

**ANALYZING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY:
LEVEL, CAUSES & STRATEGY**

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a significant factor that might impede learning a foreign language. This study used qualitative approach. In this study, twenty-five senior high school students and five English teachers participated in this study. Questionnaire and interview were used in this study as the research instrument. The objectives of this study are to investigate the level of anxiety experienced by the students in speaking English, to identify the numerous causes that trigger students' anxiety in speaking English and to know the English teacher strategies to overcome the anxiety. The results showed that there are three level of anxiety experienced by the students such as very Anxious Level (20%), Anxious Level (23%) and Mildly Anxious level (47%). While, the other students felt relaxed (3%) and very relaxed (7%). In addition, the data also revealed that the factors of students' anxiety include four aspects such as lack of confidence, lack of Preparation, lack of motivation and fear of making mistake. Finally, the data also found that there are several strategies used by the teacher to overcome the anxiety such as by providing support, playing game, and using question and answer strategies.

Keywords: Analysis, English Speaking Anxiety, Strategy, Types of Anxiety

A. INTRODUCTION

As a language learner, a student needs to be able to speak well, to communicate with the lecturer/teacher during the learning process. Through speaking the language, the learner can share their thoughts and the ideas during the classroom discussion that can enhance their learning experience. However, the learners have a small chance to practice English outside the classroom because English is not their first language which can make the students feel anxious in English language learning, especially in speaking skill regarding to the small chances to practice it (Sinaga et al., 2020). It indicates that in the classroom, asking students to speak in English in front of their peers might make them feel unsafe, uneasy, and threatened. Thus, it is now widely accepted that the biggest issue preventing students from speaking English in class is worry.

Speaking anxiety in students is a prevalent problem that hinders their ability to study and speak English well. defined anxiety as the feeling of tension, surrender, unease, and concern connected to the autonomic nervous system's activation. Feel anxious in speaking English will make students feel uncomfortable and restless. Many learners experienced anxiety when they were speaking English. It is supported by the statement of Marpaung & Fithriani (2023) that typically, students learning a foreign language often express feelings of stress, unease, or worry when trying to speak the new language. Therefore, anxiety is the main problem of learning process in foreign language especially in oral communication (Amini et al., 2019).

According to Horwitz et. al., (1986), the subjective sensation of tension, fear, trepidation, and worry brought on by the autonomic nervous system's activity is known as anxiety. Three main resources can be used to look at the fear that some kids might have in a classroom: an exercise that promotes dialogue and a screening for test-related assessment anxiety (Amini et al., 2019). In the end, this can help teachers recognize and resolve any worries that children may have, resulting in a more encouraging and conducive learning atmosphere. In addition, he proposes three interrelated causes of anxiety related to language learning: exam anxiety, dread of negative assessments, and fear of communication. Communication anxiety is said to be a type of guilt resulting from nervousness or fear when communicating to people. Fear of other people's opinions and the dread of opposing views are the same. One type of performance anxiety that results from a fear of failing is exam anxiety. While anxiety associated to learning a foreign language is sometimes included in situation- specific anxiety, some students experience concerns that are unrelated to the current circumstances (Rizkiya & Pratolo, 2023). Additionally, three primary resources can be used to investigate the dread that some students in a classroom may experience: a communication- intensive activity, a test, test-related anxiety, and test-related evaluation anxiety.

The problem of speaking anxiety not only happens in the low grade of students but also it happens in high level students especially in the 12 grade students senior high school in Medan. It is supported by the experience of researchers and also many students opinion. However students must be master of English because it can make it easier for them communicate with foreigners, making it easier for them to do public speaking for in university later. But in reality, many students of 12 grade senior high school in Medan still have problem and anxiety in speaking. Most of students are still nervous when they are speaking English in front of the classroom. Thus, one way to make students not feel anxious is to start from themselves to get used to speaking in public and increase their vocabulary (Handayani et al., 2020).

