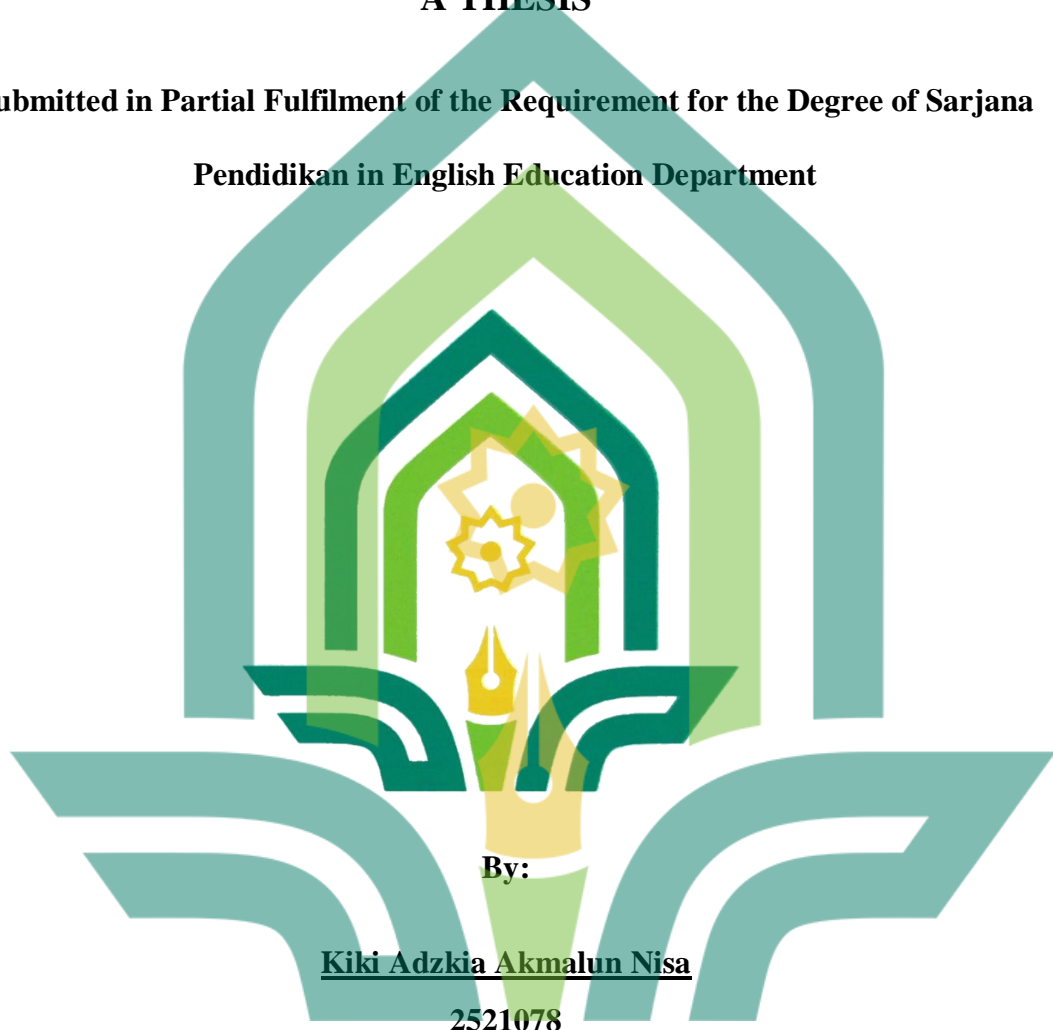


**INVESTIGATING SOCIAL STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH  
SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG EFL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Sarjana**

**Pendidikan in English Education Department**



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Saya menilai bahwa naskah skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan kepada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan untuk diajukan dalam sidang munaqosah.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

*Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

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## ABSTRAK

Nisa, Kiki Adzkia Akmalun. 2025. "Investigating Social Strategies for Coping with Speaking Anxiety Among EFL Students: A Case Study". Thesis. English Education Department. FTIK UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Supervisor Dewi Puspitasari, M.Pd

