CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Performing a presentation in front of the classroom is regarded to be difficult for most EFL learners. When presenting orally, students usually feel the symptoms of speaking anxiety, such as nervousness, shyness, and frustration. (Tareen et al., 2023). Even though she is now considered a good English learner, Kala (pseudonym) experienced a similar situation. When she was in the second grade of high school, she was instructed by her English teacher to do a presentation using English in front of the classroom. It was her first time speaking English with many audiences. She felt nervous and dreaded people's judgment of her speaking performance, including her teacher and peers. Especially for the teacher, Kala admitted that she received unpleasant feedback, which made her feel wrong about her speaking performance. Her teacher said, "I thought you were already smart, but you cannot even do a simple presentation like this, *Haduh*," with high intonation, making the classroom tense and Kala looking down with fear. Hence, speaking English in the classroom is scary since Kala feared being the centre of attention, making mistakes and getting negative evaluations. Because of this, Kala started to feel anxious to speak English.

However, the emergence of speaking anxiety did not only arise in presentation as it is proven to have negative impacts on students' speaking performance. For example, Kala also felt anxious when asked questions or had to say something in English. Putri et al. (2020) pointed out that students experience speaking anxiety in English when they want to express their ideas to speak or answer a question. Kala avoided speaking as she did not want to be embarrassed by her peers. Hence, speaking anxiety can hinder students from using and practising speaking English in the classroom. Moreover, speaking anxiety is likely to have negative impacts on students' speaking ability. As stated by Hermagustiana et al. (2021), anxiety can harm students' language performance and ability. Even though Kala had a high interest in speaking English since she was a kid, everything changed

when she experienced speaking anxiety in her second year of high school. Therefore, Kala needs a solution to deal with this problem.

Unexpectedly, the negative feedback from her high school teacher also motivated Kala to improve her speaking skills. Kala became a successful language learner when she entered university because of the utilisation of language learning strategies. As pointed out by Widhayanti (2018), the use of language-learning strategies can diminish speaking anxiety. Therefore, Kala often uses self-talk, peer practice, making scripts, note-taking, and understanding material. According to Sukying (2021), students use language learning strategies to help them memorise, save, and use new information in real-life settings, boosting their self-esteem and self-regulation. Unlike other students who experience speaking anxiety, Kala's case is unique in that she overcame it and was chosen as the best speaker at an international conference, the EDSA International ELT Conference on Intercultural Communication (EICIE). With the help of language learning strategies, Kala could also finally show her best performance in her speaking tasks, proven by her perfect marks in courses including Survival English, Public Speaking, Professional Listening and Speaking, and Academic Listening and Speaking.

A plethora of research to date has been conducted to address language learning strategies in support of dealing with students' speaking anxiety. Many of them used quantitative methods and discussed more general aspects, such as the strategies used, the level of speaking anxiety, and factors of speaking anxiety. For example, studies conducted by Pertiwi and Hidayanti (2022) and Widhayanti (2018) utilised quantitative research. They mentioned some strategies applied by students in dealing with speaking anxiety, including memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Previous research has shown the positive impacts of language learning strategies (e.g., Habók & Magyar, 2018; Sukying, 2021). However, it is yet to be explored in more detail with a student's life story of facing speaking anxiety using language learning strategies. Triyoga et al. (2022) mentioned in their study that it is essential to investigate students' language learning strategies. They called for more research focusing on how students apply language learning strategies using narrative study. Henceforth,

this study tries to fill the gap by concentrating on Kala's exciting story and utilising language learning strategies to deal with speaking anxiety using narrative inquiry.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

The present study addresses the research question, "What are the students' experiences utilising language learning strategies to deal with speaking anxiety?"

1.3 Operational Definitions

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

1.3.1 Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are specific activities students do to make learning more efficient and enjoyable. Language learning strategies are categorised into direct strategies (including memory, cognitive, compensation, and communication) and indirect (consisting of metacognitive, affective, and social). In this study, language learning strategies refer to all strategies an English education department student applies to dealing with speaking anxiety.

1.3.2 Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety refers to fear, fear, nervousness, self-doubt, and discomfort when the student must speak in English, such as in presentation, speech, and speaking in general. It is often related to painful physical symptoms such as sweating hands, increased heartbeat and adrenaline, and tension in all body parts.

1.4 Aim of the Research

This study aims to investigate the experiences of an English department student's experiences in utilising language learning strategies in dealing with speaking anxiety.

1.5 Significances of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Significance

This study will enrich the existing literature on speaking, speaking anxiety, and language learning strategies that students use as solutions in dealing with speaking anxiety.

1.5.2 Practical Significances

This study provides a reference for students to handle speaking anxiety using language learning strategies. It also acts as a reference for teachers to promote and implement instructional pedagogy based on language learning strategies in dealing with students' speaking anxiety.

1.5.3 Empirical Significance

This research will provide more insight and knowledge related to language learning strategies (LLS) that can be used as solutions to help deal with speaking anxiety.