

An Analysis Of Students' Speaking Anxiety

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Abstract

The research aims to investigate the students' speaking anxiety level and factors that contribute to the students' speaking anxiety in first-semester students of Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta. This research is descriptive qualitative. There are 13 participants involved in this research. To obtain data, FLCAS questionnaires and interviews are used. The result shows that there are 7 students (53.84 %) who are categorized as anxious students, 4 students (30.77%) are categorized as mildly anxious students and only 2 students (15.38 %) are categorized as relaxed students. It is also revealed that the dominant type of factor contributing to students' speaking anxiety is communication apprehension, followed by test anxiety. Negative evaluations do not influence the students' anxiety in speaking.

Keywords: *Speaking, Speaking Anxiety, Anxiety Level*

INTRODUCTION

In the globalization era, mastering English is very important because of its role as an international language. Considering the importance of mastering English, in Indonesia English language learning has been carried out from primary up to tertiary level to improve human resources. However, although students have learned English for years it seems that the students' ability to communicate in English is still low.

There are four English skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is one of the essential skills. Ur, (1996) states that of all the four skills, speaking seems to be the most important. Speaking is one of the key aspects of learning a second or foreign language. Speaking skills represent students' English proficiency. Speaking is a productive skill used to communicate, share information, convey messages, and express ideas through words as stated by Moge in Soreh (2022) speaking is very important for human beings to express ideas, and feelings, and report situations to other people.

For learners, learning English as a foreign language is not easy, including learning to speak. Gaiban and Elmenfi in Sutarsiyah (2017) found that speaking the English language was the most significant difficulty experienced by students.

Furthermore, Al-Roud (2016) also states that for students, speaking is a complex and difficult skill to learn since it requires command of speech production sub-skills like vocabulary

retrieval, choice of grammatical patterns, and sociocultural competence. In other words, speaking is a complex skill because it needs to require English skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and others. According to Haris (1974), speaking skills consist of five elements, there are comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Lack of these elements leads to students' anxiety such as nervousness, less confidence, and fear of making mistakes when they speak English. Students' anxiety can influence the students' speaking performance.

Anxiety is described as a fearful, worried, stressed, or tense sensation. Horwitz (1986) defined anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. According to Mohtasham & Farnia (2017), anxiety is the state of an individual when he/she feels "uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry". The feeling of anxiety is natural and can be experienced by everyone as it is said by Heri (2018) "Anxiety occurs in every people in normal life, every time, everywhere, and in every condition of the people". Furthermore, language anxiety is a normal feeling that can also occur to language learners. However, excessive anxiety sometimes can create problems including in language learning as stated by MacIntyre and Gradner in Mazidah (2020) language anxiety showed some potential issues for foreign language learners due to the way they acquire the language which

impacts the production of a new language. Liu (2006) also states that anxiety can have negative impacts on students in their language learning achievement, especially in learning a foreign/second language in the classroom

The majority of the students experience anxiety when they speak English, especially in front of the class which influences the students' speaking performance. According to Horwitz et al (1986) anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language. Horwitz (2001) defines speaking anxiety as someone's "anxious feeling when they speak in front of the class, commonly occurs in communication by foreign language learners. Furthermore, Horwitz et al (1986) state that three factors cause students' anxiety in speaking English: (1) communication apprehension (2) test anxiety; and (3) fear of negative evaluation.

1. Communication apprehension deals with students' fears in terms of communication. It is a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. It occurs in speaking performances when the students are asked to speak in front of their friends. Their fear arises because they feel unable to convey information clearly when they communicate.
2. Test anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. This type of anxiety is related to academic evaluation, which is the fear of failing a performance or exam.
3. Fear of negative evaluation deals with students' fear of negative opinions from others. They are afraid that they will get an evaluation, criticism, or a bad impression from others.

