CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This introduction chapter presents background of the study, statement of problem, research objective, research significance, scope and limitation, research hypothesis, and definition of key terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

Public speaking is one of the most important communication skills, especially for public figures, such as politicians, organizational leaders, and government officials. Public speeches serve as a medium to convey visions, missions, policies, and build emotional closeness with the audience. In many cases, public speaking performance can strengthen or even destroy a leader's image and credibility. Therefore, verbal and non-verbal aspects of speeches are the main focus in the study of political communication and psycholinguistics.

In the era of globalization, the ability to communicate using a foreign language, especially English, is one of the indicators of competence that is increasingly being considered by the public. This is due to the role of English as an international language that is often used in global forums, bilateral meetings, and inter-institutional communication. When a public figure delivers a speech in English, public expectations increase, because it not only reflects intellectual ability, but also readiness to face the challenges of cross-cultural communication.

However, the reality on the ground shows that not all public figures are able to meet these expectations well. Problems such as nervousness, stuttering,

mispronunciation, and prolonged communication pauses (dead air) often occur. One real example that caught the public's attention was Puan Maharani's English speech, where she appeared nervous and had difficulty delivering the speech fluently. The moment was captured in a widely circulated video and sparked various responses from the public, especially on social media.

This phenomenon is interesting to study from a psycholinguistic perspective, because it combines psychological and linguistic aspects in the context of real communication. One approach that can be used to understand this phenomenon is the Cognitive Dissonance Theory proposed by Leon Festinger (1957). This theory explains that individuals will experience psychological stress when there is a discrepancy between beliefs, expectations, and reality. In the context of a speech, public figures may have a strong desire to appear perfect and meet public expectations, but in reality their communication performance is disrupted by mental stress or linguistic limitations.

In addition, the Language Processing Theory developed by Willem J.M. Levelt (1989) offers a systematic framework for understanding how the language production process takes place, from the conceptualization, formulation, to articulation stages. When a speaker experiences a disturbance at one of these stages—due to stress or anxiety—the end result can be errors in pronunciation, loss of words, or even a halt in the flow of conversation. In this case, communication problems are not only caused by a lack of linguistic competence, but also by psychological conditions that inhibit the mental process in language production.

This condition is exacerbated by the presence of emotional interference as explained by Eysenck (2000) through the Emotional Interference theory. Eysenck explains that anxiety and psychological stress can significantly reduce working memory capacity and slow down cognitive processes. This means that under stress, a person's ability to choose words, construct sentences, and articulate messages will decrease drastically, even though under normal conditions he or she is able to do so well.

Thus, the study of cognitive dissonance, language processing, and emotional disturbances is important in understanding the dynamics of public communication, especially in the context of political speeches. This study attempts to analyze the communication phenomenon experienced by Puan Maharani in her public speech using the three theoretical approaches. Through a psycholinguistic approach, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence the fluency of verbal communication in formal and foreign language contexts, as well as provide useful recommendations for improving the quality of public communication.

This study also has practical relevance in the world of political education, leadership training, and public speaking skills development, especially for figures who will appear on the national and international stage. With a deeper understanding of communication barriers, training can be focused not only on the technical aspects of linguistics, but also on emotional management, mental readiness, and strategies to reduce psychological stress. This will strengthen the

communication competence of public figures, while increasing public trust in their ability to represent the nation in the eyes of the world.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes that the ability to speak in a foreign language is not only about fluency, but also about mental toughness, self-control, and adaptive ability in dealing with pressure. When these aspects are not met, then the speech that should be a moment of strengthening self-image can turn into a source of criticism and doubt from the public. Therefore, a deep understanding of this phenomenon is very important, both academically and practically.

1.2 Research Question

Public speaking, especially in a foreign language, requires not only linguistic skills but also psychological stability from the speaker. This phenomenon is important to study because it reflects the interaction between cognitive and emotional processes in formal communication situations. Based on this background, this study is formulated into the following questions:

1. How do cognitive dissonance affect public speaker performance in a foreign language, especially in the case of Puan Maharani?

2. How do language processing affect public speaker performance in a foreign language, especially in the case of Puan Maharani?

1.3 Research Purposes

Based on research question, how do cognitive dissonance and language processing affecr public speaker, these can be divine and there are:

1. Analyzing how cognitive dissonance processes affect Puan Maharani's public communication performance in English speeches, including the emergence of symptoms such as emotional pressure, dissonances, and pronunciation errors.

2. Analyzing how language processing processes affect Puan Maharani's public communication performance in English speeches, including the emergence of symptoms such as emotional pressure, dissonances, and pronunciation errors..