*Kata kunci: Anxiety, Speaking, EFL Students, Social Strategies, Peers*

*Kecemasan berbicara mempengaruhi kemampuan seseorang untuk berkomunikasi secara efektif, terutama dalam bahasa Inggris. Bagi para EFL, hal ini merupakan sesuatu yang wajar terjadi ketika mereka berlatih berbicara karena bahasa Inggris bukanlah bahasa ibu mereka. Oleh karena itu, siswa harus berusaha untuk menghadapi kesulitan tersebut agar tidak menjadi penghalang mereka dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Salah satu cara untuk mengatasi speaking anxiety adalah dengan menggunakan strategi sosial. Strategi sosial melibatkan kontribusi dari pihak lain yang mana dalam kasus ini adalah teman sebaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplor peran strategi sosial dalam membantu siswa untuk mengatasi kecemasan mereka ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris dan Kesulitan yang dihadapi para siswa dalam mengimplementasikan strategi tersebut. Pengambilan data dilakukan dengan metode observasi dan wawancara. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi sosial dapat membantu siswa untuk menghadapi speaking anxiety ketika berbicara bahasa inggris. Peran dan dukungan teman sebaya berpengaruh untuk menambah rasa percaya diri siswa ketika tampil. Selain itu dorongan dari siswa itu sendiri untuk meyakinkan diri agar tetap maju walaupun sedang mengalami anxiety. Serta hambatan dalam mengimplementasikan strategi ini berupa konflik antar teman yang dapat mengganggu komunikasi dalam pertemanan. Konflik tersebut dapat diselesaikan jika pihak-pihak yang terkait saling terbuka dan memaafkan sehingga komunikasi dapat terjalin kembali dan dapat mengimplementasikan strategi sosial kembali. Studi ini menyimpulkan dengan wawasan praktis tentang bagaimana para siswa EFL menggunakan sosial strategi untuk mengatasi speaking anxiety.*

## ABSTRACT

Nisa, Kiki Adzkie Akmalun. 2025. "Investigating Social Strategies for Coping with Speaking Anxiety Among EFL Students: A Case Study". Thesis. English Education Department. FTIK UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan. Supervisor Dewi Puspitasari, M.Pd

*Kata kunci: Anxiety, Speaking, EFL Students, Social Strategies, Peers*

*Speaking anxiety affects an individual's ability to communicate effectively, especially in English. For EFL learners, this is something that naturally happens when they practice speaking because English is not their native language. Therefore, students should try to deal with the difficulty so that it does not become a barrier for them in learning English. One of the methods to cope with speaking anxiety is by using social strategies. Social strategies involve contributions from other parties which in this case are peers. This study aims to explore the role of social strategies in helping students to cope with their anxiety when speaking English and the difficulties students face in implementing these strategies. Data was collected using observation and interview methods. The results of this study show that social strategies can help students to deal with speaking anxiety when speaking English. The role and support of peers is influential to increase students' confidence when performing. In addition, the encouragement from the students themselves to convince themselves to keep going even though they are experiencing anxiety. As well as obstacles in implementing this strategy in the form of conflicts between friends that can interfere with communication in friendship. The conflict can be resolved if the parties involved are open and forgiving so that communication can be re-established and social strategies can be implemented again. The study concludes with practical insights into how EFL students use social strategies to cope with speaking anxiety.*

## PREFACE

All praise and gratitude I express to Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala for all His blessings and guidance which enabled me to complete my thesis titled "INVESTIGATING SOCIAL STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG EFL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY". This thesis is conducted as one of the requirements for passing the English language education study program at the faculty of education and teacher training. I realized that this thesis would not have been successfully completed without the support, guidance, and prays from various parties. Furthermore, on this occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