Students' Anxiety in speaking has negative impacts on students' speaking performance. According to Na (2007) anxiety can make students get discouraged, lose faith in their abilities, escape from participating in classroom activities, and even give up the effort to learn a language well. Anxiety makes the students have little participation or even keep silent in class. They feel stressed, uncomfortable, and less confident which affects the students' speaking performance.

Since speaking anxiety is often experienced by most foreign language learners and affects their speaking performance, the researchers are interested in investigating the students' speaking anxiety levels and factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety at the first semester students of Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta.

The research questions are formulated as follows: (1) What are students' speaking anxiety levels? (2) What are the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety at Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta?

The objective of this research is to find out students' speaking anxiety levels and the factors that cause students' speaking anxiety at Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta.

The results of this study are expected to give information about the level and factors that contribute to students' speaking anxiety. It also will benefit students in solving their anxiety about speaking English. It also helps the lecturer in solving students' speaking anxiety problems in learning English, especially in speaking.

METHOD

This research is categorized as descriptive research that describes the phenomena that happened in the field. According to Ary et al (2010), qualitative researchers seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables. Furthermore, Gay and Airasian (2000) state that "descriptive study determines and describes the way things are". In this research, the researcher analyzes the students' speaking anxiety levels and factors that contribute to students' speaking anxiety levels at Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta.

The subject of this research was the first-semester students of Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta in the

academic year 2023/2024. There are 13 male students used as the subject of the research. The research was conducted on 3 – 28 October 2023

According to Gay and Airasian (2000), “descriptive data is usually collected through questionnaire, interview, and observation”. The researcher used two instruments to collect data: questionnaire and interview. The first instrument, a questionnaire about Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) adopted from Horwitz et al. (1986) was distributed to 13 male students to determine students’ speaking anxiety levels. The results of the questionnaire then are counted manually based on Oetting’s scale (Humaira, 2022) which was classified into 5 levels: very relaxed, relaxed, mildly anxious, anxious, and very anxious. The following table shows the levels of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale based on Oetting Scale (Humaira, 2022)

Table 1. The Criteria of Students’ Anxiety in Speaking Based on Oetting’s Scale (Humaira, 2022)

Range	Level
124-165	Very anxious
108-123	Anxious
87-107	Mildly anxious
66-86	Relaxed
33-65	Very Relaxed

The second instrument used is interview with open-ended questions. It is intended to obtain information more details about the factors that contribute to students’ speaking anxiety. The researcher used Bahasa Indonesia in the interview to avoid misunderstanding. The data obtained from the questionnaire and interview were analyzed using three steps of data analysis technique by Miles and Huberman (1994) namely data reduction, data display, and conclusion and verification.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to find out the students’ speaking anxiety levels and the factors that contribute to students’ speaking anxiety. The researcher used two instruments: FLCAS questionnaires and an interview to collect data. The first data was obtained from students’

responses to the FLCAS questionnaire to determine students’ speaking anxiety levels. The second data was obtained from the result of the interview with the students who have anxiety levels to know the factors that contribute to students’ anxiety in speaking. The results are described as follows:

1. Levels of Students’ Speaking Anxiety

A questionnaire about Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) adopted from Horwitz et al. (1986) has been distributed to 13 students of Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta. The result of the questionnaire shows students’ speaking anxiety levels in English classrooms. The results of the questionnaire were then counted manually based on Oetting’s scale. It was classified into 5 levels: very relaxed, relaxed, mildly anxious, anxious, and very anxious. The following table shows the result of the student’s level of speaking anxiety.

Table 2 . The Result of the Students’ Level of Speaking Anxiety.

Range	Level	Result	Percentage
124-165	Very anxious	0	0%
108-123	Anxious	7	53,84 %
87-107	Mildly anxious	4	30.77%
66-86	Relaxed	2	15.38 %
33-65	Very Relaxed	0	0 %

From the table above it can be seen that no students are categorized as very relaxed level. there are only 2 of 13 students who get scores between 66-86 which are categorized as a relaxed level, 4 students get scores between 87-107 which indicates that they are at mildly anxious level, then 7 students get scores between 108-123 which indicates that students are at anxious level.

