

SPEAKING ANXIETY IN ONLINE ENGLISH CLASS: CAUSES AND EFFECTS

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Abstract

This research analyzed speaking anxiety in English Classes at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Humanities UIN Walisongo Semarang. This research aims to analyze students' speaking anxiety and its cause and effects. Research participants were students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Humanities UIN Walisongo who took the English Class in Academic Year 2021/2022. The total sample was 86 students out of 417 students. This study used questionnaires and interviews as a data collection method. The finding showed that most students have a high level of speaking anxiety. The interview also showed that students' stress was caused by lack of vocabulary, problems with confidence, making mistakes, fears and shyness.

Keywords— speaking anxiety; online English class

Introduction

As a productive skill, speaking requires learners to be confident in delivering messages. Brown stated that speaking is rather hard to acquire compared to the other three. It is because spoken language requires interaction directly, in which someone speaking to others should be done orally. Moreover, the other four skills can be practised by him/herself, but verbal language cannot be done by oneself. It is why students must make more attempts to look for other people as conversation peers. According to Nunan (2000), speaking plays a significant role in acquiring a foreign or second language. Moreover, he further highlights that language learning success measurement is a student's competence to conduct a target language conversation. It can be concluded that speaking fluency is an urge in learning a language.

Speaking skills are related to producing meaningful words as a means to communicate with others. This activity urges humans to fulfil their needs in conveying opinions and transferring messages, ideas, and information. Mastering speaking is a significant part of learning a foreign language for some people. For the most part, people measure students who learn foreign languages by their speaking ability. Related to Indrayanti (2016), when people learn and study English, they should master the competence to use it as a means of communication.

Four communication components should be taken into consideration, namely the purpose and participants of conversations, the context of discussions, and the speaker's knowledge and experience. Recognizing the urgent position of English as a means of communication, all students should learn English at all levels of education in Indonesia. However, the mandatory language given by the government cannot be done smoothly. Learning English, especially speaking, could be a difficult task for most students because of the requirement of interaction that not all students can happen.

Although English has been taught at all education levels, from elementary to university level, the undeniable fact is that many university graduates cannot use English as their means of communication. Most students, especially in non-English study programs, struggled to pass the class with maximum performance. This phenomenon was also happened by researchers in the preliminary research conducted in the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Cultural Sciences UIN

Walisongo Semarang. The researcher also found that students remained silent in class in some online class activities. Students preferred not to turn their cameras on. Students also were afraid of being active in the discussion even though the course was online. Some of them also were unwilling to answer the teacher's calls. Students also find it hard to cope with their speaking anxiety, which makes them unable to express their language expressions in class, making them limit themselves to explore their language competency.

Broadly, Ellis (1994) categorized speaking anxiety into two types: nature anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Daly (1991) stated that some common reasons could cause speaking anxiety: being humiliated, poor preparation, feeling unconfident with their physical looks, fear of criticism done by the audience, and low self-esteem. Brown (2000) divided anxiety levels into three; individual traits anxiety, state anxiety, and situational-specific.

In the context of learning how to speak English, the ultimate goal is being able to talk with natives. However, speaking anxiety can be an obstacle to achieving the goal. According to Horwitz (1986), mental barriers become the biggest issue for most students when they talk to a native. This makes students nervous and less confident, making them step back from their learning experience. Psychological factors must be identified early on before reducing and controlling them to overcome a mental block. In line with the problem of anxiety, a statement by Thornbury (2002) stated failure and speaking anxiety is mainly caused by vocabulary and grammar comprehension and fear of mistakes. Fitnah & Hayatul further stated that common factors that caused students' anxiety were limited numbers of vocabulary, the problem with linguistics and lack of speaking readiness.

Thus, speaking anxiety significantly affects students' speaking skills and becomes a severe psychological problem. This can interfere with their learning process, and their interaction with other friends, especially in Foreign Language Learning, especially English. Considering what has been explained above, the researcher tried to investigate students' speaking anxiety and find out its causes and effects in online English classes.

Literature Review

In general, anxiety is defined as poor self-efficacy due to mental threats or feelings of discomfort due to something threatening. Speaking anxiety is a reaction to someone's fear of speaking. Anxiety makes people afraid and causes chaos in the human mind. Horwitz found that anxiety is a personal feeling of fear, nervousness, tension, and worry experienced by any age. Then, learning foreign language anxiety possibly happens because learners may feel anxiously related to the fear of communication, fear of negative evaluation and feelings of general anxiety.

