

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Speaking is one of the most crucial and challenging skills of learning English. It requires students to integrate language skills, cognitive processing, and socio-affective skills in real-time. According to Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988), learners' working memory can experience overload when they have to process information quickly and pay attention to many things at once under time pressure. This cognitive demand becomes a concern for students in vocational learning that focuses on the hospitality and cruise industries.

However, one of the biggest affective barriers that students face in many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes is speaking anxiety. This significantly hinders them from actively to develop their speaking skills. Horwitz et al. (1986) define foreign language anxiety as the worry, tension, and emotional reactions associated with the practice of speaking a second language, which are often characterized by negative self-image and fear of making mistakes. This mental barrier is further explained through the Affective Filter Hypothesis from Krashen (1982), which claims that a strong emotional state increases a person's affective filter. This therefore makes the problem with the ability to process language information efficiently and delaying language acquisition. As a result, these mental barriers cause students to prefer to be silent, give long pauses before answering, or

say nothing at all, which ultimately hinders the improvement of their speaking skills in the long run.

There are several triggers of this anxiety. Young (1991) identified a number of factors that cause anxiety of public speaking, such as fear of being evaluated, low self-confidence, weak language skills, perfectionism, as well as instructor-centered teaching techniques that discourage students from taking risks. Furthermore, Hanifa (2018) states that learners often feel anxious due to a lack of vocabulary, uncertainty about how to use language effectively, and concerns about the correct pronunciation of words. Özdemir and Erten (2020) also report that anxiety and lack of social confidence will increase significantly when students are required to correct peer mistakes and participate in competitive performance-oriented classroom activities. These kinds of affective factors can directly cause students to not involve in learning and avoid speaking activities.

Such anxiety symptoms often is worsen in classroom context that involve many demands on speaking activities, such as class discussions, presentations, or unprepared speaking activities. Physiological symptoms such as trembling, nervousness, or a pounding heartbeat make it even more difficult for students to process and produce language correctly. Public speaking performance is greatly affected by this condition; Tien (2018) found that students with high levels of anxiety tend to give shorter, less accurate, and disconnected responses from class conversations. Mahmud (2019) also found that students become not fluent and lose confidence when they have little preparation time and have to speak suddenly. This condition can create a continuous cycle in which the fear of public speaking leads

to poor performance, which then triggers an escalation of anxiety at the next opportunity.

To reduce these barriers, many educators have explored a variety of instructional strategies. Recent research from Herlina and Wiyanto (2021) on Cognitive Load Theory shows that students' cognitive stress is drastically reduced when performing speaking tasks if they are given a clear situational framework through role play simulations. The use of role play allows for the sharing of imaginative roles and social contexts that can reduce psychological pressure, lower affective filters, and free learners to produce language more freely. Putri and Fatimah (2021) also stated that encouraging instructor comments, supportive classroom climate, and low-stress speaking activities were strongly associated with decreased student anxiety and increased class participation. In line with this, Kurniasari (2019) found that students become more comfortable and free to speak when they are actively involved in collaborative learning activities, such as paired assignments and group discussions.

Although there is a lot of research on speech anxiety and its impact on EFL students, gaps are still found. Most of the existing research is dominated by studies that focus on formal educational settings, such as junior high school, high school, and college. As a result, there is still very little research examining how instructors manage student anxiety and promote active engagement in non-formal educational settings, such as course and training institution (LKP) at BEC Academy. This educational scenario in a vocational environment is very different because it demands a lot of public speaking preparation, a diversity of learners' backgrounds, and constant interaction with industry professionals or factors that have a significant

impact on fluctuating students' anxiety and adjusting learning materials. In addition to contextual issues, most previous studies have only used a single method for data collection, either quantitative questionnaires alone or qualitative interviews only. The use of this single method often fails to present the whole picture. The data may only be limited to displaying measurable levels of anxiety but missing the essence of the meaning behind the students' empirical experiences and the pedagogical dynamics of the instructors in the classroom.

To address these gaps, this study was specifically aimed at identifying the level of anxiety experienced by students at BEC Academy, the factors that contribute to this anxiety, and investigating the various strategies used by instructors at the institution. A deep understanding of these aspects is crucial to help as a basis for an effective language acquisition process, especially for hospitality and cruise ship students. Without a clear understanding of such anxiety, instructors will continue to encounter obstacles to achieve competency targets in very limited instructional time. Since the English language learning at this training institution is held in a relatively short period of time, the findings of this study are very important and urgent to be used as a concrete foundation in improving and optimizing the quality of teaching. Based on this foundation, this research is titled "An Analysis of Anxiety in Speaking Class Among Students of BEC Academy in Learning English."

