

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking is one of the most essential skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It enables learners to communicate ideas, express opinions, and interact effectively in both academic and real-life contexts. In speaking, learners are not only required to produce grammatically correct sentences, but also to deliver their messages in a way that is meaningful and engaging. One important aspect that supports effective communication is emotional intonation, which refers to the variation of pitch, tone, and rhythm used to express feelings and attitudes.

However, in many EFL classrooms, especially in Indonesia, speaking instruction tends to focus more on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation accuracy, while suprasegmental features such as intonation and emotional expression receive less attention. As a result, many students are able to construct correct sentences, but their speech often sounds monotonous, flat, and lacking emotional expression. This limitation can affect the clarity and effectiveness of communication, as listeners may find it difficult to interpret the speaker's intended meaning or emotional state.

Emotional intonation plays a crucial role in conveying meaning beyond words. Different emotions, such as joys, sadness and anxiety are often reflected through variations in pitch, intensity, and speech patterns. Without appropriate intonation, spoken language may lose its naturalness and communicative value. Therefore, understanding how emotional intonation appears in EFL students' speech production is important for improving both teaching practices and learning outcomes.

In recent years, technological developments have provided new opportunities to analyze speech more objectively. One of the most widely used tools for acoustic speech analysis is Praat. Praat is capable of visualizing and analyzing acoustic features such as pitch (fundamental frequency), pitch range, and intonation contours, making

it suitable for investigating emotional intonation in spoken language. This allows for a more scientific and measurable analysis compared to traditional subjective assessment.

Despite the importance of emotional intonation, there is still limited research that explores this aspect in EFL contexts using acoustic analysis tools. Most previous studies focus on general speaking skills or pronunciation, while fewer studies examine how emotional intonation is realized in students' speech. Therefore, this study aims to explore emotional intonation in EFL students' speech production using *Praat* as an analytical tool.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How is emotional intonation realized in EFL students' speech production?
2. What are the characteristics of pitch variation and intonation patterns in different emotional expressions (e.g., joy, sadness, calmness and anxiousness) produced by EFL students?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore how emotional intonation appears in EFL students' speech production.
2. To identify and analyze pitch variation and intonation patterns across different emotional expressions using *Praat*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

1. Theoretical Significance
 - a) To enrich the study of EFL speaking by focusing on suprasegmental features, particularly emotional intonation.
 - b) To contribute to the integration of linguistic theory and technological tools in speech analysis.
2. Practical Significance

- a) For students: to increase awareness of the importance of emotional expression in speaking English.
- b) For teachers: to provide insights into teaching strategies that emphasize intonation and emotional delivery.
- c) For researchers: to offer a reference for future studies on speech analysis using tools like *Praat*.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focuses on exploring emotional intonation in EFL students' speech production. The participants are limited to university-level EFL students. The analysis is restricted to acoustic features such as pitch, pitch range, and intonation patterns obtained through Praat. This study does not focus on improving speaking skills or testing the effectiveness of a teaching method, but rather on describing and analyzing existing speech patterns.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- a) Emotional Intonation: The variation of pitch, tone, and rhythm in speech used to express emotions such as joy, sadness, calmness and anxiety.
- b) EFL Students: Learners who study English as a Foreign Language in a non-English-speaking environment.
- c) Speech Production: The ability of learners to produce spoken language in a communicative context.
- d) *Praat*: A computer software program developed by Boersma and Weenink for analyzing and visualizing speech acoustics, including pitch, intensity, formants, and intonation patterns.