

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores the underlying causes of these speaking problems as perceived by the students themselves and examines the strategies or interventions they believe could help them overcome these obstacles. The review draws on various studies that highlight the complexities of speaking difficulties and the potential solutions that can be implemented in educational settings.

#### 1.1 Speaking reluctance

Speaking reluctance is a psychological and linguistic phenomenon that refers to students' attitudes characterized by an unwillingness or hesitation to speak in the target language in this case, English even though they possess basic competence. This phenomenon is commonly observed in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in countries where English is not used as a daily means of communication (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

According to Bao (2014), speaking reluctance poses a significant barrier to the development of speaking skills. Learners who are reluctant to speak miss valuable opportunities to actively practice the language and receive direct feedback from both teachers and peers. In the long run, such reluctance can negatively affect the development of speaking fluency, communicative competence, and academic participation.

Several studies have shown that speaking reluctance often occurs even among students who possess adequate linguistic knowledge. This indicates that the issue does not lie solely in language ability, but is more deeply rooted in

affective and social factors (Peng, 2012). For example, Safitri (2018) found that students in international classes in Indonesia often feel intimidated by the heterogeneous learning environment and high academic demands, which leads them to remain silent during class discussions.

It is important to note that speaking reluctance does not necessarily reflect a lack of learning motivation. In many cases, students are highly motivated to master English but are hindered by emotional and social barriers (Riasati, 2012). Therefore, addressing this issue requires a holistic pedagogical approach—one that strengthens students' affective domains, fosters a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere, and applies communicative and collaborative teaching methods (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2016).

By thoroughly understanding the dynamics of speaking reluctance, educators can design learning strategies that not only focus on improving linguistic competence but also aim to develop students' confidence, courage, and intercultural awareness. This is especially relevant in international classroom settings, where cross-cultural communication skills and the use of English as the primary medium of instruction are essential.

## **1.2 Factor Contributing to Speaking reluctance**

Speaking reluctance among EFL students, particularly in international classroom settings, is a complex phenomenon influenced by psychological, sociocultural, and pedagogical factors.

Internally, students often experience psychological barriers such as speaking anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, and shyness

(Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Tutyandari, 2005). These feelings can be amplified in international classes, where students are exposed to peers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, increasing their fear of being judged or making mistakes (Zhou & Kankaanranta, 2019).

Externally, the learning environment plays a significant role. A classroom that lacks emotional safety, inclusivity, or supportive peer interactions can further discourage students from speaking (Zarrinabadi, 2014). Instructors who emphasize grammar and reading over communicative competence may unintentionally limit students' opportunities to develop oral skills. Additionally, classroom dynamics that are overly competitive or teacher-dominated tend to silence students who are less confident or slower in language processing (Safitri, 2018). Cultural expectations and norms regarding communication also contribute; for instance, students from high-context cultures may be less inclined to speak up in class, perceiving silence as a form of respect or reflection (Peng, 2012). In addition, Zhou and Kankaanranta (2019) emphasize that cultural diversity and social expectations in international educational contexts also contribute to psychological pressures that may trigger speaking reluctance. While multicultural environments can provide valuable cross-cultural learning experiences, they may also lead to feelings of linguistic inferiority, especially for students who are not accustomed to using English actively outside academic settings.

The international class context itself introduces specific challenges. Students may experience linguistic inferiority when comparing themselves to

more fluent peers, especially if English is not widely used outside the classroom (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Furthermore, the academic pressure to perform in English, combined with culturally diverse expectations for class participation, often exacerbates reluctance to speak (Zhou & Kankaanranta, 2019; Safitri, 2018). These intertwined psychological and contextual factors indicate that speaking reluctance is not solely a matter of linguistic ability but is deeply rooted in affective and social dimensions of learning (Bao, 2014; Riasati, 2012).

Understanding these contributing factors is essential for educators aiming to create a more inclusive and communicative classroom environment. By adopting pedagogical strategies that build students' confidence, reduce anxiety, and promote cultural sensitivity, teachers can better support EFL learners in overcoming reluctance and participating more actively in international class discussions (Brown, 2007; Richards, 2016).

## **2.2 Strategies and Interventions for Overcoming Speaking reluctance**

In light of these challenges, students have proposed various strategies and interventions that they believe could help them improve their speaking skills. One common suggestion is the implementation of more interactive and communicative teaching methods. Gan (2013) found that role-play activities significantly enhance students' communicative competence, allowing them to practice speaking in a supportive environment (Putri et al., 2024). Similarly, Wei (2023) noted that narrative inquiry can be an effective approach to understanding students' experiences and developing tailored interventions that

address their specific needs (Ghosh et al., 2011). Another effective strategy identified in the literature is the use of technology to facilitate speaking practice. Taylor et al. (2019) explored the integration of digital storytelling as a tool for enhancing speaking proficiency among students, highlighting how this approach can reduce speaking hesitancy and provide a platform for self-expression (Karunia et al., 2019).

Additionally, Barkhuizen (2011) examined the potential of narrative inquiry to foster a deeper understanding of students' experiences and challenges, suggesting that this method can inform the development of effective teaching strategies (Hanifa et al., 2022). Moreover, students have expressed the need for more personalized learning experiences, such as one-on-one tutoring or mentoring, which can provide them with the opportunity to practice speaking in a low-pressure setting. Johnson & Golombek (2011) emphasized that narrative inquiry can serve as a vehicle for teacher inquiry, ultimately bringing about productive change in teaching practices and enhancing student learning outcomes (Umisara et al., 2021). This approach allows educators to gain insights into students' perspectives and tailor their instruction accordingly.

### **2.3 International Class**

An international class typically consists of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds who study in a common language, often English. These classes are characterized by their multicultural nature and the use of English as the medium of instruction. While international

classes offer rich opportunities for intercultural communication and global engagement, they also present unique challenges, particularly in language learning. Students may face additional speaking difficulties due to varied proficiency levels, different communication norms, and the pressure to perform in a non-native language environment. According to Dervin and Gross (2016), the diversity in international classrooms requires more inclusive pedagogical approaches that address both linguistic and cultural barriers to participation and communication.