Regarding a recent study, Kasap & Power (2019), Saputra (2018) and Suryadi (2021) have also mentioned that speaking is the part of learning a second or foreign language (S/FL) that worries pupils the most. Several studies have shon that fear, resulting from a variety of sources, has a major impact on one's ability to speak English. These elements consist of the ability to communicate, self-assurance, the interlanguage system, and the will to learn a foreign linguistic. It's crucial to remember that ESL studentss also suffer from anxiety, not just EFL pupils. Students who suffer from social anxiety frequently exhibit trembling, sweating, and shaking as physical symptoms of their worry (Khusnia, 2022). Anxiety makes students nervous and scared, which can cause poor oral performance. One of factors which greatly correlates with anxiety, is self-confidence. Confidence involves evaluating and evaluating correlates with the performance of the students themselves. The main causes of speaking difficulties were affective by shyness, lack of vocabularies, and environment of learning; dealing with mistake and lecturer's reaction during English speaking performance,

The majority of symptoms of SA are also said to include panic attacks, amnesia, blank stares, butterflies in the stomach, parched mouth and throat, racing heart, and sudden, high-pitched sounds. Speaking nervousness causes pupils to get uneasy and lack confidence when they talk. Therefore, extreme nervousness during speech might impair effectiveness, cause attention issues, and cause people to appear reserved (Syahfutra, 2021).

Based on the problem above, this current study was conducted with following aims:

1. To describe the level of anxiety experienced by the students in speaking English
2. To identify the numerous causes that trigger students' anxiety in speaking English
3. To know the English teacher strategies to overcome the anxiety

B. METHOD

The approach used in this study was a qualitative case study. Qualitative case studies, according to Baxter & Jack (2008), are a type of research methodology that makes it easier to examine a phenomenon in its context by utilizing a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is examined from several angles rather than just one, revealing the phenomenon's complex nature. It aligns with the goal of the research, which is to identify the factors that contribute to English speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms and develop coping mechanisms for it.

Researchers employed questionnaires and structured interviews to gather data. The questionnaire was developed based on the Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). There were 33 items in the questionnaire ranged from "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Neither Agree nor Disagree" (NA), "Disagree" (D), and "Strongly Disagree" (SD). One kind of survey design is the questionnaire, which respondents complete and send back to the researcher. Participants therefore made the decision to respond to the questions and agreed to divulge some basic personal or demographic data (Creswell, 2012).

In addition, a structured interview is a method used to get information from participants about their thoughts, feelings, and views regarding a certain circumstance. Researchers conducted interviews with five students from a single class to learn about the various factors that contribute to students' nervousness when speaking English, as well as with five English teachers to learn about their coping mechanisms. English speaking nervousness (Horwitz., 2001). Using this technique, the researcher inquired about the causes of the participants' nervousness as well as the teacher's coping mechanisms..

There are three procedures were employed by the researcher to analyze the data. During the initial part of the analysis, known as data condensation, the researcher selects the primary issues, finds patterns in the data, and summarizes the data to a manageable size from the questionnaires and interviews. The second is data display data views condense and arrange data in a visually appealing and comprehensible manner. The final step involves making the conclusion and confirming that the data has been condensed and presented in a simplified manner.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Level of Anxiety

The first question of this study is addressing the level of anxiety the students experienced when they speaking in English. While some worry when speaking is acceptable and even helpful in some situations when learning a foreign language, excessive anxiety can impede

communication and language acquisition. The purpose of using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire in this study was to investigate the implications for cause and prevention as well as to give an overview of the differences between the participants' experiences Very Anxious Level, Anxious Level, Mildly Anxious, Relaxed, Very Relaxed when speaking English.

