

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background and rationale of the study and also provides the research questions and objectives of the study. Additionally, the significance of the study is highlighted in terms of its theoretical and practical aspects. Finally, the chapter addresses the scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Humans are social creatures who depend on other beings to fulfill their physical and emotional needs. They have an innate desire for connection and belonging, which is essential for their overall well-being (Wooll, 2021). That connection is achieved through communication whether it is verbal communication, nonverbal communication such as body language, or other forms of communication. Humans need communication to convey and share information with others and express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings (Iskandar et al., 2023). In this matter, language exists to serve as a tool in facilitating communication between individuals or groups.

Language is an important aspect in human society as it provides a common system of words, grammar, and meaning that individuals can use to understand and convey information, thoughts, and feelings (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Not only that, language also provides a range of functions, allowing us to build relationships and express identity with each other. Cowles (2011), further, stated that language is everywhere and across every culture. It is almost unimaginable to go through living without using and understanding language whether about simple or complex matters. Furthermore, language, being such an important part of human life, has long been a topic of exploration and research. Scholars from various fields have conducted countless studies to understand how language works, how it evolves, and its impact on communication and cognition. Through this ongoing research, new insights continue to be discovered into how language functions both as a tool for communication and as a reflection of human thought.

One of the areas of study in linguistics is the relationship between language and the brain. The brain contains features of language that enables people to produce and understand linguistic messages (Yule, 2017). These brain functions are deeply intertwined with how we use language, showing that the two are inseparable. The study of this connection between language and the brain is dealt with by psycholinguistics. Psycholinguistics defined by Warren (2013) as the study of how language is represented and processed in the mind. This includes everything from producing and understanding language to storing spoken and written forms of communication. It can be said that psycholinguistics deals with how the brain produces, comprehends, and acquires language.

Speaking or speech production is an example of how the brain can produce and articulate language that allows others to therefore comprehend it. It is the process of language production (Chairunnisa et al., 2023). It can involve spontaneous dialogues between two or more people, as well as planned speeches or presentations. Some individuals may also engage in monologues, such as talking to themselves. Speaking is the basic skill that should be possessed by people as it is essential in language use and effective communication. It will allow individuals to engage successfully in a wide range of interactions and convey their thoughts, intentions, and emotions clearly and directly to others. However, as individuals get used to speaking, they tend to think it is an effortless, simple task but it actually involves a great deal of planning and organization (Warren, 2013). Aside from that, it also involves executing the message clearly. The process begins in the brain, where linguistic symbols like words, phrases, and grammatical structures are organized and then translated into spoken language through the use of speech organs like the mouth, tongue, and vocal cords (Annisa et al., 2022). Under certain circumstances, individuals will likely be aware of the planning process such as where they struggle to find the right words or phrases to express some ideas.

Speakers have to convey the intended message as ideally as possible to make it clearly understood by others to avoid misperception (Pravitasari et al., 2021). Despite the attempt to be ideal, speaking often includes imperfections, and speakers frequently fail to convey their message exactly as intended. Eventually, errors will occur whether realizing it or not. These disruptions or errors in speech are referred

to as speech errors which are the mistakes speakers make when speaking. Typically, when speakers intend to say one thing but something else comes out instead or when speakers fail to retrieve any of the form or sounds of a word they want to say (Traxler & Gernsbacher, 2006). The errors include grammatical errors, mispronunciations, or the temporary forgetting of certain words, phrases, or sentences, as well as repetition.

Speech errors can occur to almost every individual, regardless of fluency, expertise, or social status. Not only that, speech errors also occur universally across all settings in life. Whether in casual conversations with friends or in highly formal contexts like debates, speech errors can emerge. They are a natural part of human speech production, often resulting from the rapid processing of thoughts and language in real-time. In debates where speakers are required to think quickly and respond to complex arguments in real-time, the speech errors will most likely to occur (Annisa et al., 2022). An example comes from Donald Trump during the first 2016 U.S. presidential debate with Hillary Clinton, where he stated:

*“Well, the first thing you do is don’t let the job leaves. The companies are leaving. **[I could name—I mean, there are thousands of them.]**”*

This utterance shows a correction error type, where Trump initially began a phrase ‘I could name’ but then quickly corrected himself by saying ‘I mean,’ before continuing with his intended statement. Such errors are common in speech especially in debates where speakers must quickly adjust their wording to maintain clarity and coherence. Furthermore, speech errors in debates can play a significant role in shaping how people perceive the candidates. Smith (2016) stated that speech errors, such as “ums” and “uhs,” can negatively impact a candidate's perceived performance making him perceived as less confident and capable. It can disturb the listeners even though they do not always create misunderstanding.

In the first 2024 U.S. presidential debate particularly, both the candidates, Joe Biden and Donald Trump made speech errors when they articulated their ideas or responded to questions. Their speech errors shape not just the voters’ perception but also people from around the world towards them, particularly towards Biden. Biden’s debate performance faced heavy scrutiny due to his raspy voice and speech

errors, allowing Trump to mock his statement (Burga et al., 2024). Moreover, Clark and Clark (1977) stated that each person has their own style or strategy to cope with the challenge of planning and executing speech at the same time. Some people are more likely to make certain errors and some make the other errors or less errors. This is why the researcher chose to analyze speech errors made by both Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

Additionally, several studies have analyzed speech errors in various contexts, such as media, academic settings, and debates. Despite that, research on speech errors in the specific context of political debates remains underexplored. Only two researchers have previously analyzed speech errors in political debates, making it a less frequently studied field. More specifically, no research has yet focused on the first 2024 U.S. presidential debate, which is significant because of its recent occurrence, the crucial political moment and the involvement of key figures like Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Those reasons make analyzing speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the first 2024 U.S. presidential debate interesting. It could offer fresh insights into how speech errors can occur in political debates, especially presidential debates between high political figures, filling a gap in existing research.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background above, this research has two research questions as follows:

1. What are the types of speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the first 2024 Presidential Debate?
2. What are the influencing factors that lead to the occurrence of speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the first 2024 Presidential Debate?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This research aims to achieve two objectives to answer the research questions:

1. To identify the types of speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the first 2024 Presidential Debate.

2. To explain the influencing factors that lead to the occurrence of speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump in the first 2024 Presidential Debate.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study aims to have benefits in both theoretical and practical aspects. For the theoretical aspect, this study can contribute in developing the knowledge in the field of linguistics specifically on psycholinguistics and speech errors by expanding the theory's application in different contexts than most previous studies who have focused on speech errors in media or academic settings. This study can help deepen the understanding about the types of speech errors and its influencing factors. For the practical aspect, this study can be used as a reference for future research related to psycholinguistics, especially speech errors and its influencing factors.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on psycholinguistics, specifically on the types of speech errors and the influencing factors that lead to the occurrence of those errors, and will not cover any topics outside of this scope. The study will analyze the speech errors produced by Joe Biden and Donald Trump during the first presidential debate held on June 27, 2024 without including other political debates, different figures, or contexts beyond this event. Clark and Clark's (1977) theory of speech errors will serve as the framework for the analysis of the types and also the influencing factors.