning Engagement**

Learning engagement refers to students, active involvement in the learning proces. In this study, it refers to students behovorial, emotional, cognitive, and social engagement during english speaking practice at the language development unit UPB Uin Antasari Banjarmasin.

### **2. Speaking Skills**

Speaking skills refers to students ability to communicate ideas, express opinions, and exchange information in english. In this study, speaking skiils refers to students speaking practice during english learning activities at UPB.

### **3. Language Development Unit (UPB)**

The languange development unit (UPB) is an english language program at Uin Antasari Banjarmasin that helps students improve their english cummunication skiils through various speaking activities. In this study. UPB is setting where students learning engagement in speaking practice is explored.

### **C. Research Questions**

1. How do students experience behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and social engagement during English speaking practice at UPB?
2. What factors influence students' engagement in practicing English speaking skills at UPB?

### **D. Objectives of Study**

1. To examine students' experiences regarding behavioural, emotional, cognitive and social engagement during English speaking practice at UPB.
2. To identify the factors that influence students' engagement in practising English speaking skills at UPB.

### **E. Significance of Study**

This research aims to give both theoretical and practical benefits are:

#### **1. Theoretical Benefits**

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of knowledge regarding student engagement in English language learning, particularly in terms of speaking skills. This study may help to understand how students experience behavioural, emotional, cognitive and social difficulties when undertaking English language practice at UPB. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will provide more in-depth information regarding the difficulties faced by students during the speaking learning process.

Through the application of phenomenology, it is also hoped that this study will contribute to our understanding of the learning process among

students, a topic that may not have been explored in depth in the past. The findings of this study can serve as a source of academic information regarding student engagement and help to reveal the relationship between student engagement and English language practice in the context of higher education. Thus, it is hoped that this study can serve as a valuable reference for future research and the development of theories related to students in English language learning.

## **2. Practical Benefits**

It is hoped that this research will be of benefit to many people. The findings of this study are expected to help students understand the importance of engagement in English speaking practice activities. Through this research, students can learn more about how their active participation, self-confidence, motivation, learning activities, and interactions with others can influence their speaking learning process.

It is also hoped that this study will provide insights into students' experiences during speaking activities for students or learners of English. This information can be utilised as a tool to support more engaging and interactive learning activities that enhance student engagement during the learning process. Furthermore, lecturers can gain a better understanding of the factors that support or hinder student engagement in English language practice.

For the Language Development Unit (UPB) at UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, it is hoped that the results of this study will provide insights

into the difficulties faced by students when engaging in speaking activities. The findings of this study can be used as a basis for evaluation and as a guide in developing more effective educational programmes, particularly in improving students' practical English speaking skills. Finally, it is hoped that this research can serve as a reference for future researchers wishing to conduct research on student engagement, English proficiency, or other topics related to student learning in the context of English language teaching.