

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter concentrates on the research background, research questions, research purposes, research significance, research scope, conceptual framework, and previous studies.

A. Research Background

This study evaluates EFL students' speaking anxiety factors and perceives students' strategies to reduce their anxiety. This study is concerned with speaking anxiety in English department students from an ecological perspective for three adequate reasons. These reasons discuss the emergence of anxiety in speaking with English among EFL students, ecological perspective in studying foreign language anxiety (FLA), and the benefit of understanding students' strategies in reducing speaking anxiety. In addition, several previous studies guide the gap of this study.

Speaking English anxiety is an issue faced by many English department students. Handayani, Rozimela, and Fatimah (2020) noted that (68.85%) of students in the English Department experience high anxiety in speaking English. Thus, the students majoring in English Language Education possibly experience such anxiety since they will be future teachers. As in this profession, they must be self-assured enough to demonstrate their abilities in front of their students. They might experience anxiety in speaking during the learning process of the language. In line with Hashemi (2011), he also mentions that learners frequently experience anxiety during the complicated process of learning a new language. As a result, anxiety can be a severe issue for this group of students.

This study is concerned with an ecological perspective to study speaking anxiety factors because this theory views learners, instructors, their local classroom environments, and institutional variables as a web of interconnected interactions. An ecological perspective examines the learning process, teachers' and students' actions and behaviors, the interaction's multidimensional nature, and language use

(Lier, 2004, p. 210). This research studies speaking anxiety with the ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The ecological model nested ecosystem examines the environmental influence on situational foreign language anxiety (FLA) (Kashbi & Shirvan, 2017). Therefore, in this study, the factors that generate anxiety in speaking English are based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory.

This study considers that understanding EFL students' strategies to reduce speaking anxiety has several benefits. Crowe (2009, p. 17) stated, "Knowing your students' strategies allows you to teach them in the most advantageous methods possible while also establishing a trustworthy relationship with every student." Thus finding the strategy assists the teacher in identifying each student's individual needs. Moreover, the teacher can teach them the most beneficial ways to become fluent in English. Furthermore, the teacher can establish a trusting relationship with each student, which can help them to decrease the anxiety during the learning process. Therefore, this study lights on finding students' strategies to reduce their speaking anxiety to assist the teacher in the teaching process.

This study is concerned with studying the 2nd-semester students of the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati. They are EFL learners who are expected to speak English well. Mitha, Amri, and Narius (2018) noted that 82% of undergraduate English Education students encounter moderate anxiety. They elaborated that the learners were anticipated to speak fluently as they are future teachers, which drives them to feel anxious. Concerning that, the EFL students in this study may also experience anxiety while learning to speak English. Therefore, the researcher's goal in this study is to discover factors that cause speaking anxiety in second-semester students of English Education from an ecological perspective and perceive students' strategies to reduce their anxiety.

Regarding the use of an ecological perspective, several studies have been completed. Namely, Kashbi and Shirvan (2017) used the ecological model to investigate the causes of anxiety in speaking English among High school students. In addition, Rani (2020) conducted a study on English language learning anxiety

among University students from an ecological perspective. Nazari, Farnia, and Ghonsooly (2017), on the other hand, employs activity theory and Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to investigate the causes of English language writing anxiety. Therefore, using an ecological model to investigate the causes of anxiety in speaking, writing, and English language learning inspires the present study to carry out similar research.

Based on previous studies above, the researchers explored the causes of foreign language anxiety from an ecological perspective. However, regarding speaking anxiety, the researcher lies with High school students rather than university students. Therefore, it becomes a gap for the present research. This study analyzes EFL University students' speaking anxiety factors from ecological perspective and perceives students' strategies to reduce their anxiety. This research conducts a case study in the 2nd-semester of the English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesian context.

B. Research Questions

This study analyzes the topic of EFL students' speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective. In addition, this study tends to perceive students' strategies in reducing their anxiety. Therefore, two research questions are formulated concerning the foreign language anxiety context. These two research questions are presented as follows:

- A. What are the ecological factors causing anxiety in speaking English of EFL students from the nested ecosystems model?
- B. What strategies do students use to reduce their anxiety to speak English?

C. Research Purposes

This research is intended to evaluate the EFL students' speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective. Furthermore, this study is tended to explore students' strategies in reducing their anxiety. As a result, two research objectives are

developed regarding this study. Those objectives are finding the ecological factors that caused anxiety in speaking English of EFL students from the perspective of nested ecosystems theory and finding the strategies students use to reduce their anxiety to speak English.