Table 1. Students' Anxiety Level in Speaking English

No	Level of Anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very anxious	6	20%
2	Anxious	7	23%
3	Mildly anxious	14	47%
4	Relaxed	1	3%
5	Very relaxed	2	7%
	TOTAL	30	100%

It tends to be seen from the table that the understudies get various degrees of tension in talking. Out of 30 understudies, six understudies (20%) are in an exceptionally restless level. Seven understudies (23%) are in the restless level. The other 14 understudies (47%) are in the gently restless level. There is just a single understudy (3%) in the casual level and two understudies (7%) who are at the degree of exceptionally loose. It tends to be inferred that the understudies' talking nervousness is generally in the somewhat restless level with the typical score 95.5, Each anxiety level is described as follows :

Very anxious is the highest level of anxiety. There were six students (20%) on this level. The students at this level felt to be the most nervous than the other students when they asked to do a presentation in front of the class. Based on Oetting's Scale (1983), the range for this level is from 124-165. All the students at this level were interviewed for farther information about the factors that have contributed to their speaking anxiety.

Anxious level is the second high level of speaking anxiety. The range for this level is from 108-123. There were seven students (23%) on this level. The students at this level also experienced anxiety when they were asked to deliver a speech in front of the class but not as much as the students at a very anxious level did.

The middle level of speaking anxiety has the range from 87-107. Most of the students who participated as a sample in this research were at this level, which were 14 students (47%). The students at this level might also felt nervous when they asked to do the presentation in front of the class but they can handle it and can overcome the feeling of anxiety.

Furthermore, relaxed level has range from 66-86. The data showed that there was only one student (3%) at this level. The students at this level felt relaxed and calm when they have to deliver a speech in front of the class. While, there were two students (7%) at very relaxed level. They felt very relaxed and calm when they have to do a presentation in front of the class. The students at this level were usually confident with their speaking English ability.

2. Factors of Students' Anxiety in Speaking

The second research question is regarding the cause of the students' speaking English anxiety. To answer this question, the researcher used interview to collect the data and were

analysed and the results show that there are three causes of English speaking anxiety which can be described as follows:

a. Lack of Confidence

The majority of students reported that they felt anxious when speaking in English because they either had low or no confidence in their own ability to use the target language. It could be seen in the following excerpts:

“Something that makes me feel anxious when speaking English is that I don't trust my self, im afraid say something wrong”. (Student 1)

“The thing that makes me feel anxious when speaking English is that I am embarrassed to be laughed at for saying the wrong thing”. (Student 4)

From the results of the interview, the researcher found that what makes students feel anxious when speaking English is because they are not confident, they are afraid of being laughed at if they say something wrong. It is in line with the statement of Syafitri et al., (2023) that 8 of 14 students' answer the factor what make them anxiety is low confident. Self confidence plays very important role in language acquisition, a person is more willing to take chances, participate in conversations, and learn from their mistakes when they feel confident in their language ability, Conversely, if someone lacks confidence they might hold themselves back shay away from practice chances, and give up.

b. Lack of Preparation

From the results of interviews revealed that lack of preparation made students feel anxious in speaking English. It could be seen in the following excerpts:

“I feel anxious when speaking English because I dont know enough about the language” (Student 3)

“I feel anxious when I speak English because I don't have any basic English” (Student 4)

The data above indicates that inadequate preparation can lead to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety which in effect can hinder effective communication. It means that one of the causes of lack of confidence and feeling anxious when speaking English is lack of preparation. As stated by Marpaung & Fithriani (2023) that EFL with lack preparation because students don't know much about English. Fefeling anxious and lacking confidence can come from various factors such as lack of vocabulary, grammar knowledge and correct English pronunciation skills (Huashan, 2019).

c. Lack of Motivation

The data from interview revealed that low motivation as the cause of students' anxiety. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

“I have low motivation to learn English, which makes me feel anxious when speaking English”. (Student 2)

“Since junior high school I don't like English, and the people around me have never motivated me to learn English, so I feel anxious when speaking English”.

