

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is learned in places where English is not a language commonly used daily and is often learned in formal educational institutions. Quimosing (2022) mentioned that EFL students had much fewer chance to encounter English outside the classroom than second language learners. However, English is also called as a global language which connects people all around the world and allows them to communicate internationally in many industries. In Indonesia, English is taught from elementary school to university level and students are required to improve English competence in order to compete in academic and professional arenas. However, student in Indonesian schools still confront many obstacles in learning English, especially in institutions with low resources and learning opportunities. Problems such as inadequate learning facilities, limited opportunities to practice English, and difficulties encountered during the learning process may affect students' overall language learning experiences. As a result, there is often a gap between the curriculum objective of mastering the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and students' actual language performance.

Besides the challenges associated with the use related to the learning process, students may also face a variety of psychological challenges in learning English. Many EFL learners encounter psychological problems such as anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and boredom or irritation with

classroom learning activities. Students' motivation to be actively involved in the class can be reduced by these psychological problems, and this can have a detrimental effect on their overall language learning journey. In addition, students often develop different ways of responding to these challenges, such as seeking help from friends, calming themselves, or finding alternative ways to continue learning. Therefore, in order to have a more complete picture of the English learning experiences of students, it is vital to understand both the psychological issues they face and how they respond to these obstacles.

A similar situation is also found at SMP Yapindo II, a private school in West Jakarta whose students come from various learning backgrounds. Based on the researcher's initial observation, some students were reluctant to answer questions in English, had poor confidence in engaging in classroom activities and were fearful of making mistakes while speaking the language. These circumstances imply that pupils may have numerous psychological problems that affect their involvement and overall learning experiences in English sessions. Furthermore, students may react differently when they face these hurdles, making it necessary to understand how students deal with these issues in the English learning process.

Previous study has identified many issues that students experience in learning English as a foreign language. For instance, Putri and Sya (2023) found that children in primary schools experienced difficulties in communication due to being shy, having limited English vocabulary, and frequently mispronouncing English terms. Similarly, Harlina and Nur Yusuf (2020) explained that low motivation, teaching methods, and limited support from the surrounding learning environment

may negatively affect students' learning experiences. At the junior high school level, Nurhaliza et al. (2024) found out that students encountered a variety of psychological problems and also language-related problems while learning English. Similar findings were also observed by Ariyanti (2016) and Eliza et al. (2023) who showed that anxiety, low self-confidence and fear of making mistakes were widely experienced by EFL learners.

Previous studies have provided important insights into the psychological challenges experienced by EFL students in learning English. They have identified issues such as anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and language-related difficulties across different educational contexts. However, these studies have primarily focused on identifying the psychological challenges experienced by students. Comparatively fewer studies have examined the factors contributing to these psychological challenges and the coping strategies students use to manage them within a single investigation. In addition, although some studies have been conducted in junior high school settings, limited attention has been given to exploring these three aspects simultaneously in Indonesian EFL classrooms. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate students' psychological challenges, the factors contributing to these challenges, and the coping strategies students use to overcome them during the English learning process.

In considering the previous, this research aims at investigating the psychological challenges encountered by EFL learners at SMP Yapindo II, West Jakarta, the factors leading to the psychological challenges, and the students' coping

strategies in facing the psychological challenges during English language learning. The motive of this research is to gain a better understanding of students' psychological experiences such as anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation and emotions of boredom or frustration faced throughout the learning process. The findings of this study are expected to help English teachers create more supportive and student-centered classroom environments that address students' academic and psychological needs during English learning.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

This study focuses on understanding the psychological challenges experienced by EFL students during English learning at SMP Yapindo II. Although students may encounter different emotional and psychological difficulties while learning English, it is still unclear what specific psychological challenges are most commonly experienced by students in this learning context. In addition, the factors contributing to these challenges and the ways students respond to them during the learning process have not been fully understood. Since psychological conditions may influence students' classroom participation and overall learning experiences, it is important to examine these issues more deeply. The purpose of this study is to identify the psychological problems faced by students, the reasons for the problems, and the coping techniques that students develop while learning the English language.