D. Research Significances

This research is tended to explore the ecological factor generated in the speaking anxiety of EFL students. In addition, this study is attempted to explore students' strategies in reducing their anxiety. Thus this study is contributed to theoretical and practical significance. First, theoretically, this study broadens the ecological understanding of EFL university students' anxiety in speaking English from the nested ecosystem model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Thus it may support the prior ideas on speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective. Second, practically, this study may inspire teachers to choose, develop, and innovate approaches or strategies for teaching English to EFL students by concerning their anxiety about speaking English. It may encourage effective learning to help students become fluent in English. Furthermore, this research may enlighten students in taking action to prevent and overcome the unease feeling in speaking English.

E. Research Scope

This study is concerned with analyzing the EFL university students' anxiety in speaking English from an ecological perspective. Furthermore, this study is intended to explore the EFL students' strategies in reducing their anxiety. Therefore, it leads to the discussion of the subject, object, and location as the research scope of the study. First, this study's subject is the 2nd-semester students enrolled in English Education Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Second, the object of this study is the factors of speaking English anxiety from an ecological perspective. Third, this study is conducted at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesian context.

F. Conceptual Framework

This study evaluates EFL students' anxiety from an ecological perspective. Furthermore, this study is intended to explore students' strategies to reduce their anxiety in speaking English. Therefore, it leads the discussion of ideas and perceives the link among them as the conceptual framework. Those ideas are speaking anxiety, ecological perspective in studying foreign language anxiety (FLA) factors, and students' strategies in reducing speaking anxiety.

This study focuses on speaking anxiety among EFL students. Gardner and Macintyre (1993) define speaking anxiety as fear or apprehension when a learner is expected to perform in a second or foreign language. Moreover, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) discover a unique factor influencing students' oral production. Anxious foreign language learners consider speaking in the target language a frightful skill. In this study, the EFL students from English Education Department are expected to be fluent in English as future teachers. Thus they are considered to experience speaking anxiety during the speech with the target language.

This research studies foreign language anxiety factors from an ecological perspective. An ecological perspective examines the learning process, the actions and behaviors of teachers and students, the multidimensional nature of the interaction, and language use (Lier, 2004). Thus, exploring EFL learners' anxiety from an ecological perspective sheds on how the interaction of different agents at different contextual levels can contribute to the emergence of anxiety. In this study, speaking anxiety as foreign language anxiety is analyzed from an ecological perspective to see the contributions of different agents at different contextual levels that generate anxiety.

This study examines speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective with the theory proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979). The ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is known as nested ecosystems. This theory examines human development with interconnected structures. The nested ecosystem consists

of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In this research, speaking anxiety is evaluated with a nested ecosystem.

The classroom influence and the experience effect are studied in the first and second layers of the nested ecosystem. The microsystem is the innermost layer of the nested ecosystem. It consists of the developing person's immediate surroundings. The language classroom is an example of where individual and contextual variables collaborate to allow development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, the learning process, teachers' and students' actions, and behaviours are examined at the microsystem level. The second layer of the nested ecosystem is the mesosystem. It examines the developing person's interactions with circumstances outside the current context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This level considers the interplay of experience. Different experience learning settings in and out of the classroom are analyzed at this level.

The educational policies that directly affect students are analyzed in the exosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) mentions that the exosystem investigates elements embedded affects learner outside the classroom, impacting individual learning in educational settings. Furthermore, curriculum design and course evaluations are considered at the exosystem level (Peng, 2012). Thus the curriculum design and course evaluations utilized in the class are examined in the exosystem.

The societal and cultural ideas of where students develop are evaluated at the macrosystem level. Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that the macro-system in an individual's development consists of societal or cultural ideas. For example, in this study, EFL students of the English Education Department are expected to be future teachers. The requirement to be a professional teacher demands them to be fluent in English. Therefore, the anxiety they have experienced while speaking English regarding this concern is considered at the macrosystem level.

This research is pondered to explore students' strategies for reducing speaking anxiety. Newman (2015) mentions that learners' strategies to overcome anxiety in speaking a foreign language comprise three steps. The first is before the

presentation. In this stage, students prepare the material by writing notes and understanding the material. Students also practice the material to prevent anxiety occur. The second is during the presentation. In this phase, students might take a deep breath to cope with the anxiety that emerges. The third is after the presentation. In order to soothe themselves, students may write down what they can improve for another performance. Thus this study tends to analyze the students' strategy with the theory proposed by Newman (2015). Exploring the strategies students use before, during, and after encountering anxiety in speaking may improve understanding EFL students' strategies for reducing speaking anxiety.

In conclusion, this research utilizes certain ideas to examine EFL students' speaking anxiety. The first is the ecological perspective to study EFL students' anxiety about speaking English. The ecological model nested ecosystem model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) is used. The second is Newman's (2015) ideas which investigate students' strategies to overcome speaking anxiety. The following Figure 1.1 represents the connection of each concept.

