

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND  
SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SEMESTER  
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM  
OF SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

**A Thesis by**

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**English Education Study Program**

**Language and Arts Education Department**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

**SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

**PALEMBANG**

**2019**

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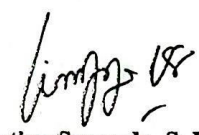
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**The Correlation between Perfectionism and Speaking Performance of the 6<sup>th</sup>  
Semester Students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University**

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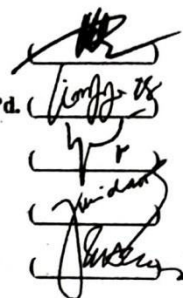
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## DECLARATION

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**ABSTRACT**

Perfectionism is a belief that perfection must be obtained. Perfectionists are people who strive for perfection in everything they do and chase high unrealistic goals for their performance. Perfectionism is believed to affect language learning especially speaking performance. The purposes of this study were to find out whether or not there was a significant correlation between students' perfectionism and speaking performance, there was a significant contribution of perfectionism to speaking performance, which dimension of the students' perfectionism that mostly contributed to their speaking performance, and which aspect of speaking performance that was mostly influenced by perfectionism. The sample of this study was 72 sixth semester students of English Education Study Program. of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Sriwijaya University. The technique of collecting the data was total population sampling. In collecting the data the researcher used Almost Perfect Scale-Revised questionnaire and speaking test. The data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, Simple Linear Regression, and Multiple Linear Regression in SPSS 24. The results showed that (1) there was a significant negative correlation between perfectionism and students' speaking performance with p-value (0.000) and r-obtained (-.614), (2) there was 36.8% contribution of perfectionism to students' speaking performance, (3) the dimension of perfectionism that mostly contributed to speaking performance was discrepancy with 57.9%, and (4) the aspect of speaking performance that was mostly influenced by perfectionism was grammar with 34.2%.

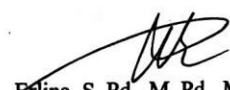
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents: (1) the background of the study, (2) the problems of the study, (3) the objectives of the study, and (4) the significance of the study.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Being able to communicate in a foreign language is one of the essential things needed in this globalisation era. With the knowledge of foreign language, people can easily understand the idea of the talk by someone who lives in different country. English is the most commonly used language by people around the world. According to Pennycook (1994), the number of speakers of English worldwide is between 700 million and one billion covering native speakers of English and speakers of English as a second and foreign language. It can be assumed that English is very well-known around the world.

English includes the four language skills. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Harmer (2007), the skills are divided into two. They are productive skills and receptive skills. The productive skills are speaking and writing while the receptive skills are listening and reading. Speaking and writing are productive because learners need to articulate words and write to produce language while listening and reading are receptive because the learners receive language by listening to conversation, music, and video and also by reading comprehension, poem, newspaper, poetry, book, etc.

According to Orwig (1999), when students learn foreign language, first they should be taught how to speak. Therefore, it means that speaking is one of the important skills in English that should be mastered by students beside writing, reading, and listening. It is such an active skill and one of the ways for students to share their ideas, feelings, and opinion.

According to Nunan (1991), mastering speaking skill is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language. It means that speaking skill is believed as the most influential part in language learning because if the students

want to master a language, they have to master the speaking skill too. To provide a meaningful communication, one of the skills that the students need to master is speaking skill. Egan (1999) states:

Speaking is the important part of learning second or foreign language. It is thinking of what a person wishes to say, how to choose the right words from vocabulary, and put the words in the proper grammatical framework, then communicating the feelings they have, and so on.

However, some students still find it difficult to speak English. The data from EF English Proficiency Index (2018) showed that Indonesia got 51<sup>st</sup> rank among 88 countries with 51.58 proficiency index. It can be assumed that Indonesia's English proficiency level was low. With a low English proficiency level, it can be assumed that Indonesian students still have difficulties in learning English especially speaking. The study done by Sayuri (2016) which involved fourth semester students of English Department of Mulawarman University showed that they are still confused to make conversation, deliver statements, and give opinions. Beside the reason that they are lack of vocabulary and grammar, they are also afraid of making mistakes and being corrected by their peers.

Another study in speaking performance done by Heriansyah (2012) has also identified the difficulties of speaking faced by the students of the English Department of Syiah Kuala University. They are often not confident to speak, afraid of making mistakes, shy in front of their friends, and not used to talking in class since their pronunciation and vocabulary are poor and confined. Based on the interview that the writer did to some students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University, they said that they actually understood English well but when it came to speaking, they became afraid and shy. They said that the only reason was because they did not want to make any grammar and pronunciation error when speaking. Also, they did not want their peers to correct them when they unconsciously made a mistake when speaking. So in the end, what they did was they only remained silent and became passive when it was time for speaking class.

The striving for perfection and the high expectation of their friends for them when speaking are some problems that can really affect how they behave in speaking class. If these things happen overtime, it will affect the success of their speaking performance. According to Ellis (1986), the success of speaking in students itself can be influenced by many factors such as age, aptitude, intelligence, cognitive style, attitudes, motivation and personality trait. According to Larsen-Freeman (1991), personality traits in learners have been believed to affect their language learning especially speaking and one of them is perfectionism.

Over past decade, many researchers have been conducted researches about perfectionism and how it can affect learning process especially language learning. Brophy (1999) stated that perfectionism in learners seem to be counterproductive to any kind of learning including language learning. Even though the results from the previous researchers seemed to be inconsistent, it still could show how far perfectionism can affect the English achievement of the students especially speaking.

