

Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

This research is aimed at finding out students' speaking anxiety and their strategies to cope with anxiety. The researchers used the tenth graders of SMK Negeri 5 Palembang as Subject of the Research. The researchers used a qualitative research method. To collect the data, the researchers used documentation technique in terms of giving closed-ended and opened ended questionnaires. Percentage analysis and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the data. The results showed that there were four types of speaking anxiety occurred (i.e. communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and comfortable of speaking) which were caused by not mastering grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and made them lost their self-confidence. Taking a deep breath, practicing before speaking and asking friends, pretending to be busy and avoiding eye contact are the strategies they used to cope with speaking anxiety during verbal classroom activity.

Keywords: Speaking, Anxiety, EFL Classroom

Introduction

Nowadays, English has transformed into crucial role for many academic activities in line with four language skills (i.e. listening speaking, reading, and writing). As one of the important language skills, speaking is needed to be learnt and mastered by all people to communicate with other people around the world. As the matter of facts, many students at any levels of education, especially Senior High School graders cannot speak English well as they speak with their classmates and English teachers. They tend to be passive. They even become tense, feel anxious when speaking before the classroom. It is all because of anxiety in language learning. Anxiety is a state of uncomfortable emotion where danger is perceived, and the victim has a powerless feeling with expression of tension in anticipation of danger (Gaibani and Elmenfi, 2014, p.1). It is also suggested by El-Sakka (2016) who defined anxiety in speaking as feelings of fear and apprehension of using the language orally (p.23).

In addition, language anxiety happens because of the difficulty of mastering English as a foreign language, especially in speaking, since it is like provoking skill (Mahpudilah, 2014; Al-Shboul et al., 2013). Moreover, Yaikhong and Usaha (2012) reported that speaking anxiety was rated at a high level, whereas the others were rated medium. Students felt most anxious to speak English in an English class without preparation, did not brave to volunteer to

answer questions, felt troubled when asked by the teacher, worried about the use of grammar, were embarrassed when they made mistakes, lost confidence in speaking, and were shy when speaking English with friends (p.24). Like other experts, Mukminin et al., (2015) stated that speaking anxiety experienced by foreign language learners may contribute to the failure to learn the target language (p.218). There are three types of language anxiety, for instances; trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation specific anxiety (Papamihel, 2002; Woodrow, 2006; Zin and Galea, 2012). These types are caused by language apprehension referring to a certain situation like in public. Besides, there are also four common sources of anxiety such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and comfortable of speaking. (Adeyemi et al., 2017; Neath, 2014; Aydin, 2008; Talbot, 2016; Yokus, 2013)

In this research, the researchers used a qualitative research method or design that is applied to seek certain phenomenon related to comprehensive narration of not numerical data to obtain insights. It is also based on six main characteristics, for instances: exploring a problem and improving or developing a phenomenon, having theoretical framework, stating the objectives or purposes and questions of the research, collecting data regard on words in terms of a small number of individuals to get the views of the

participants, analyzing the data to be described and writing a research report through flexible, emerging structure and evaluating criteria related to the researcher's subjective reflexivity and bias. Creswell (2012). It means that this research is considered as

qualitative research approach or design because it does not have relationship with numbers in terms of inferential statistical data.

Furthermore, the researchers got the Tenth Grade Students in Accounting Program as a subject the research. To be clear, Table 1 is presented.

Table 1. Subjects of the Research

No	Class	Students		Total
		Male	Female	
1	X Accounting 1	8	31	39
2	X Accounting 2	5	31	36
3	X Accounting 3	8	29	37
Total		21	91	112

In addition, the researchers used documentation technique in collecting the data related to open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires of ready-made question items. After that, the researchers analyzed the data of open-ended questionnaire through descriptive analysis in terms of five procedures (i.e. identifying, clarifying, interpreting, predicting, and concluding). (Syahri, Sulaiman, & Susanti, 2017). Then, the researchers also analyzed the data of closed ended questionnaire using percentage analysis through the following stated formula.

$$SR = \frac{\text{Answer}}{N} \times 100 \%$$

SR : Students' Response

A : Answer

N : Number of Students (Arikunto, 2010, p.106)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the responses of students' closed-ended questionnaires of 25 items were analysed by using percentage analysis, and four opened-ended questionnaires were analysed through descriptive analysis based on four grading instruments such as *communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and comfortable of speaking*.

The Results of Communication Apprehension
Table 2. Results of Communication Apprehension

No	Question Items	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Total
1	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on language class	4	6	25	49	19	103
2	I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students	20	48	21	10	4	103
3	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English	3	9	40	43	8	103
4	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called in front of English class	2	12	23	52	14	103
5	The more speaking test I have, the more confused I get	5	18	31	37	12	103
6	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English	4	17	26	46	10	103
7	I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English	5	18	37	33	10	103
8	I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English	0	11	36	42	14	103
N=AVRG		5	18	30	39	11	103

Table 2 shows nineteen students responded strongly agree on the question item “I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on language class”. Four students responded strongly agree, on the question item “I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students”. Eight students responded strongly agree, on the question item “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English”. In addition, fourteen students responded strongly agree, on the question item “I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called in front of English class”. Twelve students responded strongly agree on the question item “The more speaking test I have, the more confused I get”. Moreover, ten students responded strongly agree on the question item “Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English”. Ten students responded strongly agree on the question item “I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English” and fourteen students responded strongly agree on the question “I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English”. Additionally, some other students also responded disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree to every single of question items.

