

## **STUDENTS' ANXIETY OF SPEAKING ENGLISH IN PUBLIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Speaking skill is the most important skill to acquire in foreign language learning. Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign language. The ability to speak a foreign language is predominantly influenced by one of the problems, namely speaking anxiety. This study aims to investigate the students' speaking anxiety among college students. It focuses to reveal in what situation students feel anxious, the causal factors that make students feel anxious when speaking English in public, and how they overcome anxiety. This study applied descriptive qualitative to answer the research questions. The data were obtained through observation and interview. It was shown that the factors that made students feel anxious when speaking in English were lack of preparation, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being laughed by friends, nervous when standing in front of people, afraid of being wrong to pronounce and choosing the words in English.

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Speaking Anxiety, Public Speaking*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking is one of a tool for communicating with each other in daily life, for human life speaking is very important because we can share opinions, information, news, ideas. Haycraft (1978), said that as a language, english skills have been divided into four major types, namely speaking, writing, listening and reading. Speaking seems to be the most important. It is supported by Parmawati (2018) that speaking has been the most important skill of English language because speaking is the communication tool of daily life. Furthermore, Hornby (1995) in Sartika (2016) defines speaking as the skill that the students will be evaluated upon most in their real-life situations. It becomes a skill that is mostly used in communication. In developing speaking skills, students not only have to learn and prepare about vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and other English knowledge but also have to build their confidence, public speaking, and their fluency in speaking. English is one of the majors taught in various courses starting from formal to non-formal education as one of today's international languages. English also was considered to be an important complementary skill to be mastered for jobs in different segments. However, English is still categorized as a foreign language in Indonesia. The government has tried to put this subject into school curriculum. Today, English is seen as a common skill that becomes one of the requirements to achieve "better life". English competence is also considered as one of the important elements in adapting to this advancement. As a means of communication, English relates people among nations and it covers many sectors including business, education, engineering, technology, banking and tourism. Moreover, the communication tools which are available around us are supported by the use of this language. Therefore, it is very necessary to discover the barriers to foreign language production. The ability to speak a foreign language is predominantly influenced by one of the problems, namely speaking anxiety. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in speaking is one of the elements that both teachers and students should consider in producing the language. A study found out that there were three causes of FLA, namely fear, shyness, and discomfort. Moreover, the study also encouraged self-reflection activity as students may identify their strengths and weaknesses, conduct problem solving, and increase confidence.

Speaking in English for the English Foreign Language classroom is not easy because students have to speak in a new language with high self-confidence. Speaking fluently can show that they get good proficiency in learning the foreign language. Commonly students feel nervous, not confident, and anxious. This phenomenon is called foreign language anxiety. According to Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) language anxiety may be outlined because the worry or apprehension occurring once a learner is anticipated to perform within the second or foreign language. Anxiety is one of the negative emotions that have the potential to distract students' learning effort in learning English. Feelings of anxiety can happen when someone talks in public because of their habits. with signs such as trembling, pallor, excessive sweating and nervousness when speaking, anxious feelings can be seen.

To summarize, we can conclude that speaking is one of the most essential skills in learning English, but there is a problem that influences students' speaking ability, there is speaking Anxiety. The average of English Foreign Learner definitely has the same problem about Speaking Anxiety, especially when speaking English in public because of a lot of factors, and this research is conducted to examine what factors influence it and to find out the solutions to overcome speaking anxiety. Therefore, this research has three objectives as follows: to find out situations that make students experience anxiety, to investigate factors that make students feel anxious when speaking English in public and to know how students overcome the anxiety.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **Speaking**

Speaking is a productive skill. It cannot be separated from listening. When we speak, we produce the text in the nature of communication we can find the speaker, the listener, the message and the feedback. Speaking could not be separated from pronunciation as it encourages learners to learn the English sounds. In our own language, speaking is usually the second language skill that we learn. This vocalized form of language usually requires at least one listener. When two or more people speak or talk to each other, the conversation is called a "dialogue". Speech can flow naturally from one person to another in the form of dialogue. It can also be planned and rehearsed, as in the delivery of a speech or presentation.

Speaking has usually been compared to writing, both being considered productive skills, as opposed to the receptive skills of reading and listening. Speaking also is closely related to listening as two interrelated ways of accomplishing communication. Every speaker is simultaneously a listener and every listener is at least potentially a speaker (Oprandy, 1994 & EL Menoufy, 1997).

### **The Components of Speaking**

According to Vanderkevent (1990) there are three components in speaking:

- a. The Speakers  
Speakers are a people who produce the sound. They are useful as the tool to express opinion or feelings to the hearer. So if there are no speakers, the opinion or the feelings or the feeling won't be stated.
- b. The Listeners  
Listeners are people who receive or get the speaker's opinion or feeling. If there are no listeners, speakers will express their opinion by writing.
- c. The Utterances  
The utterances are words or sentences, which are produced by the speakers to state the opinion. If there is no utterance, both of the speakers and the listeners will use a sign.

According to Harris (1974) there are five components of speaking skill concerned with comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency.

