

INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY: A CASE STUDY AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF UINSU

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety about speaking English has received a lot of attention in recent years. The purpose of this study was to know the factors that caused English Department students of UINSU language anxiety and their strategies for reducing anxiety in speaking English at class. Participants in this study were 5 students' English department in the second semester. The methods used in this study were descriptive and qualitative. Data were obtained from interviews and observations. The results show that EFL students in English Department of UIN Sumatera Utara, they feel anxiety in speaking English. Fear of speaking English is due to a number of factors, both internal and external. The first factor was the type of the task, fear of making mistakes, the role of the language teacher, self-perception and the last is the limited exposure to English. The finding of this study also revealed that there were some strategies they used to overcome their speaking anxiety. There are preparation before speaking English, positive thinking, and strategy they used was peer seeking.

Keywords: *Speaking, Anxiety, Foreign Language, Spoken English.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the tools we use to communicate with one another in everyday life. Speaking is highly important in human existence since it allows us to exchange our opinions, information, news, and ideas. Speaking English in an English class can be difficult because students need to speak confidently in their new language. Fluency indicates your ability to master a foreign language. Students are often nervous, unconfident, and anxious. It's called foreign language anxiety. (Fauzi et al., 2021). Many foreign language learners are concerned as English becomes the language of preference. (Rumiyati & Seftika, 2018). Over the last 30 years, language anxiety has been a major issue in foreign language teaching and learning.

Most EFL students are likely to face anxiety when speaking and conversing in a foreign language in public (Hanifa, 2018). Many students may encounter

difficulties while acquiring her EFL language at higher levels. Anxiety study began with native speakers when psychologists saw anxiety in various settings such as driving, testing, and stage performance (Liu, 2018).

Speaking is one of the most productive abilities, and English students must be courageous and self-assured in order to deliver their message to their listeners. Everyone must learn to communicate effectively with one another. English is a foreign language in Indonesia that all students should acquire from middle school to university level. Because the primary aim of learning a target language is to improve one's speaking skills. As a result, foreign language learners often regard speaking as a success measure for learning a language. Fear, on the other hand, becomes an issue for foreign language learners, who themselves help convey messages and create communication in their environment (Çağatay, 2015)

Anxiety is a negative manner of expressing human emotions. We feel apprehensive, frightened, and fearful when we are anxious. We battle, quiver, sweat, and our hearts race. Anxiety is a multifaceted phrase that is based not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy, but also on assessments of the potential and perceived hazards inherent in various situations (Ansari, 2015).

In this study, researchers analyzed problems found in the situational field. Researchers collected data by observing students' anxiety when speaking. Why do anxiety situations occur when speaking English? It has far-reaching effects on performance. Therefore, there is a need to study and investigate the effects of fear on language learning so that students can acquire the language with minimal difficulty. As part of this study, Indonesian learners studying English at the Islamic State University of North Sumatra (UINSU) must pass an English challenge. However, observations show that learners face difficulties in English classes. They demonstrate a lack of motivation and participation in classroom activities. Reasons cited by most Indonesian learners include lack of self-confidence and the difficulty of the English language itself.

Several research have been undertaken to investigate her EFL students' levels of anxiety around speaking performance. The researchers discovered that there is an urgent need to explore anxiety difficulties among EFL learners during speaking performance. This is because it can lead to underdeveloped speaking skills and decrease students' performance in speaking and foreign language learning (Darmawan et al., 2021). A substantial relationship was established between students' speaking scores and their fear over speaking in a foreign language. (Tridinanti, 2018). Her worried EFL students have fewer continuous utterances, longer pauses in the middle of phrases, and more erroneous starts.

Mohd Fadhli Shah Khaidzir (2015) conducted research on foreign language anxiety in Thai students in an EFL classroom. As a result, Bahasa revealed that, despite studying Melayu as a second language, the majority of pupils experience language anxiety. The data point to a normal response. In other words, each time these kids learnt a new foreign language, they experienced some degree of language anxiety.

As a result, the goal of this study was to investigate the classification of anxiety levels, the factors that contribute to students' nervousness when speaking English, and the solutions students require to alleviate their anxiety.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The qualitative research method was applied in this study, employing a case study methodology. The qualitative method was chosen since the goal of this study is to provide insight into situations of language anxiety among English department students in UIN Sumatera Utara, specifically worry over speaking English. A case study, according to Fraenkel and Wallen, is a qualitative research method that studies a single person, group, or noteworthy example in order to produce an interpretation of a specific situation or to generate relevant generalizations. As a result of the study case technique, the authors were able to examine specific students in order to better understand cases of speaking anxiety.