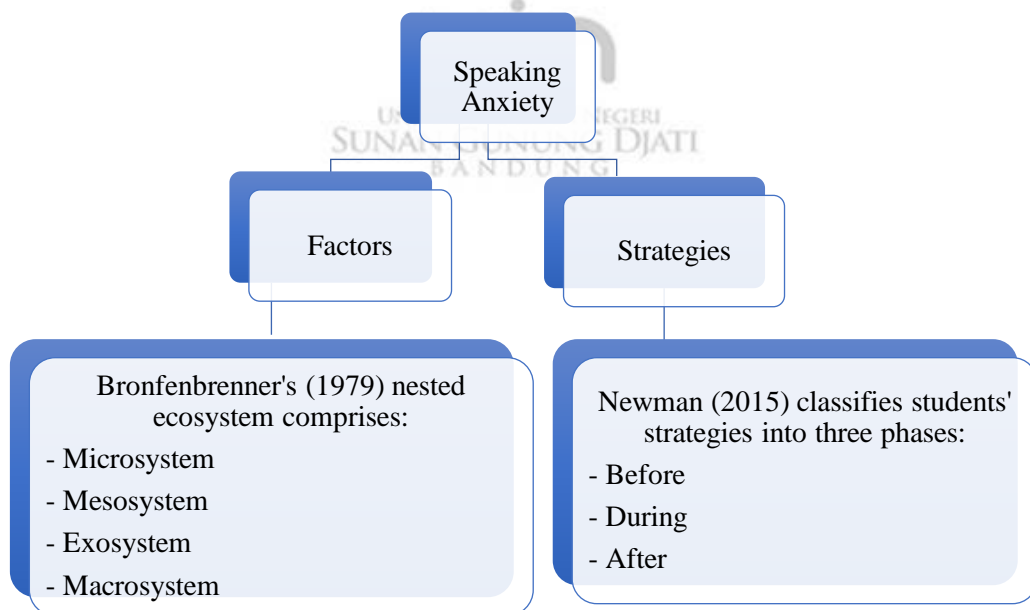


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

G. Previous Studies

This research studies EFL students' speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective. Furthermore, this study is intended to explore the students' strategies in reducing speaking anxiety. Thus this study derives from several earlier studies. There are several preliminary studies regarding the ecological perspective on foreign language. In addition, the result of these previous studies leads to the gap of this study.

In a non-Indonesian context, two studies have been conducted regarding ecological perspectives in studying a foreign language. First, Kashbi and Shirvan (2017) conducted a case study to explore speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective based on the nested ecosystems model and complex dynamic system theory. They selected Iranian EFL high-school students as participants. It found that the ecological variables involved in the variance of learners' speaking anxiety. The link between the classroom and other settings demonstrates that students' prior learning experiences outside of the classroom significantly impact their speaking anxiety inside the classroom. The present research studies speaking anxiety, the same as the prior study. While the previous research was investigated high-school students, the current research analyzes EFL university students.

The following study on foreign language from an ecological perspective in a non-Indonesian context was conducted by Rani (2017). She conducted a case study regarding the ecological perspective of language learning anxiety. She selected undergraduate students of different departments at National Textile University as participants. The study found that ecological variables such as the parents' educational and financial status, the area of residence, and the institute's rules generate anxiety. The previous study was conducted at the university level, the same as the present study. However, this study analyses specifically speaking anxiety among EFL students at English Education Department.

Two prior studies have been conducted in the Indonesian context regarding the ecological perspective on foreign languages. First, Pupah, Ramdani, and

Rahmat (2019) conducted a case study examining poetry writing from an ecological perspective, using the nested ecosystems model to create an expressive and creative English language learning environment. They selected EFL high school learners as a participant. It discovered that the mesosystem level influenced their creativity in poetry writing. Writing outside the classroom significantly impacted their creativity in the poetry writing task. While the research was conducted for high school students, the present study focuses on the university level.

The subsequent study regarding the ecological perspective on foreign language in the Indonesian context was conducted by Krismayani, Suastra, and Suparwa (2021). They performed a qualitative descriptive study examining teaching materials using an ecological perspective. Data derived directly from preliminary tests, observations, and documents of English learning at the university level. The study found that teaching materials met the following ecological approach characteristics: relations, context, patterns/systems, emergence, quality, value, critical, variability, diversity, and activity. The prior research studies foreign language teaching materials, while the present studies foreign language anxiety. Moreover, this study conducts a case study on EFL university students. Thus it leads to the distinction of the prior and the present study.

Based on several studies above, the researchers explored the foreign language from an ecological perspective. In the prior research, foreign language anxiety, learning, and materials are studied. However, EFL university students have not been investigated explicitly regarding speaking in terms of foreign language anxiety. Thus it leads to a gap in the present study. Therefore, this research analyzes EFL university students speaking anxiety from an ecological perspective.