- a. Comprehension  
For oral communication, it certainly requires a subject to respond, to speech as well as to initiate it.

- b. **Grammar**  
It is needed for students to arrange a correct sentence in conversation. It is in line with the explanation suggested by Heaton (1978: 5) that students' ability to manipulate structure and to distinguish appropriate grammatical form in appropriateness. The utility of grammar is also to learn the correct way to gain expertise in a language in oral and written form.
- c. **Vocabulary**  
Vocabulary means the appropriate diction which is used in communication. Without having a sufficient vocabulary, one cannot communicate effectively or express their ideas in both oral and written form. Having limited vocabulary is also a barrier that precludes learners from learning a language. Without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. So, based on this explanation, the researcher 6 concluded that without mastering vocabulary sufficiently is English learners will not be able to speak English or write English properly.
- d. **Pronunciation**  
Pronunciation is the way for students to produce clearer language when they speak. It deals with the phonological process that refers to the component of a grammar made up of the elements and principles that determine how sounds vary and pattern in a language. There are two features of pronunciation; phonemes and suprasegmental features. From the statement above, the researcher concluded that pronunciation is the knowledge of studying about how the words in a particular language are produced clearly when people speak. In speaking, pronunciation plays a vital role in order to make the process of communication easy to understand.
- e. **Fluency**  
Fluency is the ability to read, speak, or write easily, smoothly and expressively. In other words, the speaker can read, understand and respond in a language clearly and concisely while relating meaning and context. Fluency can be defined as the ability to speak fluently and accurately. Fluency in speaking is the aim of many language learners. Signs of fluency include a reasonably fast speed of speaking and only a small number of pauses and "ums" or "ers". These signs indicate that the speaker does not have spent a lot of time searching for the language items needed to express the message. From the ideas above, the researcher concluded that another important component is fluency. Fluency means the capability of someone who speaks fluently and accurately with little use of pauses like „ums“ and „ers“, and so on.

### **Public Speaking**

Public Speaking is one language skill which is very important to be mastered by students in order to be a good communicator. "Public Speaking is the verbal use of language to communicate with others" (Fulcher, 2003, p. 23). Speech is one of examples that students must choose how to interact in expressing themselves and forming social relationships through speech. According to Hall speaking in an ability that is taken for granted, learned as it is through process of socialization through communicating (Fulcher, 2003) and "Public Speaking is making use of language in ordinary voice; uttering words; knowing and being able to use a language; expressing oneself in words; making speech" (Hornby, 1987, p. 827). In short public speaking can be the way to carry out feelings through words, even conversations with others. It means that humans use words and phrases in the interactive process of constructing the meaning of public speaking.

### **Anxiety**

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints, and rumination. It includes subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over anticipated events (Davidson, 2008). It is often accompanied by muscular tension, restlessness, fatigue and problems in concentration (American

Psychiatric Association, 2013). Anxiety is closely related to fear, which is a response to a real or perceived immediate threat; anxiety involves the expectation of future threat. People facing anxiety may withdraw from situations which have provoked anxiety in the past (Barker, 2003).

### **Speaking Anxiety**

Anxiety is one of the negative emotions that have the potential to distract students' learning effort in learning English. Feelings of anxiety can happen when someone talks in public because of their habits. with signs such as trembling, pallor, excessive sweating and nervousness when speaking, anxious feelings can be seen. According to Lanefeldt (2011) speaking anxiety is something that has a great impact on one's self-confidence when the speakers speak out and shows what one knows. Students who have experienced failure when speaking will choose silent rather than taking the risk of failing again. They are afraid of being laughed at by classmates and ultimately reducing their confidence.

### **METHOD**

This study applied a qualitative research approach. Qualitative method is used to gain and understanding of underlying reasons, opinion and motivation. According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is an approach to data collection, analysis, and report writing referring from the traditional quantitative research. In order to collect input from respondents, this research used observation, and interview.

This study focuses on students' anxiety of speaking English in public. It employs qualitative descriptive methods. Data sources are from observation to students. The process of data collection in this study uses several techniques of: observation and interview.

Observation is used in the social sciences as a method for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures. Observation, particularly participant observation, has been the hallmark of much of the research conducted in anthropological and sociological studies and is a typical methodological approach of ethnography. It is also a tool used regularly to collect data by teacher researchers in their classrooms, by social workers in community settings, and by psychologists recording human behaviour. Observation is the systematic description of the events, behaviors, and artifacts of a social setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 79).

The interview guide was adapted from Price (199) in Musthachim (2014:19) focuses on foreign language anxiety. Furthermore, the interview was using the Indonesian language to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity between the interviewer and interviewee.

There were several steps in analyzing the data. First, writers chose randomly 4 students from 76 students of third-grade students as the respondents of this research. Second, the writers observe in the respondents' classroom and collect on the same day. Third, the writers interviewed students that have the result of the observation sheet that have relaxed, anxious, and mildly anxious levels and the result of their behaviour when they speak english in public. Then, after the data collected the writers integrated and related the findings to the background of the study, mainly to the research questions, theories, and the methodology for classifying the data into manageable units.