The subject of this study was Students of English Department in UINSU, Medan. This amounts 5 students who are considered to be anxious in Speaking English. Data were analyzed in several steps. First, the author randomly selected five of her students as respondents to this survey. Second, the authors observe in the respondent's classroom and collect on the same day. Third, we interviewed students with observation sheet scores, relaxed, anxious, and somewhat anxious scores, and students with scores for behavior when speaking English in class. After collecting the data, the authors synthesized the results and related them to the research background, primarily the research question, the theory and the methodology used to classify the data into manageable units.

This study focuses on EFL students' fear of speaking in the classroom. Use a qualitative description method. Data sources from observations to students. The data collection process in this study uses several techniques, there are observation and interview.

An interview is a type of data collection method in which respondents are chosen at random. Furthermore, this interview use google form in which one or more respondents are asked to provide a reliable and validated measure in the form of verbal answers.

The authors stressed the relevance of this research to the students during the initial interview process, and that all interviews would be conducted in the students' native language which is Bahasa Indonesia, in order to collect answers without limiting or constraining the students. Those who expressed an interest in participating were invited to an interview.

Afterwards, five participants were interviewed. Of the remaining 5 participants, 2 were male and 3 were female. All the participants are second semester students of English department in UINSU. Each interview lasted

approximately 10 minutes and was recorded with the participant's permission. Interview guides are price-adjusted and focused on foreign language anxiety.

The following main questions are:

1. Please explain something about how you have felt during Speaking English Activity in class?
2. What are the problem with Speaking English ? Why? Tell me more!
3. What your opinion about the role of your lecturer to guide you in teaching learning process?
4. How do you think people in your classroom will react if you make a mistake in speaking English?
5. Do you think English is a difficult language to learn? Why? Tell me more!
6. In your opinion, how English Speaking skill might be less stressful? What did you do to overcome anxiety?!

RESULTS

Researchers conducted the survey and obtained data from all research tools including observations and interviews. To achieve their research goals, researchers systematically and accurately analyzed the data. Data were analyzed to draw conclusions about the purpose of the study. In this section, researchers described the process of observing and interviewing outcome data.

Table 1. Observation result

Participan ts	Unnatural Psychology and Physicology Condition						Level of Anxiety
	Flushe d Faces	Tremblin g	Voice Intonation s	Gesture s	Eyes Contact	Nervou s	
Student 1	✓		✓		✓	✓	Anxious
Student 2		✓	✓	✓			Anxious
Student 3	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Anxious
Student 4		✓				✓	Mildly Anxious
Student 5		✓				✓	Mildly Anxious

Based on observations, there are five student samples. The first student exhibits psychological and physiological unnaturalness, including vocal intonation and pronunciation, gestures, eye contact, and nervousness. The second student, included in the Fear Level, exhibits unnatural psycho-physiological features such as tremors, gestures, and eye contact with her. A third student included in the anxiety level displays unnatural psychological and physiological symptoms such as tremors, gestures, and nervousness included in the anxiety level. The fourth student and fifth student shows unnatural psychological and physiological phenomena, such as being easily tremors and and nervous.

The researchers concluded that all students in the sample felt anxious. This was because when they spoke English in public, they not only spoke, but also made other unnatural behaviors such as unnatural eye contact, shaking, and unnatural gestures.

Finding from the data taken from interview are shown in the follow table:

Table 2. Interview Result

No.	Question	Result
1.	Please explain about how you have felt during Speaking English in class?	S1 : "I feel scared to be in front of people include to be in front of my friend, I often feel nervous and it makes me forget what I have to say"

		<p>S2 : <i>I often feel afraid that maybe I speak the wrong way, I feel not confident</i></p> <p>S3 : <i>“It’s hard to focused because by looking my friends’ face its make me laugh and forget what to say”</i></p> <p>S4 : <i>“I feel a kindly nervous but I don’t really take it as pressure so I can control my self to just focused on material”</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>“I don’t put pressure at all if I Speaking english in class with my friend, because in senior high school I used to take part in speech contest”</i></p>
2.	What are the problem with Speaking English ? Why? Tell me more!	<p>S1 : <i>“the thing that bothers me the most is that I forgot what to say, its because I don’t know much about vocabulary”</i></p> <p>S2 : <i>“for me its lack of speaking practice, I don’t have friend to talk with so its rare for me to practice speaking”</i></p> <p>S3 : <i>“I fear of making mistake so its makes not confident to speaking English”</i></p> <p>S4: <i>“I’m nervous so it makes me not want to speaking English with my friend”</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>“if I master the material, I have nothing that is barrier in speaking English”</i></p>
3.	What your opinion about the role of your lecturer to guide you in teaching learning process?	<p>S1 : <i>“the role of lecturers are good already but sometimes I feel uncomfortable when the situation is nerve wracking, it makes me afraid and trembling if I get negative comment about my speaking”</i></p> <p>S2 : <i>“there is a lecturer who makes me fine when making</i></p>