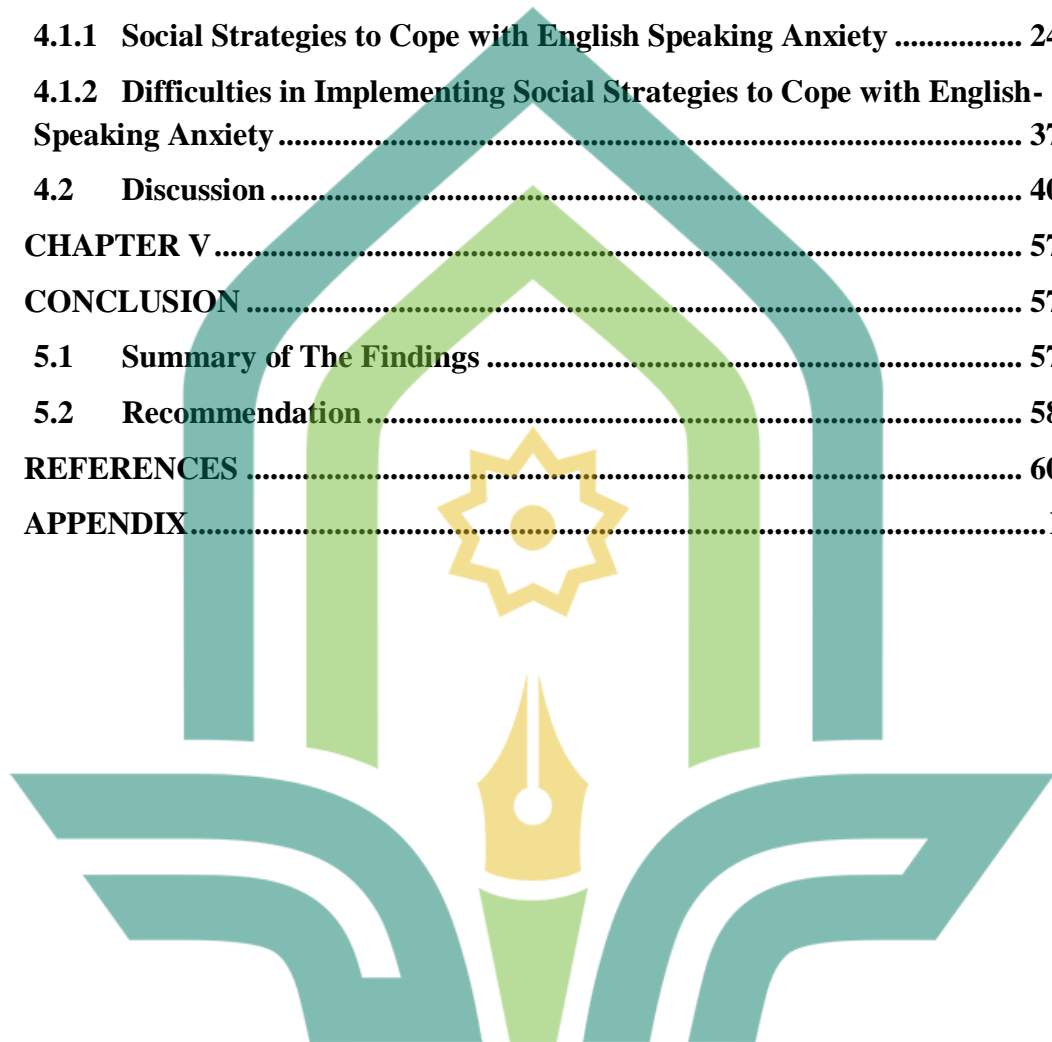
1. Prof. Dr. H. Zaenal Mustakim, M.Ag., as Chancellor of UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan.
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## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>SURAT PERNYATAAN KEASLIAN SKRIPSI</b> .....	ii
<b>NOTA PEMBIMBING</b> .....	iii
<b>APPROVAL SHEET</b> .....	iv
<b>ABSTRAK</b> .....	v
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vi
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	vii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b> .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER I</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Background of the study</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 Formulation of The Problem</b> .....	4
<b>1.3 Aims of The Research</b> .....	4
<b>1.4 Operational Definitions</b> .....	5
<b>1.5 Significance of the research</b> .....	5
<b>CHAPTER II</b> .....	7
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	7
<b>2.1 Theoretical Framework</b> .....	7
<b>2.1.1 Social Strategies to Cope with English Speaking Anxiety</b> .....	7
<b>2.1.2 Foreign Language Anxiety</b> .....	11
<b>2.1.3 Speaking Anxiety</b> .....	12
<b>2.2 Previous Studies</b> .....	14
<b>2.3 Conceptual Framework</b> .....	17
<b>CHAPTER III</b> .....	19
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	19
<b>3.1 Research Design</b> .....	19
<b>3.2 Settings and Participants</b> .....	19
<b>3.3 Data Collection</b> .....	21
<b>3.4 Data Trustworthiness</b> .....	21
<b>3.5 Data Analysis</b> .....	22