The interview was to find out what are the factors that made the students feel anxious. Ten students were chosen with different levels in anxiety to do the interview. There were eight questions in the interview. The researchers interviewed the students with some questions as follows: (1). How do you feel when studying English in the classroom? (2). Do you think English is a difficult language to learn? (3). In your opinion, what is the most difficult major in English? (4). How do you feel when you speak English in public? (5). What are the factors that make you feel anxious when speaking English in public? (6). What do you think about the reaction of your classmates if you make a mistake when you speak in English? (7). What is your strategy to overcome your speaking anxiety?

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The researchers did the research and got the data from all the research instruments including observation and interview. To gain the objectives of the research, the researchers had analyzed the data systematically and accurately. The data was analyzed in order to draw conclusions about the

objective of the study. In this section, the researcher described the process of observation and interview findings data.

### **Observation Result**

The first data was taken by observation, the findings shown in table below:

Participant	Unnatural Psychology and Physiology Condition					Level of Anxiety
	Flushed Face	Trembling	Voice Intonation/articulation	Gesture	Eye Contact	
Student 1			√	√	√	Anxious
Student 2		√		√	√	Anxious
Student 3		√		√		Anxious
Student 4						Mildly Anxious

Based on the findings of observation there are four samples of the students. The first student shows unnatural psychology and physiology such as voice intonation or articulation, gesture, eye contact, and nervousness. Included in the anxious level, the second student shows unnatural psychology and physiology such as trembling, gesture, and eye contact. Included in the anxious level, the third student shows unnatural psychology and physiology such as trembling, gesture, and nervousness, included in anxious levels. Fourth student shows unnatural psychology and physiology such as nervousness included in mildly anxious.

The researchers concluded that all of the sample of the students felt anxious because when they speak English in front of the public they not only speak but do other unnatural activities like unnatural eye contact, trembling, and unnatural gestures. That's all showing the characteristic of anxious level.

### **Interview Result**

Findings from the data taken from interview are shown in the following table:

No.	Question	Results
1.	How do you feel when learning English in the classroom?	Two of the samples answered that they feel normal.  The other two of the sample answered that they feel anxious when learning English in the classroom but it depends on the subject.

2. Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?

All of the samples answered that English is a difficult language to learn because they have a problem with how to pronounce words in English and understand the materials.
  
  3. In your opinion, what is the most difficult major in English Study Program?

Two of the samples answered that the most difficult major in English Study Program is Syntax, because of the difficult material and the lecturer is firm.

One of the samples answered that the most difficult major in English Study Program is Listening, because it's hard to understand the native accent.

The other one of the samples answered that the most difficult major in English Study Program is Speaking, because he is afraid of being wrong when pronouncing English, and does not know the translation when speaking english.
  
  4. How do you feel when you speak English in public?

Three of the samples answered that they feel nervous when speaking English in Public.

One of the samples answered that she felt a little nervous.
  
  5. What are the factors that make you feel anxious when speaking English in public?

All of the samples answered that they were afraid of making mistakes.
  
  6. What do you think about the reaction of your classmates if you make a mistake when you speak in english?

All of the samples answered that some of their classmates will laugh or try to fix their mistakes.
  
  7. What is your strategy to overcome your speaking anxiety?

Two of the samples answered that their strategies touch something or when they are speaking in front of the class they just look at their close friend.

One of the samples answered that she must suggest herself not to be nervous.

The other one of the samples answered that he has to do more practice such as pronunciation practice, try to speak in front of the mirror or speak with friends, improve their vocabulary knowledge.
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Based on the findings of the interview, all of the students felt anxious because they were nervous when standing and speaking in front of the class, afraid of making mistakes when they pronounce a word in English and feel afraid of the subject that they think is difficult, afraid of being laughed at by their friends, and lack of preparation. Some of the students said that the strategy to overcome their anxiety is they must try to suggest themselves not to be nervous, touching something to reduce their anxiety, or when they speak in front of the public they only look at their close friends, so they would not feel nervous. And one of the students said the strategy to overcome the anxiety is he has to do more practice such as pronunciation practice, try to speak in front of the mirror or speak with friends, improve their vocabulary knowledge.

## **CONCLUSION**

To summarize, we can conclude that speaking is one of the tools for communicating with each other in daily life, for human life speaking is very important because we can share opinions, information, news, ideas. But, speaking in English for the English Foreign Language students is not easy because students have to speak in a new language with high self-confidence. Speaking fluently can show that they get good proficiency in learning the foreign language. Commonly students feel nervous, not confident, and anxious. This phenomenon is called foreign language anxiety. Anxiety is one of the negative emotions that have the potential to distract students' learning effort in learning English. Feelings of anxiety can happen when someone talks in public because of their habits with signs such as trembling, pallor, excessive sweating and nervousness when speaking, anxious feelings can be seen. Students who have suffered anxiety would choose to be quiet instead of taking the risk of failing again. They fear that classmates will laugh at them and eventually reduce their confidence. So, anxiety is something that has to be overcome by us as the students, because when we feel anxious, it is hard to construct the words that will be spoken and it will influence students' learning performance.

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