		<p><i>mistakes in speaking, but also there is a lot of lecturer who makes me nervous to speak English in front of them</i></p> <p>S3 : <i>“the role of lecturer is fine and we have good relationship with all our lecturer”</i></p> <p>S4 : <i>“so far our lecturer is quite effective to transfer the lesson material”</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>“all is good, the lecturer as learning resource, I as a student when I ask something, the lecturer can swiftly and responsively reply to student question by using language that easy to understand”</i></p>
4.	How do you think people in your classroom will react if you make a mistake in speaking English?	<p>S1 : <i>“My classmates don't really intimidate me when I speak wrong English”</i></p> <p>S2 : <i>“Some of my friend are laughing at me, sometimes I feel embarrassed”</i></p> <p>S3 : <i>“they laughed at me because of my mistakes in speaking English”</i></p> <p>S4 : <i>“I think people in my classroom don't like me so they act like they're the best at everything”</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>“their reaction when I make mistake in speaking English is not friendly, they didn't hesitate to reprimand me if I speak wrong English”</i></p>
5.	Do you think English is a difficult language to learn? Why? Tell me more!	<p>S1 : <i>“I think yes, because its so hard for me to remember vocabulary in English”</i></p> <p>S2 : <i>“of course, speaking is really challenging for me, I'm afraid of making mistake”</i></p>

		<p>S3 : <i>"I think yea, there are complicated concepts to learn English regarding how to spelling the word and pronunciation itself."</i></p> <p>S4 : <i>"I think so, there are a lot of rules, a lot of grammar that I have to master it makes me confuse sometimes"</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>"I think its easy when you already know about the vocabulary and you keep practice it with your friend"</i></p>
6.	<p>In your opinion, how English Speaking skill might be less stressful? What did you do to overcome anxiety? !</p>	<p>S1 : <i>"I think have friend to speaking English with is makes me less stressful"</i></p> <p>S2 : <i>"do a lot of practice is one thing that can overcome anxiety in speaking English"</i></p> <p>S3 : <i>"what I do to reduce my anxiety in speaking English is that I usually visualize my success, imagine that I can speak fluent at English and people give me applause"</i></p> <p>S4 : <i>"to overcome my anxiety I usually just focused on my material of speaking not focused on my friend/audience"</i></p> <p>S5 : <i>"English speaking can be less stressful if you have friend that support you in English. Not intimidate you when you make a mistake"</i></p>

Based on observations and interviews, researchers received responses that most English department students in English Department of UIN Sumatera utara are afraid during class due to several factors. There are several factors caused by

internal and external politics. The first factor was the nature of the task. When students were requested to present an activity in front of the class, the task became anxiety-inducing. All of the students felt the same way about the anxiety they felt when they made a mistake. The third is the role of the language teacher. This relates to how teachers create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to the teaching and learning process. The fourth factor is self-awareness, and self-awareness in this context is a perception that negatively impacts students. The last is limited exposure to English.

Furthermore, researchers revealed ways students used to minimize anxiety after each interview. The findings revealed that they adopted effective anxiety-reduction measures. The first step was to prepare before studying English. Students had a stronger sense of having materials to use in their studies as a result of this. The second method is to think positively. To manage language anxiety and reduce worry in the classroom, positive thinking as a psychological aspect was required. The final approach they employed was peer searching. This was something that students used to do. Students enjoyed asking their peers about something they didn't understand, whether it was a sentence, the meaning of a word, or an imprecise pronunciation. It proved to be a wonderful option for students.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we have discussed what causes English Department students of UIN Sumatera Utara anxiety in speaking English classes and the strategies for them to reduce anxiety.