## **1.3 Research Question**

1. What psychological challenges are experienced by students in learning English?



2. What factors contribute to students' psychological challenges in learning English?
3. What coping strategies are used by students to overcome those challenges?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions presented above, this study aims to investigate the psychological challenges experienced by students in learning English at SMP Yapindo II. Specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the psychological challenges experienced by students in learning English at SMP Yapindo II, including anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and boredom or frustration.
2. To describe the factors that contribute to students' psychological challenges in learning English at SMP Yapindo II.
3. To explore the coping strategies used by students to overcome psychological challenges during the English learning process.

#### **1.5 Limitations**

This research was limited to understanding and explaining the psychological problems faced by students of SMP Yapindo II in learning English. The current research is connected to the psychological problems such as anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation and boredom or frustration in the process of learning English. In addition, the study explores factors contributing to these psychological conditions and examines the coping strategies used by students to manage them.

This research does not specifically evaluate teachers' instructional strategies or other aspects outside students' psychological experiences during English

learning. Furthermore, the study was conducted only at SMP Yapindo II, a private school with a particular educational context. Therefore, findings may not be relevant to students in other educational environments. These limitations were created to ensure that the study remained within the bounds of students' psychological experiences and their reactions to the problems they face in learning the English language.

### **1.6 Benefits of the Research**

This study is anticipated to theoretically contribute to the understanding of psychological aspects in English language learning by investigating students' experiences of anxiety, low motivation, low self-confidence, and boredom or frustration in an EFL context. The findings may help support Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Theory, Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory, Dörnyei's (1994) Motivational Framework, Wang and Xie's (2024) theory of academic emotions, and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Coping Theory in explaining students' psychological challenges and coping strategies in learning English at a private junior high school.

Furthermore, the current study is anticipated to contribute to the literature on the psychological problems that EFL students face and how they manage to overcome such issues in the course of learning English.

### **1.7 Novelty of the Research**

Previous research on the problems in learning English have mostly concentrated on the linguistic factors such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar or have been conducted in elementary schools and rural school settings. Some studies such as Ariyanti (2016) and Eliza et al. (2023) have discussed the

psychological problems in learning the English language. But there has been little research on these difficulties in private junior high schools. Moreover, although previous studies have examined students' psychological challenges, fewer studies have explored how EFL students cope with these challenges during the English learning process.

The novelty of this study lies in its investigation of various psychological challenges experienced by EFL learners, including anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, low motivation, and boredom or frustration, within the context of a private school with limited resources. Moreover, this study not only identifies the psychological issues faced by students, but also investigates the factors that contribute to such challenges and the coping techniques students adopt to deal with them.

This study intends to evaluate the students' experience of psychological barriers in learning English at SMP Yapindo II and how they respond the challenges during the learning process. Thus, the findings are expected to contribute to the current literature on psychological aspects of English language learning and provide important insights for future research in similar EFL environments.

## **1.8 Clarification of Key Terms**

### **1. Psychological Challenges**

In this study, psychological challenges refer to the emotional and psychological difficulties experienced by students during the process of learning English. These challenges include anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of making

mistakes, low motivation, and feelings of boredom or frustration that may influence students' participation and performance in English learning.

## **2. EFL Students**

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students refer to learners who study English in a country where English is not used as the primary language of daily communication. In this study, EFL students refer specifically to students of SMP Yapindo II Junior High School who learn English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

## **3. English Language Learning**

English language learning in this study refers to the process through which students acquire and develop English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, within the formal educational setting of SMP Yapindo II Junior High School.

## **4. Coping Strategies**

Coping strategies refer to the methods and efforts used by students to manage and overcome psychological challenges encountered during English learning. These strategies may include seeking support from teachers or peers, engaging in independent learning, utilizing additional learning resources, and applying emotional regulation techniques to reduce stress and maintain participation in learning activities.