<b>CHAPTER IV .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1 Findings .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1.1 Social Strategies to Cope with English Speaking Anxiety .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4.1.2 Difficulties in Implementing Social Strategies to Cope with English-Speaking Anxiety .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>4.2 Discussion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>CHAPTER V.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>5.1 Summary of The Findings .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>5.2 Recommendation .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>I</b>



# CHAPTER I

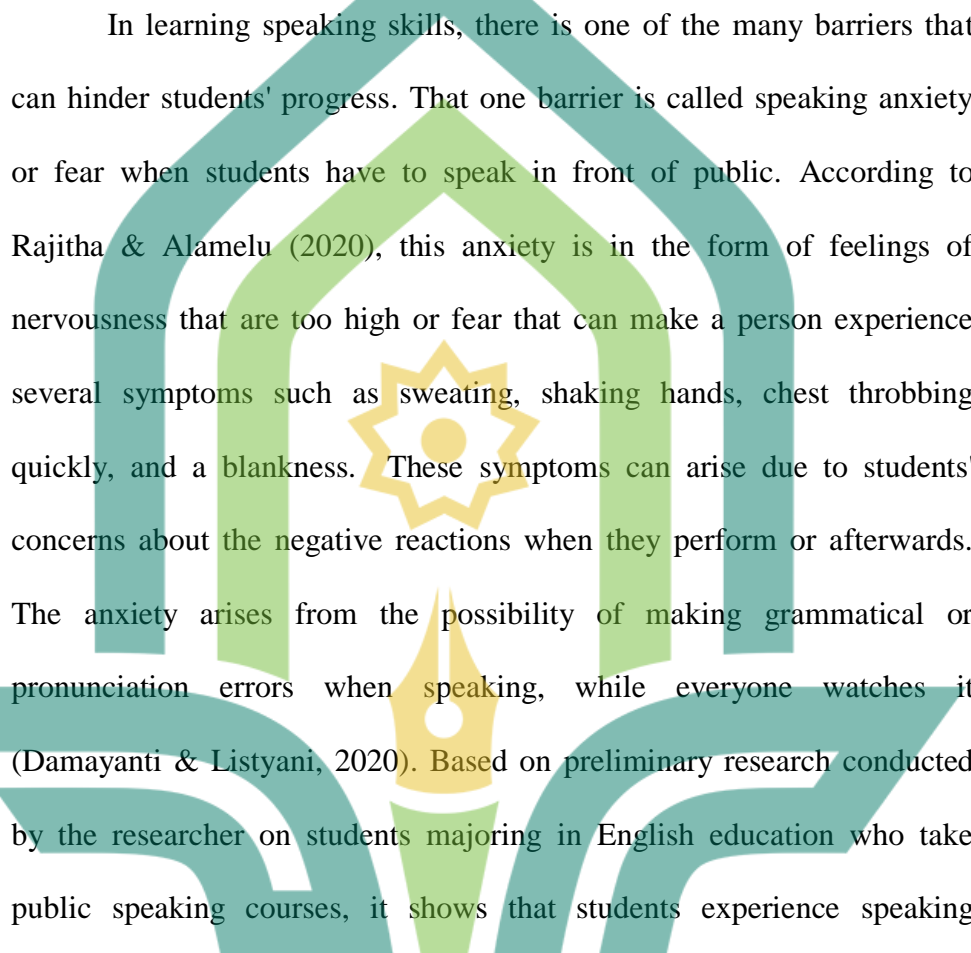
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Speaking is one of the important skills that must be learned in life. In daily life, we are inseparable from the ability to speak. Having good speaking abilities will bring benefits in various aspects of life, such as education, career, and social relationships with others (Rao, 2019). In terms of education, speaking is the most challenging skill in language acquisition among the four language skills.