The Results of Test Anxiety
Table 3. Results of Test Anxiety

No	Question Items	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Total
1	I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation in advance	2	4	25	43	8	103
2	In speaking class, I can get so nervous and forget things I know	3	12	33	47	29	103
3	I get so nervous when the teacher of language asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance	5	22	36	33	7	103
4	I feel anxious while waiting to speak English	2	15	27	48	11	103
5	I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English	1	8	46	37	11	103
6	Even if I am very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English	3	10	31	47	12	103
N=AVRG		3	12	33	42	13	103

Table 3 presents twenty-nine students responded strongly agree on the question item “I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance”. Twenty-nine students responded strongly agree on the question item “In speaking class. “I can get so nervous and forget things I know”. In this addition, seven students responded strongly agree on the question item “I get so nervous when the teacher of language asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance”. On the other side, eleven students responded strongly agree on the question item “I feel anxious while waiting to speak English”.

Furthermore, eleven students responded strongly agree on the question item “I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English” and twelve students responded strongly agree on the question item “Even if I very well-prepared I feel anxious about speaking English”. Additionally, some other students also responded disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree to every single of question items.

The Results of Fear of Negative Evaluation.
Table 4. Results of Fear of Negative Evaluation

No	Question Items	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Total
1	I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English	0	12	38	43	10	103
2	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English	5	13	35	42	8	103
3	It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English	13	40	30	16	4	103
4	I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English	1	16	30	42	14	103

5	I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than me	3	14	26	46	14	103
6	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do	4	8	25	43	23	103
N=AVRG		4	17	31	39	12	103

Table 4 shows ten students responded strongly agree on the question item “I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English”. Eight students responded strongly agree on the question item “I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English”. In addition, four students responded strongly agree on the question item “It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English”. Moreover, fourteen students responded strongly agree on the question item “I want to speak less because I feel shy while speaking English”. In this research, fourteen students responded strongly agree on the question item “I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than me”, and also twenty-three students responded strongly agree on the question item “I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do”. Additionally, some other students also responded disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree to every single of question items.

The Results of Comfortable of Speaking
Table 5. Results of Comfortable of Speaking

No	Question Items	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Total
1	I feel confident while speaking English	5	32	42	18	6	103
2	I have no fear of speaking English	8	30	36	24	5	103
3	I feel relaxed while speaking English	6	35	47	10	5	103
4	I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence	2	22	47	27	5	103
5	I enjoy the experience of speaking English	2	11	33	45	12	103
N=AVRG		5	26	41	25	6	103

Table 5 presents six students responded strongly agree on the question item “I feel confident while I am speaking English”. Five students responded strongly agree on the question item “I have fear of speaking”. Furthermore, five students responded strongly agree on the question item “I feel relaxed while speaking English”. Five students responded strongly agree on the question item “I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence”. Moreover, twelve students responded strongly agree on the question item “I enjoy the experience of speaking English”. Additionally, some other students also responded disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree to every single of question items.

The Results of Open-Ended Questionnaires
Students Manifest Their Anxiety in speaking English

In this research, the students clarify some reasons from the question, such as: (1) keeping silent, (2) smiling and laughing, (3) looking down, and (4) pretending to be busy. In brief, thirty-nine students claimed that the manifesting their anxiety is keeping silent, twenty-four students clarified that manifesting their anxiety is smiling and laughing, twenty-one students explained that manifesting their anxiety is looking down and nineteen students claimed that manifesting their anxiety is pretending to be busy.

Students Cope with Their Speaking Anxiety

In this research, the students clarify some reasons from the question, such as: (1) practicing before speaking (2) trying to ask friends, and (3) self-confidence. In other words, forty-six students claimed that the solution is by practicing before speaking. Thirty-

seven students claimed that the solution is trying to ask friends and twenty students explained the solution is self-confidence.

On the other side, based on the questionnaire analysed, it was found that anxiety was one of the problems in learning speaking. It was proved that some students were reluctant and doubtful to speak English because they had no self-confidence and felt apprehension. It happened because of lack of vocabulary mastery, pronunciation, weak in grammar rules, fear of failure in communication, making mistakes, failing in front of others, and fears of being negatively judged, failing in exams. It was also found that communication apprehension and faced fear of negative evaluation made speaking anxiety in EFL classroom.

As a result of anxiety, the students choose to remain silent and unwilling to participate in verbal classroom interaction. They tend to avoid eye contact with the teacher as one of the strategies used

to cope with anxiety. They even look down and pretend to be busy as if they are writing or checking their books.

CONCLUSION

This research has been in line with students' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. Based on the data gained from questionnaires, some conclusions could be drawn. In this case, many of the students generally are not anxious when speaking. They are not shy, not afraid of being in public, and not apprehension of speaking inaccurately. This is probably because English is considered as their second language.

In this research, they mostly suffered from speaking anxiety related to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. They have the same reason for experiencing speaking anxiety due to fear of being in public, shyness, nervous, lack of confidence when speaking English and to cope with that situation, they have done such common strategies as keeping silent, avoiding eye contact, practicing before speaking and asking their friends.

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