

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

##### **2.1.1 Public Speaking Anxiety**

Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is the feeling of nervousness and apprehension that people experience when they have to speak in front of a group of people. Similarly stated by O’Hair et al. (2007), PSA is “the fear or dread of giving a speech in front of an audience” (p. 155). PSA can be categorized as an instance of social anxiety characterized by the risk of unsatisfying audience evaluations. As claimed by Bodie (2010) defined PSA is situational social anxiety caused by the actual or anticipated performance of an oral presentation. PSA can also be classified as a type of communication apprehension. According to McCroskey (1977) as cited in Tsang (2020), communication apprehension is defined as an individual’s level of fear or anxiety that comes with either actual or anticipated communication with anyone. Regarding the opinion of experts on public speaking anxiety, it can be concluded that PSA is a speaker’s fear of communicating in front of the audience, whether actual or anticipated performance.

There are often symptoms associated with anxiety, including trembling, cold clammy hands, shaky voice, rapid heartbeat, sweating, shortness of breath, and forgetting something you know or were about to say. In addition to the symptoms of PSA, Richter (2021) stated that PSA “may result in physical reactions, such as hands shaking, a general unsteadiness and tension, blushing, sweating, a dry mouth, a queasy stomach, or in the worst case a complete breakdown of the speaker” (p. 169).

Anxiety strikes every speaker at different times. Refers to O’Hair et al. (2009), the onset of speech anxiety can be classified by four pinpoints: 1) Pre-preparation Anxiety, anxiety in the early stages when the speakers realize they will deliver a speech in front of the audience 2) Preparation Anxiety, the anxiety that strikes speakers as they begin to prepare a speech because they are overwhelmed by the pressure (e.g. time and short planning) 3) Pre-performance Anxiety, the anxiousness that speakers feel as they begin to rehearse their speech 4) Performance

Anxiety, the anxiousness that speakers experience when they begin to speak in front of the audience.

As stated by Aulia (2022), there are three levels of anxiety that show different criteria. First, low-level anxiety refers to those who have no fear or anxiety at all. This kind of person does not appear to be anxious about their upcoming public speaking performance. Second, those with a moderate level of anxiety show that they have a small amount of performance anxiety. Third, a high level of anxiety, people who have a high level of anxiety will be worried and fearful about a particular public speaking performance.

Anxiety can get so intense for some people that it hinders their capacity to perform at all. Sugiyati and Indriani (2021) pointed out that when people are nervous about speaking and prefer to avoid situations where they must perform, one of the major constraints they face is PSA. In the case of students, this may lead to them avoiding certain courses or even majors that require oral presentations, or deciding against such careers that require occasional public speaking. Besides, anxiety is also defined as a positive force that can lead students to be more motivated (Akramy, 2020). That is, if speakers are anxious about public speaking, there is a lot they can do to improve their performance. However, anxiety is worth investigating because it affects perceived competence and it should be overcome because students who lack public speaking skills may find their career options and advancement limited, creating barriers to career success (Arnold, 2018; Kalra & Siribud, 2020).

### **2.1.2 Thesis Defence Examination**

The thesis defence examination (TDE) has various terms used in one country to another. As said by Hasan (1994), TDE is known by different names in different countries. For example, in the United States, it is known as institutionalized pedagogical activity. In the United Kingdom, it is known as *viva voce*. Meanwhile, in other European countries, it is known as public defence. In Indonesia, where this research is being conducted, the TDE is also known by different names depending on its level: *ujian/sidang skripsi* for an undergraduate degree, *ujian tesis* for a master's degree, and *ujian disertasi* for a doctorate.

However, its function and significance are identical. All students pursuing to complete their bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree programs in most Indonesian universities must present and defend their respective theses in a TDE.

The purpose of the TDE is to demonstrate that an examinee is capable of conducting research by presenting arguments and answering questions from examiners based on the examinee's specific field of knowledge. Samad et al. (2022) claimed that "the examination aims at assessing students regarding their research knowledge and other related knowledge that they have already obtained from the study program by passing some steps from the introduction to the closing step" (p. 192). However, the TDE is regarded as a highly anticipated yet anxious event. The TDE allows students to demonstrate their competence in their research study by presenting its process and outcomes orally before a panel of examiners, who will determine whether they have met the standards for graduation (Samad & Adnan, 2018).