When speaking, students have to understand some terms like grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency in case they want to make a communicative speech (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). With good speaking skill they have, it will help them to build relations and reach their goal in the future. Nowadays, speaking in English is very crucial because English is an international language used for communication between people around the world. Furthermore, English is important to learn because almost every aspect of life, such as technology, education, economic, and culture, uses English in order to operate and compete in this era (Chand et al., 2022). For that reason, many students choose to major in English at university or take courses at specific places in order to become proficient in the language. Learning a new language especially in speaking skill is certainly not as easy as learning one's native language. Students have to practice listening to English, learn grammar and sentence

structures that are different from their native language, and try to get a lot of new vocabulary are some of the efforts they make in learning English (Rachman, 2021).



In learning speaking skills, there is one of the many barriers that can hinder students' progress. That one barrier is called speaking anxiety or fear when students have to speak in front of public. According to Rajitha & Alamelu (2020), this anxiety is in the form of feelings of nervousness that are too high or fear that can make a person experience several symptoms such as sweating, shaking hands, chest throbbing quickly, and a blankness. These symptoms can arise due to students' concerns about the negative reactions when they perform or afterwards. The anxiety arises from the possibility of making grammatical or pronunciation errors when speaking, while everyone watches it (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). Based on preliminary research conducted by the researcher on students majoring in English education who take public speaking courses, it shows that students experience speaking anxiety when asked to speak in front of audience. They admitted they were afraid that the words they said would be wrong and have a negative impact on their learning progress. In addition, they also revealed symptoms that arise when anxiety attacks such as sweating, fast heartbeat, and body trembling.

Students tend to push themselves to be perfect when performing even though their abilities are insufficient so that it interferes with their

performance (Grieve et al., 2021). Fear of negative impressions from the audience will also increase the sense of anxiety in students. The existence of speaking anxiety will interfere with students' activity in class. This has an impact that causes students' interest in learning to decrease and hinders their development (Zuhri et al., 2022). Students will tend to be passive in activities that require speaking skills and afraid to express their opinions. The presence of speaking anxiety that disrupts the communication process must be overcome so that the intended message can be conveyed effectively, since the purpose of learning a language itself is to convey messages in accordance with the target language.

To deal with this anxiety problem, there is one strategy that students can use to cope with their anxiety, namely social strategy. This strategy is carried out by seeking peers to collectively address this anxiety, either by asking them to listen or by correcting any errors in the speech (Milanrianto et al., 2023). Social strategy is usually done before the performance to train students' readiness in public with the help of friends. The support from friends can empower students in their performance. With the help and support of close friends, it will make students more confident and reduce anxiety (Hafifah & Angraini, 2023). This social support is very necessary for a student who has speaking anxiety in order to be able to speak fluently. When practicing speaking skills, one must be prepared, confident, and abandon things that stand in their way such as embarrassment, anxiety, and lack of confidence (Susanti, 2019). This

emphasizes that the presence of anxiety can disrupt an individual's fluency in speaking and result in the message not being conveyed effectively. It will differ for someone who has self-confidence, thorough preparation, and good social skills, as they will be able to speak fluently and convey the message as intended. With social support such as friends assisting in preparation before performing, it makes a person feel confident and ready to perform.

Previous studies conducted by (Altun, 2023; Tee et al., 2020; Damayanti & Listyani, 2020) have found perspectives regarding the phenomenon of speaking anxiety and the strategies employed to address it. However, further in-depth investigation is still required concerning the strategies used, particularly social strategies. This study aims to explore how social strategies are useful to reduce anxiety when speaking in English. This study will be conducted at the English language education study program at one of the universities in Pekalongan.

## 1.2 Formulation of The Problem

This study provides two research questions:

1. How social strategies are used by students to cope with English speaking anxiety?
2. What are students' difficulties in implementing social strategies to cope with English speaking anxiety?

## 1.3 Aims of The Research

This research is conducted with the aims:

1. To explore how social strategies used by students can cope with English speaking anxiety.
2. To understand the difficulties that the students face when implementing social strategies to cope with English speaking anxiety.

#### 1.4 Operational Definitions

To prevent any misunderstanding regarding the terms used in this research, here are some definitions related to those terms:

1. Speaking Anxiety: A situation where someone is afraid to speak due to anxiety about others' negative judgments (Bourne, 1990).
2. Social Strategies: A way for a person to practice learning by involving others or peers through the surrounding environment (O'Malley & Chamot, 1991).

