

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Speaking skills are key skills in communication because they are a means of expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings verbally. According to Xiao (2023), speaking is a verbal interaction in which the speaker transacts with others and manages communication according to the context. Abdullah, Sha'ar, and Boonsuk (2024) added that speaking reflects a person's ability to express ideas and emotions effectively. Harmer (2001) explained that this skill requires mastery of vocabulary, pronunciation, intonation, and grammar. Students with weak speech skills often experience anxiety and lack confidence, thus hindering communication (Ali, 2023; Getachew, 2024). Therefore, speaking skills are essential as the main foundation.

Previous research on the use of local languages in English language learning highlights the important role of social, cultural, and technological contexts in supporting the second language acquisition process. Liu et al. (2025) through a thematic review of 49 empirical studies of EFL Asia emphasized that the practice of Informal Digital Language Learning (IDLE) can empower students to become independent and productive learners. Yu et al. (2025) found that institutional support and positive attitudes play an important role in shaping effective learning behaviors towards English. In addition, Islam et al. (2024) show that English language proficiency can affect the dynamics of local language use as well as cultural integration. Overall, these studies show that the use of local languages in the context of EFL

learning has a significant pedagogical and social impact on the development of students' 6 language competencies.

Research on the development of vocabulary knowledge shows that cognitive and technological factors have a major contribution to the lexical ability of English learners. Teng and Mizumoto (2025) found that ChatGPT-based exercises significantly increased the size and vocabulary strength of Saudi EFL students. Teng (2025) adds that differences in metacognitive knowledge, working memory, and non-verbal intelligence can affect the rate of vocabulary growth longitudinally. Meanwhile, Lai and Wang (2025) identified that extramural digital activities such as entertainment, socialization, and information are related to the level of receptive vocabulary knowledge. These findings confirm the importance of learning strategies that stimulate cognition and utilize technology to improve vocabulary acquisition in the context of EFL.

The study on speaking fluency in the context of EFL highlights the role of language input, directed exercise, and technological support in improving speaking fluency. Kholmurodovna (2024) shows that exposure to authentic language and learners' motivation are the main factors in the development of speaking fluency. Li and Zhao (2025) emphasized that the integration of AI-based technologies such as chatbots and voice recognition is able to improve students' fluency and confidence through real-time interactions. In addition, Zhang et al. (2024) found that the use of NLP tools, especially AI chatbots, can optimize sociocultural learning leading to continuous improvement in speaking fluency. In general, this study emphasizes the importance of a combination of communicative practices, digital support, and intrinsic motivation to develop speaking fluency in English learning or successful communication and self-development in the global era.

Previous studies have addressed the technological, cognitive, and social aspects that affect vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency. However, most research concentrates on formal or digital contexts. On the other hand, some studies have concentrated on direct interactions in jargon classes using local languages. Therefore, research focusing on the influence of regional languages on the vocabulary and speaking fluency of students studying non-formal EFL should be conducted.

This study seeks to expand on previous findings by reviewing the relationship between local language use and students' English language skills in the context of non-formal learning. Given that previous research such as Liu et al. (2025) and Islam et al. (2024) highlighted social and cultural aspects of EFL learning, this study adds a new dimension by linking the function of local languages to vocabulary development and fluency in speech. Thus, this study enriches the literature on the dynamics of local language use in supporting speaking skills and vocabulary mastery among young learners.

This research is important because the use of local languages in learning can serve as a linguistic bridge that helps students understand the meaning of new vocabulary and express ideas more confidently. In the context of EFYL (English for Young Learners), local languages play a role in building comfort and reducing anxiety when speaking. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide practical implications for teachers in non-formal institutions to be able to balance the use of local language and English to increase the effectiveness of speaking learning and mastery of students' vocabulary.

The purpose of this study is to find out how the use of regional languages has an impact on vocabulary mastery and fluency in speaking of EFYL students at LKP Ambassador in Bengkulu. Through a mixed

methods approach, this study combines quantitative data from questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations. The main focus of this study is to identify the extent to which the use of local languages helps students in understanding vocabulary, improving speaking fluency, and strengthening confidence in communicating in English in a non-formal learning environment.

To know about students real problem in EFL classes at LKP Ambassador research conducted preliminary research on 5th november 2025. Initial observations in EFYL classes at LKP Ambassador Bengkulu show that most students still use the local language frequently, especially when they do not find English vocabulary or when interacting with friends. Students seem to have difficulty pronouncing certain terms so that fluency in speaking is interrupted by pauses and doubts. Some students also seem to lack confidence when asked to speak in English. In addition, teachers tend to give explanations using Indonesian, so the use of L1 is still dominant in the learning process. (Appendix 1 about instrument of classroom observation. Appendix 2 about the results of preliminary research classroom observation).

The results of interviews with two EFYL students at LKP Ambassador Bengkulu show variations in language use in the classroom. Kei students said that teachers and friends often use the Bengkulu language, while Ab students mentioned the use of English more. When they don't understand vocabulary, both tend to ask the teacher using the local language or Indonesian. Both of them felt nervous when talking because they forgot vocabulary. They acknowledged that the use of local languages helped to understand the meaning of new words, even though the language of instruction preferences differed: Kei chose full English, while Ab was more comfortable with a mix of local and English

languages. (Appendix 3 about instrument of students' interview. Appendix 4 about the results of preliminary research students' interview).

Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Exploring the Influence of Local Language Use on Vocabulary Knowledge and Speaking Fluency (Evidence from EFYL Classes at LKP Ambassador Bengkulu)" because the initial findings show that the use of local language is still dominant both in student interaction and in teacher explanations. Vocabulary difficulties, pauses when speaking, and lack of confidence are the main obstacles to students' fluent speaking. The interviews also showed that students use the local language to understand new vocabulary, but have different preferences regarding the language of instruction. This condition confirms the need for more in-depth research into the role of local languages in the development of their vocabulary and speaking fluency.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the research problems that have been described, several research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. Many early childhood students in non-formal institutions have difficulty speaking English fluently.
2. Students' vocabulary mastery is still limited, limiting the expression of ideas in oral communication.
3. Lack of confidence when speaking makes students reluctant to actively participate in communication activities.
4. Previous research has focused more on adult learners in formal contexts, rather than on children in non-formal institutions.

5. There have not been many studies that have specifically examined the relationship between vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency in young learners.
6. The learning methods in LKP still do not fully integrate effective approaches to developing vocabulary and fluency in speech.
7. There is still a lack of data on which aspects of vocabulary most affect the fluency of young students.
8. Learning technology that has proven to be effective in improving vocabulary has not been optimally utilized at LKP Ambassador.
9. Affective factors such as anxiety and motivation have not been widely taken into account in improving young students' speaking skills.
10. Targeted and contextual vocabulary teaching strategies are still not consistently applied in English learning in LKP Ambassador.

C. Limitation of the Problem

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the study only focused on young learner students at LKP Ambassador as a non-formal institution, so the results could not be generalized to formal educational institutions, other age groups, or institutions with different teaching methods. Second, the mastery of the vocabulary studied only includes aspects of quantity, variety, and accuracy, while other dimensions such as depth of meaning, collocation, and pragmatic use are not discussed thoroughly. Third, although research touches on the influence of vocabulary on speaking fluency and confidence, external factors such as motivation, anxiety, and learning environment support are not explored in depth. In addition, the limited time of the study led to the analysis being more focused on momentary conditions rather than the long-term development of students' vocabulary skills and speaking fluency.

D. Research Questions

Based on the background description, the research question of this study are:

1. How does the use of the local language influence students' vocabulary knowledge in EFYL classes at LKP Ambassador Bengkulu?
2. What aspects of vocabulary (number, variety, or accuracy) contribute the most to students' fluent speech?
3. How vocabulary mastery affects students' confidence and fluency in English learning in non-formal institutions?

E. The Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions that have been formulated previously, the purpose of this research is to provide a clear direction in achieving the results of scientific studies as follows:

1. To investigate the influence of the use of the local language on students' vocabulary knowledge in EFYL classes at LKP Ambassador Bengkulu.
2. Identify the aspects of vocabulary, such as number, variety, and accuracy of use, that contribute the most to students' fluent speech.
3. Analyzes how vocabulary mastery affects students' confidence and fluency in English learning in non-formal institutions.

F. The Significance of the Research

Speaking skills are fundamental skills in oral communication that are essential for young learners to express ideas and interact effectively. However, many students at LKP Ambassador have difficulty speaking English fluently due to limited vocabulary mastery and low confidence. This study aims to examine the relationship between vocabulary mastery and fluency in speaking, especially in young learners in non-formal institutions, thereby filling in the gaps in previous research and providing practical insights.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of how aspects of vocabulary mastery such as number, variety, and accuracy of use affect the fluency of speech in young learners. Most of the previous research focused on adult learners in formal contexts, while this study expanded the theoretical framework on early language acquisition in nonformal settings. In addition, this study also integrates affective factors such as self-confidence which enriches the study of communication competence in children.

Practically, the results of this research provide benefits for educators and curriculum developers at LKP Ambassador and similar institutions. Understanding the aspects of vocabulary that most affect speaking fluency can help in designing more effective learning strategies and teaching materials. In addition, insights into the influence of vocabulary mastery on students' confidence can encourage the creation of a more supportive learning environment that increases students' active participation and speaking ability.

In conclusion, this study not only adds to the treasure trove of academic knowledge, but also provides practical recommendations for improving English speaking skills in young learners in non-formal institutions. This research answers the important need in supporting early language development through targeted and contextual vocabulary learning, which will ultimately contribute to students' academic success and lifelong communication skills.

G. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

To avoid differences in interpretation, the following are explained important terminologies that are defined operationally so that this study has clarity of concept and study limitations:

1. *Vocabulary Knowledge* is the understanding and mastery of vocabulary that students have, including the number, variety, and accuracy of the use of words in the context of everyday and academic language.
2. *Speaking Fluency* is the ability to speak fluently, without many pauses, errors, or confusion, that reflects the fluency of verbal communication in the target language.
3. *Young Learners* are early childhood children who are in the early stages of learning a second or foreign language, with different cognitive and affective development characteristics than adult learners.

4. *Local Language Use* is the use of regional languages by learners in the English learning process that affects the way of thinking, understanding meaning, and developing linguistic competence in a bilingual context