Perfectionism is a belief that perfection in any domain must be obtained. Perfectionists are people, who struggle to fulfill very high standards in everything they do, and chase unrealistically high goals in performance and achievement. (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). At first, perfectionism was considered as a personality trait which only had one-dimensional by many people, but since the early 1990's it has been viewed as multidimensional (Riley & Shafran, 2005). It means that perfectionism is not only about striving for perfection but more than that. It is believed to have more than one dimension.

In this case, Slaney, Rice, Mobley, and Trippi (2001) had developed three dimensions of perfectionism by dividing it into negative (maladaptive) and positive (adaptive) aspects. Those are standards, order, and discrepancy. The standards and order display perfectionism in adaptive and positive way while the discrepancy attempts to show the maladaptive/negative aspects of perfectionism. The first is standards. It describes the perfectionist as an individual who has high standards and expectations about his/her performance and achievements. The

second is order. It describes the perfectionist who has preference for orderliness and neatness. The last is discrepancy. It describes the perfectionist who has a belief that his/her personal high standards are not being met, which defines the negative aspect of perfectionism.

According to Curran and Hill (2017), perfectionism is believed as one of the serious problems faced by most young people in this current time especially millennial generation because young people especially students now facing more competitive environments, more unrealistic expectations, and more anxious and controlling parents than generations before. It was also the reason why the writer chose the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University to be the sample because most of the students in the sixth semester students are in millennial generation (1980s -1990s) and beside that, they have already finished all the speaking courses (IEC Speaking, Speaking I, II, and III). Studies conducted by Hollender (1965) and Conroy (2003) stated that a fear of failure in perfectionist is corresponded with problems in achievement. When students get disappointed with their results, they tend to be anxious, stressful and depressed for what is coming next. With a fear of failure that students have, it seems very impossible for them to get a good achievement in language learning especially in speaking.

A study done by Pishghadam and Akhondpoor (2011) which involved 300 junior and senior students of English in Mashhad universities showed that the perfectionism of the students influenced their foreign language learning success. It showed that the perfectionist learners tend to set high expectations of their performances, and see their mistakes as a failure. They often have unrealistic goals which lead them to a disappointment. In speaking class, they would not be satisfied with only communicating. They would want to speak flawlessly.

Another study done by Ghorbandordinejad and Afshar (2017) which involved 400 students studying at six high schools in Northern Tehran showed that the total perfectionism scores of the students had a significantly negative correlation with their scores of English. It means that the students who have higher level of perfectionism were likely to have lower scores in English. It

happened because they tend to have high unrealistic goals of something that they want to achieve. The high unrealistic goals are believed to have negative effects in the process of language learning.

Nevertheless, perfectionism also has a positive side. Flett, Sawatzky, and Hewitt (1995) considered that positive side of learners' perfectionism associated with a good achievement. It is because the students who have positive perfectionism tend to have a high motivation in themselves. Even though they sometimes do not reach their goals, they always come up with a higher motivation than before. They are more likely to bounce back from the failure faster than those who have negative perfectionism. In the end, they will still be able to achieve a good achievement.

A study done by Rastegar, Khabir, and Kermani (2017) which involved 98 students studying English as a foreign language at Kerman institutes showed that perfectionism of the students has a significant positive relationship with their language proficiency. Related to the dimensions of perfectionism, students' personal standards and organization had a significant positive relationship with their language proficiency.

In a nutshell, based on researches before, there will be a time when the students unexpectedly pronounce the wrong grammar or pronunciation in speaking. When it happens, students who have perfectionism in themselves might get disappointed easily because the words that they produce when they speak are not in line with their high expectations. Also, when other people give negative feedback whenever they make mistakes in speaking can make them afraid to try again. This may lead the students to become stress and get lower score in speaking. It may happen because their perfectionism leads to a more negative way. However, for some reasons, they also might have positive perfectionism if they become realistic with their expectations and the learning environment around them is supportive. So, it can be assumed that perfectionism is believed to affect the language learning of the students especially speaking performance.

From the discussion above, the writer was fascinated to conduct a correlation study entitled **“The Correlation between Perfectionism and**

**Speaking Performance of the 6<sup>th</sup> Semester Students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University**". The writer would like to know whether or not there was a significant correlation between perfectionism and students' speaking performance.

### **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background stated above, the problems of the study are formulated in the following questions:

- 1) Is there any significant correlation between students' perfectionism and their speaking performance?
- 2) If yes, is there any significant contribution of students' perfectionism to their speaking performance?
- 3) Which dimension of the students' perfectionism that mostly contributes to their speaking performance?
- 4) Which aspect of speaking performance that is mostly influenced by perfectionism?

### **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

Based on the problems of the study above, the objectives of the study are:

- 1) to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between students' perfectionism and their speaking performance.
- 2) to find out whether or not there is a significant contribution of students' perfectionism to their speaking performance, if there is.
- 3) to find out which dimension of the students' perfectionism that mostly contributes to their speaking performance.
- 4) to find out which aspect of speaking performance that is mostly influenced by perfectionism.



#### **1.4 The Significance of the Study**

The result of this study is hoped to be essential for educators, students, students' parents, and future researcher:

1. For the educators, hopefully they can use this as a reference in order to reflect on themselves in choosing effective way to teach students and create a good competitive environment in learning process especially speaking class so that the students who are perfectionist can be more realistic with their goals and standards.
2. For the students, hopefully the result of this study can help them to utilize their personality trait including "perfectionism" for reaching a good achievement in language learning especially speaking.
3. For students' parents, hopefully the result of this study can help them to understand their children's personalities more, manage the expectations of their children and give a big motivation for them.
4. For future researcher, hopefully the findings of this study can be considered as beneficial information to add the reference related to perfectionism in language learning especially speaking.

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