In literature, the information on the generic structure (GS) of the TDE is only available at the doctoral level. There are four well-known GSs of the TDE that are known as Grimshaw's model, Burke's model, Hasan's model, and Swales' model (Samad & Adnan, 2018). Therefore, Samad et al. (2017) conducted research to demonstrate the TDE GS at the undergraduate level in Indonesian public universities, which consists of four segments: preliminary, opening, proper defence, and in-camera. In the preliminary segment, the panel members: The Deputy of Academic Affairs, the Head of Department, the examiners, the examinees, the witness, and the note taker gather in the room to prepare for the TDE. In the opening segments, a ceremony is held give speeches by the vice dean for academic affairs and the head of the English education department in order to motivate the examinees. The examinees are asked to leave the room. In the proper defence segment, a member recalls an examinee entering the room and being asked to conduct a research presentation. It is then followed by examiners freely asking critical questions about their research. In the in-camera segment, the examinee is asked to leave the room, and the secretary or note taker computes the score from the examiners. The result is announced at a predetermined time. Eventually,

understanding the GS adequately could assist undergraduate students in completing this examination appropriately and obtaining a high score.

### **2.1.3 Factors Causing Public Speaking Anxiety**

There are previous studies have been conducted to investigate factors causing PSA. Sugiyati and Indriani (2021) discovered three components of PSA-provoking factors in their study, including fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and comfort in speaking English. Another researcher Kelsen (2019), claimed that a negative mindset, physical symptoms, preparation anxiety, and performance anxiety can all contribute to the onset of public speaking anxiety. Moreover, Grieve et al. (2021) argue many students' main concerns about oral presentations and public speaking revolve around being judged, being uncertain about the topic, and experiencing physical symptoms. In addition, Aulia (2022) discussed the main factors contributing to students' PSA, including feeling afraid of having a negative evaluation from both the teacher and classmates, afraid of making mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, shyness, and a lack of confidence.

Furthermore, the researcher constructs theories from O'Hair et al. (2009) and Horwitz et al. (1986) into five major factors that can lead to PSA, including:

1. Lack of Positive Experience, public speaking anxiety naturally occurs in students who have no experience speaking in public or positive experiences speaking in public.
2. Feeling Different, as the students take their places in front of the examiners, they will feel as if they are the only ones who differ from the others in negative ways, such as being the only ones who fear public speaking, thinking their appearance is strange, and feeling inferior.
3. Being the Center of Attention, because students frequently serve as the center of attention in a TDE room, they are more sensitive to things that could go wrong with what they are doing and wonder if the examiners have noticed it. For instance, fear of negative evaluation from the examiners.

4. Communication Apprehension is a type of anxiety or fear of engaging in real communication with others (i.e., the examiners) that influences the difficulty of speaking in public and listening to or learning spoken messages.
5. Test Anxiety refers to the students' fear of failing in their performance and it arises because the students often set unrealistic demands on themselves and believe that the only acceptable performance is when they can do it perfectly.

Based on the opinions of the experts above, the factors that can lead to public speaking anxiety can be caused by internal factors such as lack of positive experience, communication apprehension, test anxiety, feeling different, and physical symptoms, as well as external factors such as being the center of attention or fear of negative evaluation.

#### **2.1.4 Strategies to Overcome Public Speaking Anxiety**

There are previous studies have been conducted to investigate how to overcome PSA. Aulia (2022) in her study discovered students' efforts to reduce their PSA by preparing speech material and performance by watching public speaking videos on YouTube, taking deep breaths before giving a speech, preparing themselves by speech practice with friends, and preparing themselves by speech practicing individually in front of a mirror. Another researcher, Raja (2017), found out that practicing and rehearsing can help people overcome their fear of public speaking. Furthermore, Grieve et al. (2021) revealed strategies for students to reduce their fear of public speaking through practice and preparation, such as breathing techniques, recording presentations, practicing in front of peers, and speaking out loud. Moreover, Netta et al. (2020) stated that strategies for dealing with speech anxiety include adequate preparation and practice, as well as the use of hand and body movements when delivering a speech.

Additionally, the researcher constructs theories from O'Hair et al. (2009) and Bodie (2010) into five strategies to overcome PSA, including:

1. Prepare and Practice, the students prepare the speech or presentation well in advance and keep rehearsing until they feel ready to perform.