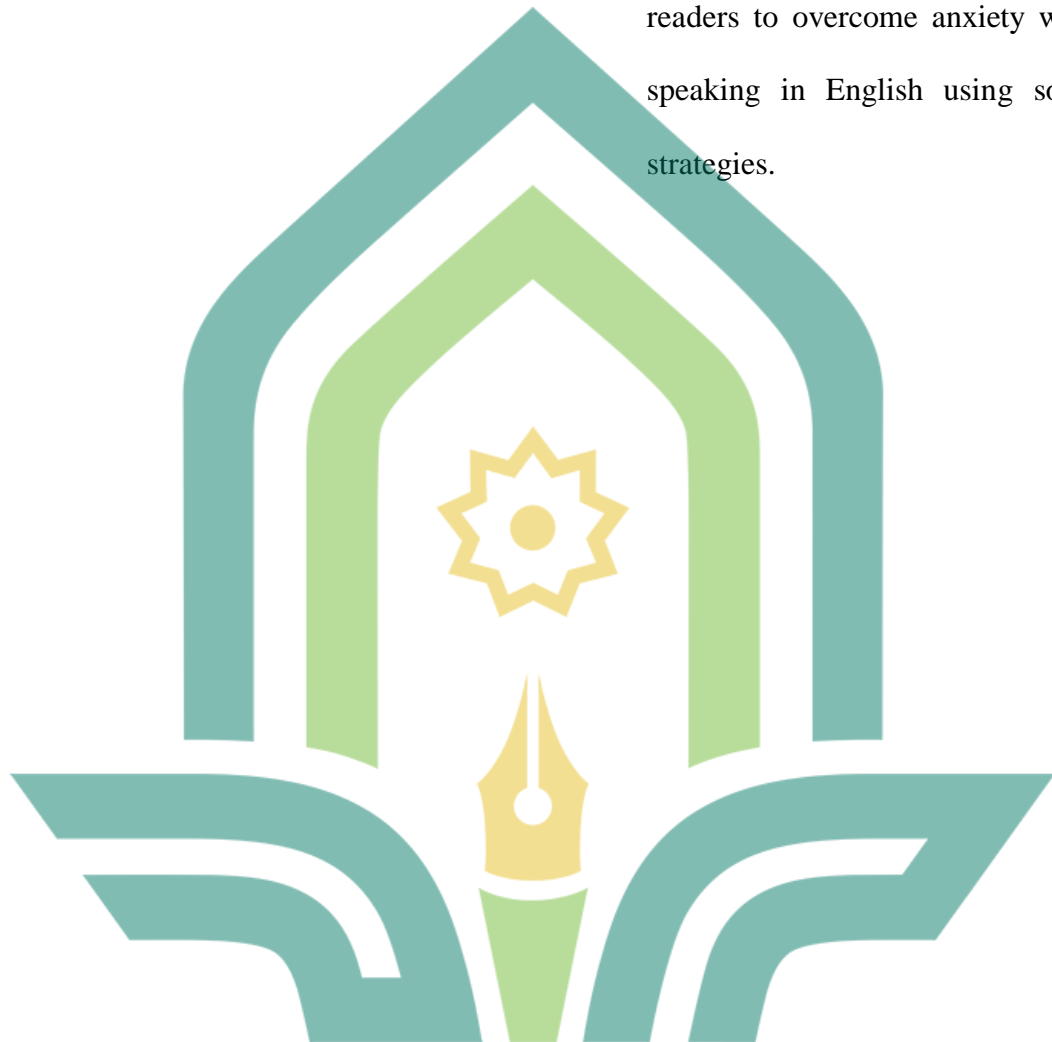
#### 1.5 Significance of the research

1. **Theoretical Significance:** The results of this study are expected to enrich the literature and contribute to the theories of O'Malley and Schamot (1991).
2. **Empirical Significance:** This research provides an overview of the benefits of social support in

overcoming speaking anxiety.