(Student 4)

The data indicates that the majority of students who experience anxiety in English have very little motivation to study the language due to contextual and other supporting factors. Thus, it can be concluded that motivation greatly affects students' ability to learn English so that they will be more confident and feel less anxious when speaking English. It is in line with the statement of Huashan (2019) that Chinese English language learners with higher levels of motivation and interest in the language had lower levels of speaking anxiety. This indicates that motivation can also play a significant role in reducing anxiety associated with speaking English.

d. Fear of making mistakes

It could be seen in the following excerpts:

“I was afraid that what I said would be wrong and my friends would laugh at me”.

(Student 2)

“I was afraid what I said would be wrong ,so that make me feel anxious”.

(Student 3)

The data above indicates that one of the reasons students feel anxious in speaking English is that they are afraid that what they are said is not correct. It is in line with the statement of (Suryadi, 2021) found that seeming foolish in the oral language classroom is one of the things that causes them worry. Because they are terrified of making mistakes and feel embarrassed about them, they remain silent until they are asked to speak in English.

3. Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Student Anxiety in Speaking

The third research question is regarding the teachers strategies to overcome students English speaking anxiety. To answer this question, the researcher used interview to collect the data and were analysed and the results show that there are three strategies to overcome student' anxiety.

a. Providing Support

One of teachers strategies to overcome students speaking English anxiety is by providing support to students. It can be seen from the following excerpt:

“I always give support to my students so that they continue to be enthusiastic about learning English and have more confidence when speaking English”.

(Teacher 2)

“What I often do when I see my students feeling anxious in speaking English is that I always give them encouragement and support to feel calm and confident”.

(Teacher 1)

The data above showed that the teachers tried to help reducing students' anxiety by providing support. It is intended to make the students more enthusiastic in learning. It is in line with the statement of (Januariza & Hendriani, 2016) that teacher motivation becomes an important role in the process of learning speaking skills. Similarly, (Kim et al., 2016) also reported that teacher's support can be an effective method for overcoming English speaking anxiety in language learning. A student really needs words that make them believe that their

can, that's where the confidence of a student arises. From there it will reduce students' anxiety in English.

b. Playing Games

The data from interview revealed that the teacher likes to use fun learning especially in learning English in order to reduce students' boredom when learning English. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

“Im often give games to students when learning English to make students happy learning English”.
(Teacher 3)

“I am always give games to students in learning English because it can make students enthusiastic learn English”.
(Teacher 4)

The data above showed that the teachers' strategy in reducing students' anxiety is by playing games. It is in line with the statement of Titania (2021) that the use of game can be an appropriate medium to overcome students speaking anxiety. This strategy can improve self confidence in speaking English, overcome their anxiety in speaking English and also can improve their vocabulary as said from the teacher as the time of interview.

c. Question and answer Strategies

The data from interview showed that the teachers applied question and answer as the strategy to reduce students' anxiety. It can be seen in the following excerpt:

“I'm always give random question to my students in the class to improve their English especially in speaking English”
(Teacher 5)

“Every meeting im always give question related to the material to my students that can make they are active in the class and can improve their speaking English”.
(Teacher 2)

The data above showed that Question and answer strategy is one of the ways that is applied in teching or presenting the material. It is supported by Anugrawati & Mannong (2022) who found that question answer strategy can overcome students speaking anxiety. It indicates that this strategy can make students actively speak without feeling anxiety. In other word, question and answer strategy can make students more active in the classroom.

D. CONCLUSION

The results off this study indicate that most students have high levels of anxiousness. Four factors are identified as the causes, namely lack confident, lack of motivation, lack of preparation, and fear for making mistakes. And the data also revealed that there three strategies used by the teachers to overcome students speaking anxiety such as by providing support, playing game, and using question and answer strategies. The information provided in this study is very hopefully going to help EFL teachers identify the best Speaking Anxiety Reduction strategies. It is anticipated that this study will inspire and educate educators, pre-service educators, and instructors on how to overcome speaking anxiety in order to develop some research methodologies. In the conclusion, we suggest the best course of action based

on the study's findings and the issues that have been researched with EFL senior high school students.

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