1.4 Research Significance

This research is expected to provide significant contributions both theoretically and practically in the study of psycholinguistics and political communication. Theoretically, this research enriches the understanding of the relationship between psychological conditions and cognitive processes in language production, especially in the context of foreign language public speeches. Through the application of cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), language processing theory (Levelt, 1989), and emotional interference theory (Eysenck, 2000), this research explains how emotional stress can disrupt the flow of language production and reduce the quality of verbal communication. This opens up new discussion space regarding the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in analyzing the communication performance of public figures. Practically, the results of this study can be used as a reference for political figures, communication trainers, and leadership training institutions in developing more comprehensive public speaking training programs. And the researcher hopes that this research can also be a

reference for students or the wider community to make public speaking better. This research shows that training does not only need to emphasize aspects of language and speaking techniques, but must also include mental strengthening, stress management, and readiness to face public pressure. Thus, public figures can appear more confident and effective in delivering messages, especially in international forums that require the use of foreign languages. In addition, this study also contributes to increasing public awareness to assess public figures' communication skills more fairly and contextually, by considering psychological factors that may affect their performance.

1.5   Data Sample

Time: 0:17-0:38

Transcription:

> "Unprecedented global health and economic crisis, tens of millions of people… (short pause and showed the nervousness)… a all are tris of fa falling (unstable intonation and intermittent pronunciation)… into extreme po poverty (intermittent pronunciation)… the number of a undernourished people is predicted to skyroad—skyrocketed (mispronounced)—into more than… (short pause)… it–"

Table 1.1 Table of Data Sample

Picture of Expression	Explanation/Picture Description
 Figure 1. Paradigma TV, Seconds 0:17-0:38	In the picture, Puan Maharani is seen looking down and only reading the text from the podium without making eye contact with the audience. Her facial expression looks serious and a little tense, indicating full focus on the text. Her body position is rather stiff and has minimal interactive expressions, and does not show convincing harmonizing gestures.

1.5.1 Verbal Observation

1. There are several pauses that are not natural breaks in the sentence, but rather pauses due to loss of focus or confusion,

2. There are incorrect pronunciations such as: "tris of fa falling" and "skyroad" which was later corrected to "skyrocketed",

3. Unstable intonation, which is an indication of nervousness or decreased control of articulation.

4. There is no eye contact or non-verbal communication accompanying the speech.

Leon Festinger (1957) – Cognitive Dissonance Theory: When the reality of performance (nervousness, pronunciation errors) does not match his expectations as a national leader who must appear fluent and confident, cognitive dissonance arises. The psychological pressure from this discrepancy causes increased anxiety, which impacts speaking ability.

Willem J.M. Levelt (1989) – Language Production Model: Based on the language production model, there is a disturbance at the formulation and articulation stages. At the formulation stage, there is unpreparedness to choose the right word, while at the articulation stage, there are pronunciation errors and phrase repetitions ("skyroad—skyrocketed"). This indicates a high cognitive load that interferes with verbal output.

Eysenck (2000) – Emotional Interference Theory: High anxiety interferes with working memory, causing language processing errors. Intense emotional stress reduces the brain's capacity to access short-term linguistic memory and decreases the speed of real-time verbal responses.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity in this study, some key terms are defined as follows:

1. Cognitive Dissonance:

Refers to the state of psychological discomfort experienced by individuals when there is a discrepancy between beliefs, expectations, and actual actions. In the context of public speaking, cognitive dissonance occurs when a speaker wants to appear confident and eloquent, but experiences performance barriers, such as

pronunciation errors or nervousness, that conflict with personal and social expectations (Festinger, 1957).

An emotional state in the form of restlessness or anxiety that can affect cognitive and verbal performance when speaking in public. According to Eysenck (2000), Anxiety, which manifests as nervousness, can reduce cognitive processing efficiency by overloading the working memory with task-irrelevant thoughts. Nervousness in this study was observed through facial expressions, voice intonation, body gestures, and loss of eye contact with the audience.

2. Language Processing:

The mental processes that occur when a person produces or understands language. According to Levelt's theory (1989), this process consists of three main stages: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. Disruption in any of these stages can result in impaired verbal performance, such as pauses, mispronunciations, or loss of sentence flow.

Mispronunciation of words is usually caused by lack of mastery of foreign language phonology or emotional stress when speaking. According to Yule (2010), Mispronunciation refers to the incorrect articulation of phonemes that may lead to confusion or misinterpretation by the listener. In this study, mispronunciation is an indicator of obstacles in the language articulation stage.

A prolonged and unplanned communication pause in the process of delivering a speech. According to Glickstein (2014), Dead air in public speaking is often a consequence of cognitive overload or speech disfluency caused by emotional

interference. Dead air usually appears as a sign of uncertainty, nervousness, or loss of control over the flow of speech, and is part of the symptoms of stuttering or articulation disorders.

Verbal communication activities carried out in front of the public to convey information, opinions, or ideas. According to Lucas (2015), Public speaking is the art of effective oral communication with an audience, requiring both verbal clarity and non-verbal engagement. In the context of this study, public speaking refers to formal speeches made by political figures in international forums using a foreign language.