**3. Practical Significance:**

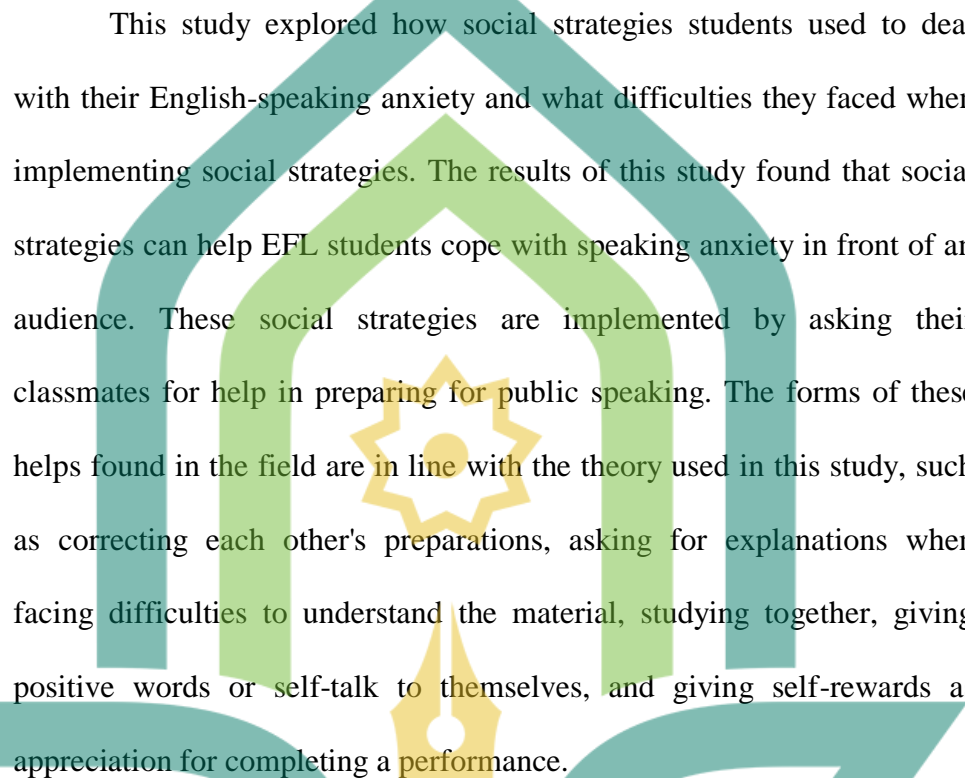
This research presents insights for readers to overcome anxiety when speaking in English using social strategies.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary of The Findings



This study explored how social strategies students used to deal with their English-speaking anxiety and what difficulties they faced when implementing social strategies. The results of this study found that social strategies can help EFL students cope with speaking anxiety in front of an audience. These social strategies are implemented by asking their classmates for help in preparing for public speaking. The forms of these helps found in the field are in line with the theory used in this study, such as correcting each other's preparations, asking for explanations when facing difficulties to understand the material, studying together, giving positive words or self-talk to themselves, and giving self-rewards as appreciation for completing a performance.

In addition, related to the difficulties faced by students in implementing social strategies to cope with English-speaking anxiety is the problem of conflict in their friendships. Based on the results found, the existence of conflict can lead to other problems such as disruption of communication between peers. To implement social strategies, there needs to be good communication and reciprocity between the two parties and the presence of conflict will make it difficult to interact and ask for help from each other.



Social strategies relate to the peer environment in the classroom. To be able to apply these strategies, it is necessary to have good friendships, support each other, and provide mutual feedback regarding tasks or performances. When conflicts occur, students must be able to immediately resolve these problems in order to re-establish friendships and support their learning process.

## 5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings in this study, the researcher provides recommendations regarding the application of social strategies to cope with English-speaking anxiety along with the difficulties when implementing these strategies.

Firstly, this study recommends EFL learners not to hesitate to ask for help from peers in preparing their public speaking performance. This is because speaking anxiety is related to the fear of the audience being dissatisfied with the student's performance or making mistakes due to fear and nervousness. For this reason, it is necessary to study with friends in order to be trained to speak in front of others or the public so that they become familiar, ready and less nervous when performing later.

Secondly, this study recommends EFL learners to help each other in preparing public speaking performances among students. With support and feedback between friends, students will be more confident when performing.

Lastly, this study recommends EFL learners to immediately resolve conflicts in their friendships. The presence of conflict can put a strain on friendships and can disrupt students' learning concentration.



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