Furthermore, other researchers, namely Huyen (2003), Boonkit (2010) and Liu (2011), lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, lack of preparation and shame were common causes of speaking anxiety. In addition, Gregersen stated that learners' anxiety about learning foreign languages, possibly caused by their learning, is less enjoyable. Another study related to foreign language anxiety has shown that foreign language anxiety is mainly caused by a lack of confidence, which leads the learners to frustration.

According to Dixon (2012), there are three categories of anxiety in language learning: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. From these quotes, it can be said that student anxiety can come from several possible factors. Different factors will cause other effects of stress and require different treatments to deal with certain types of anxiety.

Several signs can detect anxiety factors. Johnston (2006) describes some signs of seeing anxiety; physical symptoms such as sweating, headache and shortness of breath, emotional signs such as fear of death and cognitive signs such as difficulty concentrating. That is, they feel anxious. Students who show signs of anxiety should be helped by the teacher to reduce their stress and provide solutions to overcome them.

There are several signs of anxiety indicated by the symptoms of fear of the mind. These symptoms are feeling scared, maybe telling ourselves that we are physically ill, having a heart attack or going crazy, thinking that people are looking at us, worrying that we will lose control and embarrass ourselves in front of others, feeling that we have to do it. Escape and go to a safe place. Although anxiety is mostly about negative things, stress also has a positive side.

Researchers can conclude that "Anxiety is a feeling and is related to the psychological system of a person who feels uncomfortable caused by nervousness or worry about something might happen in the future". Furthermore, anxiety is the risk of a situation and can be reduced if a person has achieved what he wants.

Some researchers also conducted several studies related to speaking anxiety. A survey conducted by Imam Wahyudi Antoro (2015) entitled "Speaking Anxiety: Factors Contributing To The Anxiety In Speaking Class Of The First Year Students Of English Department Faculty Of Latter Jember University" focused on factors contributing to anxiety in speaking class. The purpose of this research is to gain further knowledge of the factors that contribute to anxiety speaking style and the result of the dominant factors that contribute to anxiety speaking style in the first-year students of the English Department Faculty of Latter Jember University. Other research was conducted by Rumini Yuliana (2017), and Nur Lina Amalia Huda (2018) focused on investigating student's anxiety in speaking performance from several problems such as what types of stress faced by students, what are factors and strategies to reduce student anxiety, and what are the levels of student anxiety.

The similarities between previous research and this research are both looks for factors from the anxiety of speaking English. However, this study differs in digging information about speaking anxiety online learning.

Research Method

The designer of this research chooses descriptive research. The population is the second year students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Cultural Sciences UIN Walisongo Semarang in the 2021/2022 academic year. The total population is 417 students. However, Gay et al. (2000) suggest that the minimum sample of 10% is considered the minimum to do descriptive research. Researchers choose 86 students as research samples. Examples were selected randomly. The research instrument is a questionnaire. Questionnaire items were made based on students' anxiety indicators, as stated by McIntyre et al. The items in the questionnaire were adapted from Horwitz (1986) with the term FLAC, an abbreviation for Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The purpose of the questionnaire was to know the level of students speaking anxiety. The story of anxiety is categorized into three; low, medium and high. SD: Strongly Disagree D: Disagree N: Neither agree nor Disagree A: Agree on SA: Strongly Agree

No	Questions	Answer				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I never feel pretty sure of myself when speaking English, even in an online class.					
2	I tremble when I know that I will be called to perform in an online class.					
3	I enjoy following the speaking test.					
4	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in class.					
5	I worry about the consequences of failing my speaking performance.					
6	When I perform my speaking, I tend to forget all the things.					
7	When I'm performing in an online class, I often feel ashamed.					
8	I don't have to worry about making a mistake in my speaking					

	performance.					
9	I don't mind taking the speaking test.					
10	I often forget everything I am supposed to say and feel nervous when speaking.					
11	I feel anxious when speaking, even if I'm well prepared.					
12	when I need to perform speaking, I often feel like I'm not present					
13	I feel confident speaking in class.					
14	when I was going to be called to speak, my heart pounding.					
15	I became more confused the more I learned and practised speaking.					
16	I felt being forced to perform in an online class.					
17	When I speak, I can feel confident.					
18	When I speak, I feel confused and nervous.					
19	When I speak, I feel relaxed.					
20	Whenever I speak in class, I fear that the other students will laugh at me.					