The result of the questionnaire data shows that more than half of the students (53.84%) are categorized as anxious level. It means that they feel worried, and nervous and do not have enough self-confidence in speaking English. Meanwhile, 4 (30.77%) students are at mildly anxiety levels. It means that these four

students experience excessive anxiety in speaking in front of the class. Table 2 also shows that there are 2 students at a relaxed level. Students with this relaxed level have normal anxiety since many people also often feel nervous and anxious when they speak English. They feel relaxed and have enough self-confidence to speak English. From the Questionnaire data, it can be concluded that almost all the students (84,61%) experience anxiety in speaking English and they are categorized as students with anxious and mildly anxious levels when they speak English, especially in front of the class.

2. Factors Contributing to Students' Speaking Anxiety

Factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety are obtained from the result of the interview with 13 male students. Based on the questionnaire data, it is found that 7 students are at anxious levels and 4 students are at mildly anxious levels, 2 students are at relaxed levels. Then the researcher interviewed the students who had anxious and mildly anxious levels to get more details about the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), there are three major types of anxiety, namely: (1) communication apprehension (CA), (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative evaluation. The results of the interview with 11 students who have anxious and mildly anxious speaking levels show that the dominant factor that contributes to students' speaking anxiety is communication apprehension, then it is followed by test anxiety. Referring to communication apprehension, 11 students feel anxious when they speak English in front of the class because they feel worried, nervous, and unconfident that people do not understand what they speak. They fear making mistakes due to their lack of English skills such as limited vocabulary, lack of grammar, pronunciation, and lack of preparation. It can be understood when students do not have enough English skills, they will find difficulties in delivering their ideas or do not know what to say which causes anxiety. Dealing with test anxiety, students feel anxious in speaking when they have fear of failure with their score. They worry about

getting bad scores and lack of preparation. Surprisingly, in terms of negative evaluations from others, either classmates or lecturers do not influence much to their speaking performance. In other words, comments, corrections, and evaluations from others do not influence much to their speaking performance. Even being laughed by classmates doesn't affect their speaking performance because most of the anxious students state that they have already known their classmates well so their comments and critics do not make them nervous or shy. Furthermore, they also said that comments and evaluations from friends and lecturers supported them and it was very helpful in reducing their nervousness when they speak in front of the class. It means that the students have positive impressions on their classmates. The fact that all the participants are male students also makes them feel more relaxed than female students, so they can ignore negative evaluations from others such as being laughed at or comments from others. It is admitted by some of the students. The results of this research are different from many previous research in which the perception of negative evaluation from other influence students' anxiety in speaking. In this research, it is found that negative evaluations from others such as comments, corrections, evaluations or even being laughed at by others do not contribute to the students' speaking anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that most students of Vocational Program of Industrial and Mechanical Technology of Institut Sains & Teknologi AKPRIND Yogyakarta experience speaking anxiety problems. There are 7 out of 13 students (53 %) who are categorized as anxious students. 4 students (30.77%) are categorized as mildly anxious students and only 2 students (15.38 %) are categorized as relaxed students.

There are three factors contributing to students' anxiety in speaking English (Horwitz, 1986) : (1) communication apprehension (2) test anxiety; and (3) fear of negative evaluation. However, in this research, it was found there are only two factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety: communication apprehension and test anxiety. Referring to communication

apprehension, most students feel anxious in speaking English because they fear making mistakes due to lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar, pronunciation, and lack of preparation. Dealing with test anxiety, students feel nervous in speaking English because they have a fear of failure with their scores and lack of preparation. Meanwhile, negative evaluations such as comments, corrections, and evaluations from classmates and lecturers do not influence students' speaking anxiety.

Students with anxious levels are suggested to use strategies to reduce their anxiety. Further research about strategies to reduce students' anxiety in speaking should be developed.

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