1.2 Problem Identification

Speaking anxiety has been showed up as a physical sign in the classroom, such as sharking or sweating, blockage in the mental conditions such as being afraid of being judged negatively, and behaviour issues like does not wanted to participate in the learning process. According to the early observations at BEC Academy, it

can be seen that lots of the students showed a clear indicator of nervousness when they need to speak English. Some students tend to fear the chance to speak up, avoid eye contact or choose to stay still during task that inquire them to communicate with other people. In a state where students feel the fear of making mistake or judged by their peers, their emotional state will go up. This condition drive them to feel hard to take the chance to speak in English.

In fact, the instructor play a big obligation to help the students who encounter nervousness in speaking. Instructor at BEC Academy had implemented variety of teaching strategy such as pair work, group discussion, role play, feedback, and encouragement. However, there is no clear evidence on which method does give a stronger impact to assist the students to feel less anxious while speaking English.

In worst condition, the cause of the speaking anxiety have not yet fully identified in BEC Academy. According to Young (1991), anxiety can be caused by several factors, such as language problems, low self-confidence, pressure from peers, classroom environment and the act of instructor in instructional setting. It is not yet clearly demonstrated which of this factor indeed giving influence the most on the students' anxiety. Refering to this gap, it is necessary to gain a closer investigation into BEC Academy students, related to their speaking anxiety, the factor supporting the phenomenon and what instructional strategy will be the best to overcome the anxiety.

1.3 Research Limitation

The limitation on this research mentioned as below:

1. The level of anxiety that the students experience, when speaking English at BEC Academy.

2. The contributing factors to students' anxiety during speaking English at BEC Academy.
3. The instructors' strategies to overcome students' speaking anxiety at BEC Academy.

1.4 Research Questions

As discussed in the research background, the research questions of this study can be proposed as below details:

1. What level of anxiety does students' experience when speaking English at BEC Academy?
2. What factors contribute to students' anxiety during speaking English at BEC Academy?
3. What strategies do the instructors use to overcome students' speaking anxiety at BEC Academy?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objective of this study could be mentioned as below:

1. To identify the level of anxiety does students experience when speaking English at BEC Academy.
2. To investigate the factors that contribute to students' anxiety during speaking English at BEC Academy
3. To identify the strategies that the instructors use to overcome students' speaking anxiety at BEC Academy

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is meant to make important additions to the field of teaching and learning English, especially when it comes to the problem of speaking anxiety among EFL students and ways to help them get over it. This study is important from both a theoretical and a practical point of view.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

Several important new ideas about speaking nervousness and how to teach communication have been added to our knowledge by this study. This study adds to what is known about foreign language anxiety by looking at it through the lens of how students interact with each other and how instructors do their jobs, rather than just looking at it from the point of view of the students, which is how most earlier studies have done it.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For The Instructor

The result of this study is expected to give a support to the instructor to gain more comprehension through the different kinds of students' speaking anxiety and the cause of the phenomenon. From this acknowledgement, it is hoped that the instructor could figure out the suitable teaching method that could help the students reduce their speaking anxiety.

b. For Students:

The findings of this study were expected to give the students broader knowledge about anxiety especially in speaking, so that the students could get the feeling of being equipped in order to reduce their fear, and speak more confidently.

c. For Future Researchers

The result of this study was expected to become a useful guidance for future research about speaking anxiety, emotional factors in the process of language learning and supportive instructional strategies.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to ensure clarity on this study, there are several key terms emerged in this research.

1.7.1 Conceptual Definition

1. Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is a type of anxiety that happens during a performance when someone have to speak a language. This anxiety can be directed into mental, emotional and physical reactions, for instance jitters, shaking, fear, and avoiding (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1982).

2. EFL Students

EFL students are people who learn English in a place where it's not the main language used for everyday conversation and where it's mostly used for school or work (Brown, 2001).

3. Instructor Strategies

According to Oxford (1990) and Richards and Rodgers (2001), teaching strategies are the planned lessons, methods, or actions that instructors use to help students learn and reach their individual goals.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

The operational definitions explain how the key terms are used specifically within the context of this study.

1. Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety in this study means that students are clearly uncomfortable or unhappy when they have to talk in class. This is shown by instructors' comments and classroom observations that show students are anxious, such as hesitating, avoiding, or not participating at all, making worried movements, or not wanting to speak.

2. EFL Students

In this study, "EFL students" are active students taking speaking classes at BEC Academy who fill out surveys and take part in interviews as research participants.

3. Instructor Strategies

In this study, instructor strategies are the exact things that BEC Academy instructors do to plan and help students who are nervous about speaking up, as found through instructor interviews and classroom observations.