Results and Discussion

After the data is compiled, the researcher then continues to analyze the questionnaires and then gathers all of the participant responses in tables by utilizing the Likert Scale. FLCAS give no precise instructions or guidelines for interpreting the responses. There's a simple method to analyze the questionnaire as suggested by Kriangkrai (2012); picking the Liker scale in this study is because most people adopted the scale in analyzing the questionnaire. The advantage of the Likert scale is that the Likert scale gives room to the degree of opinion from the respondent, not only expecting a simple yes/no answer. The system used by the Likert scale is by giving the individual a scale of five-point options which guide individuals to express how much they agree or disagree according to certain statements. This study used 20 item questionnaires with 100 as the total score. 70-100 categorized as high anxiety, 40-69 classified as moderate anxiety and below 40 as low pressure. The researcher then ordered the participants' level of anxiety and high anxiety category existing of 66 participants from the data. At the same time, 17 participants belong to the moderate performance with moderate anxiety category, and the other three are included in high performance with low anxiety.

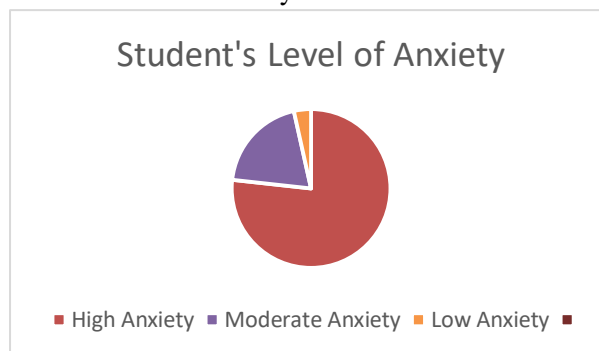


Chart 1. Levels of Student's Anxiety

Based on the interview, 32 students of 86 students answered that the factor of their anxiety is because of lack of vocabulary, 24 students felt not confident when speaking English, and 36 students of 86 students responded that they were fearful of making mistakes. They are purely afraid of making mistakes without any other mixture of anxiety. They feel that if they make a mistake, it will make them feel like they are embarrassing themselves in front of their friends, they feel bad if they give the wrong thing to others, they are afraid of being laughed at by their friends, and fear is unclear in pronunciation. Shyness is also a factor in student speaking anxiety. In this factor, only 23 students of 86 students feel ashamed to talk to English.

Based on the theory of Huyen (2003), Boonkit (2010), Liu (2011) states that other common factors cause students, "Anxiety includes lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, lack of preparation and shame." Based on the interview, the researcher found that most of the students felt anxious when speaking English, mainly when they performed. Several causes make students feel nervous when speaking in front of the class. These factors are lack of vocabulary, confidence, fear of being wrong, and shame.

The researcher found that the dominant factor of the students was the fear of making mistakes. They are afraid of being laughed at by their friends if they make a mistake or fearful of making a mistake because it will make their friends receive wrong information. They don't want to embarrass themselves in front of their friends.

The second factor contributing to anxiety in speaking English is the lack of vocabulary. Many of them realized that they lacked language. It makes them anxious, causing more anxiety. The third factor that causes anxiety is a lack of self-confidence. Most of the students experience a lack of self-confidence. This reason is based on their lack of confidence, especially when speaking English. Although in fact, they look comfortable when said to personality. They just don't believe in themselves if they have to be the centre of attention in class by their friends.

Then the last anxiety factor is a shame. Shame is one of the causes of student anxiety. Based on in-depth interviews, many students experienced feelings of embarrassment when speaking. From this shyness, he won't say much in everyday tasks. In contrast, one of the students felt embarrassed to speak English because it was influenced by other factors, namely the lack of vocabulary.

This is Elli's theory related to trait anxiety. Trait anxiety is one of a person's personality traits and behaviours that are usually attached to a person, which is permanent and difficult to change. The inability to express feelings, emotions, ideas and thoughts allows students to be involved in this category because they cannot control their nervousness. Thus, their involvement in class activities was questioned in improving their speaking ability. They tend to be silent rather than speak or give some ideas in front of the class. It also happens in any situation or subject in school.

Conclusion

Based on the research and discussion above, the conclusion is that high speaking anxiety is felt by most students of Usuhuluddin and Humanities Faculty at UIN Walisongo Semarang. The researcher also found that the dominant factor of the students was the fear of making mistakes. Since this study limits its area to the causes and effects of speaking anxiety, further research could take an analysis of teachers' strategies for dealing with this problem.

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