The factors students' fear of speaking English

Based on the interview result above, There are factors that makes Students in English department feel anxiety in speaking English, there are the task type, fear of making mistakes, the role of language teaching, self-awareness, and limited exposure to English.

i. Task type

When students were requested to present an activity in front of the entire class, the assignment became stressful. For example, tasks included speaking, storytelling, dialogue, role-playing, and presentation. When students had to practice speaking in front of their peers, their confidence helped them perform better. It is clear from the description below:

“speaking is really challenging for me, I’m afraid of making mistake especially when I have to speak in front of the class to present my presentation or story telling. I always avoid that kind of task”

ii. Fear of making mistakes

According to interviews, most students felt the same about feeling anxious when they made a mistake. The above data show that students were afraid of making mistakes when performing in front of the class. The type of fear of peer acceptance or reaction can affect English-speaking performance, and for some students. If you make a mistake, you may fear negative judgment from your instructor (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020). Their way of thinking influenced the development of their language skills. Because of my poor grades and fear of being evaluated by others, I was unable to speak freely while speaking English.

iii. Self-awareness

The student's own self-concept is one factor that adds to student anxiety about speaking performance. Negative thoughts and underestimating one's own skills can lead to anxiety as one's self-esteem declines (Sholikhi, n.d.). The data presented above indicate that this condition is associated with low self-awareness. This condition was clearly a psychological barrier to learning to talk well. Students with this condition are concerned about what others perceive of them. It shows based on the interview result below:

“Some of my friend are laughing at me, sometimes I feel embarrassed”

iv. The role of the language teacher

The role of the language teacher also played a part in the existence of anxiousness. In this scenario, as a language teacher, the tutor must be able to select

appropriate teaching methods and approaches to ensure a successful learning process. According to the data presented above, the lecturer's environment should be appropriate for the student's condition, as it affected the student's anxiousness when speaking English. Teachers must consider how to respond to each student's errors. Limited exposure to English To achieve their objective of speaking English fluently, students must practice speaking English on a daily basis (Mulyono, 2019). However, little exposure to English might stifle the development of communication abilities. According to the statistics, the English-speaking environment was unwelcoming to the students, and it was difficult for them to find English-speaking practice partners (Sho, 2020). On the other hand, the frequency of continuous practice was critical for lowering anxiety.

Students' Anxiety-Reduction Techniques

Data from interviews and observations revealed that students employ three ways to overcome their fear of public speaking. Pre-learning English preparation, positive thinking, and peer seeking were the tactics used.

i. Preparation before learning English

The majority of students stated that one strategy they can use is to prepare themselves before studying English. Use the app to browse discussion topics and learn new pronunciations. Then rehearse with a friend or in front of a mirror. (Mulyono & Saskia, 2021) was discovered to be a clearly task-related preparation, used equally by students with high and moderate anxiety. exercise. As a result, with appropriate preparation, students can improve their skills. Improving competence can aid in the reduction of student anxiety..

ii. Positive thinking

Positive thinking is a second technique that many students employ. The researchers discovered what they were looking for in the interview once again. Students responded that they should strive to believe they can talk English fluently, even if they don't know how, because confidence is crucial. It may alleviate their nervousness. Furthermore, positive thinking is a psychological component in

dealing with language anxiety and overcoming performance anxiety in class(Pahargyan, 2021).

iii. Peer seeking

Seeking a companion was a simple student anxiety-reduction technique. When presented with unfamiliar words or less clear pronunciations, students sometimes chose to ask their peers if they had any problems(Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). You can talk with suitable learning partners or create small groups. This can be an effective solution, particularly if students are able to share their experiences and strategies with their learning partners.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that EFL students at UINSU's English Department are anxious and avoid speaking English. In the classroom, students face the issue of foreign language speaking anxiety. This study discovered characteristics that cause students to feel apprehensive when speaking English or when required to speak English in the classroom, as well as the ways they employed to lessen their anxiety. According to research, five variables contribute to student anxiety in foreign language classes. The first was the task's nature, the second was the fear of making mistakes, the third was the language teacher's function, the fourth was self-awareness, and the last was the limited usage of English. Students prefer to be quiet all the time during learning procedures such as discussions and speaking activities, which can be more than just shame. This was not only an issue for students, but it also required additional attention to understand this common case. I also learned about the method used for Pre-learning English preparation, positive thinking, and peer seeking were the tactics used. Students must deal with anxiety difficulties. If the students known what was causing their anxiety, they might have been able to overcome it, allowing them to enjoy anxiety-free learning. The study also suggests that there should be more studies on speaking anxiety in EFL Students context.

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