2. Cognitive Modification ways to change the stigma associated with public speaking more positively, as well as oneself as a public speaker by employing communication-orientation modification (COM therapy), which views public speaking as a conversation rather than a performance, the students will not feel judged by the examiners and are more likely to talk to them and share knowledge about their thesis; and Visualization, visualizes success in performance in order to be confident which is to get rid of negative thoughts before, during, and after a presentation by creating their own visualization script or watching videos of qualified speakers to imagine themselves as those speakers.
3. Systematic desensitization involves students' physiological symptoms which must be overcome by learning to become relaxed through activating the relaxation response, such as briefly meditating, controlled breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation; once relaxed, they try to apply the relaxing strategies, gradually learning how to remain relaxed while visualizing/watching the scenes that they are afraid of in an actual public speaking situation.
4. Use Movement to Minimize Anxiety, the students can do it with natural hand gestures when making statements that are appropriate to what is being said, and they can also move such as walking around as they make their points.
5. Learn from Feedback, after delivering the presentation or rehearsing, graciously accept feedback in order to be motivated to do better the next time. Aside from self-reflection, feedback is required and it can come from seniors, friends, lecturers, and colleagues.

Following the opinion of previous research above, the most common strategy for overcoming PSA is preparing and practicing, followed by systematic desensitization, using movements, cognitive modification, and learning from feedback.

## **2.2 Study of the Relevant Research**

The researcher studied the previous studies conducted by Samad et al. (2022), Nur et al. (2022), and Hizriani et al. (2022). This helps the researcher write this present research as it is relevant to this research.

The first research conducted by Samad et al. (2022) focused on examining the extent of anxiety experienced by English postgraduate students in a TDE as a whole communicative event, rather than specifically in each segment at an Indonesian university. The researchers used a descriptive quantitative method, administering the questionnaire to 23 students who had already passed the TDE. The findings demonstrated three major topics on which students faced anxiety, including anticipatory anxiety, which some students experienced while preparing for their TDE, such as being worried that an unexpected experience would occur during the TDE; physiological symptoms that some students agree have heart palpitations and rapid breathing; and a lack of control during speech performance, that is some students portray negative self-evaluation and perceive TDE as a dangerous situation. Overall, because the students were aware of what was expected of them, they arrived well-prepared, minimizing unnecessary body responses and physical symptoms of tension.

Second, Nur et al. (2022) conducted research to identify the factors that cause students' anxiety and the strategies that EFL students use to overcome or reduce their anxiety during the TDE. This research employed a qualitative method with a case study design. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 7 EFL students in Islamic Higher Education. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that there are two major factors causing students' anxiety during the TDE, those are linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors. The linguistic factors are poor vocabulary, poor grammar, low pronunciation, and low English proficiency. In non-linguistic factors, the researchers divided into two categories, those are psychology factors that consist of fear of making mistakes, fear of questions from examiners, negative thinking, forgetting the content of the thesis, fear of not being able to convey the message well, fear of criticism from the examiner, and shyness; and environment factors that

consist of people have much knowledge, topic of the research, healthy, lack of knowledge about research, and bad presentation experience. Furthermore, there are six major strategies that EFL students use to overcome their anxiety in TDE, including preparation which includes making a note and self-preparation, relaxation which includes taking a breath, positive thinking which includes imagining a good presentation and enjoying, peer seeking which includes seeing friends' experiences, self-entertainment which includes watching movies and playing games, and praying which includes praying beforehand.

Third, Hizriani et al. (2022) conducted research that focused on the challenges of thesis proposal seminars both online and offline, as well as identifying students' solutions for making a good presentation. The descriptive qualitative design was used in this research, which included 35 EFL students who had taken research and seminar subjects and had presented thesis proposal seminars offline and online. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and documentaries. The findings revealed that students encountered some difficulties during their thesis proposal seminar, including seminar preparation, topic mastery, student confidence, and technical issues. In order to give an effective presentation, students must thoroughly understand their research topic and methodology. They must also plan their presentation by practicing and preparing extensively.

Those previous studies have some similarities and differences with this present research. The differences are that some of them focus on investigating how postgraduate students experience anxiety in facing TDE as a whole communicative event on each segment in it, and another one investigates challenges and solutions in the thesis proposal seminars, both online and offline. There is also research conducted using a quantitative method, collecting data using questionnaires and documentaries, and analyzing the data using thematic analysis. Whereas, this research is qualitative and focuses on identifying factors that cause undergraduate students' PSA in the TDE and how to overcome them. Collecting data by using semi-structured interviews and analyzing data using a data analysis method by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014).