An Analysis of Students' Speaking Anxiety in an EFL Class at Muhammadiyah University of Metro

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the fundamental causes of anxiety and create treatments to reduce it. This survey was done since a lot of pupils don't know what worries are or how to handle them. Using a qualitative technique, the researcher looked at and discussed the data on student anxiety. This study included 26 students from the sixth semester of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Metro. The researcher employed an interview, an FLCAS questionnaire created by Horwitz in 1986 that had been modified to fit the research focus, and an observation to gather data. According to the survey results, there are five levels of anxiety among students, ranging from low to high. The next step was to choose 10 students from the low anxiety and high anxiety groups for interviews to determine the reasons and treatments for anxiety. According to the study's findings, 15.3% of students had low anxiety, 3.84% of students had very low anxiety, 30.7% of students had moderate anxiety, 34.6% of students had very high anxiety, and 15.3% of students had severe anxiety. After analysing the data of the interviews, the study identified six traits that contributed to students' worry: poor English proficiency, misinterpretation anxiety, low self-esteem, evaluation anxiety, lack of preparation, and excessive test anxiety. Researcher also came up with a number of strategies that may be utilized to help students feel less anxious, including changing one's perspective, being well-prepared, practicing to boost one's confidence and English proficiency, and finally, being brave. Additionally, the researcher detailed the recommendations that other researches could have used. The next researchers should determine from various angles of the speaking anxiety, including the learning setting, the history of the students, and instructor insight.

Keywords: Speaking, anxiety, EFL

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important skills which should be learned since it allows us to communicate with people and express our emotions. Throughout our lives, we use both formal and informal speaking abilities in a number of contexts. Speaking abilities can be separated into formal and informal categories. Having informal conversations with friend

and family is important because it helps us forge stronger emotional relationships. On the other hand, formal speech is required in the workplace, in presentations, and in conversations with strangers.

Formal language is crucial because it enables courteous communication and helps us make a good first impression.

Speaking is very useful in communication since it allows for direct communication and quick exchange of information between listeners and speakers. We typically need to speak with one another in order to survive. Speaking is difficult, but we should do it because it allows us to directly convey our thoughts and opinions. However, learning speaking abilities is not without its challenges. One of the students' issues is emotional. When the students are under emotional stress, it might hinder or upset their ability to focus, as well as make them anxious and stutter.

Students that are anxious perform worse because they worry, doubt themselves, and are less engaged in class. Additionally, crippling anxiety, according to Krashen (2013), might increase the effective filter and create a "mental barrier" that inhibits a comprehensible input from being used for language acquisition. Based on the observation that the researcher found in one of the EFL Class at Muhammadiyah University of Metro, there's a negative relationship between anxiety and performance. like when the teacher asks them to practice in front of the class. Some of them thought that if they made a mistake, their classmates would make fun of them.

They therefore opted to keep quiet. This syndrome causes students to develop classroom anxiety, which may impair their speech.

Anxious students will have a hard time paying attention in class and speaking coherently. They might not pick up as much knowledge and might not be able to apply what they have learnt. Even worse, they might continue to fail, which would make their anxiousness worse. The researcher discovered numerous symptoms of nervousness among the students when performing a pre-survey in an EFL class at the English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Metro: 1) Many of them became restless, 2) Created avoidance, and 3) Afraid to engage in class.

Due to their lack of self-confidence anddesire, the students found it difficult to participate in class discussions. Because they are concerned about making mistakes, they are afraid and bashful to speak up in English. Additionally, some students think that English is a challenging topic. They think it might lower their self-esteem and cause them to experience

anxiety in the classroom. In the end, they began to stutter when prompted to speak up. The following inquiries are used to frame the issues covered in this study.

(1) What variables cause the students to feel anxious when speaking a foreign language?

(2) What coping mechanisms might be employed to lessen the students' fear of public speaking?

METHODS

Research design

The researcher used a case study qualitative approach in this study because it is important to establish explanations for social phenomena.Understanding the social psychology research environment in its whole.The qualitative approach was utilized since the goal of this study is to shed light on the issue of language anxiety, particularly anxiety related to the English language.A case study is a qualitative research method that looks at a single individual, a small group, or a major example in order to generate interpretations for the specific case or to make useful generalizations, according to Fraenkel (2009: 14).

Instrument

Arikunto (2000: 134) defines a research instrument as a tool used by researchers to collect data in order to facilitate their work and produce more accurate analysis results.The researcher used observation, interviewing, and a questionnaire to gather data for this study.

In this study, observation was utilized to understand the conditions of the participants, to understand why individuals experience speaking anxiety during the learning process, and to pinpoint the circumstances or components that contribute to this anxiety when speaking English in an EFL setting. Then, using a 5-Likert questionnaire, the students' speaking anxiety in the foreign language of English was carefully investigated. The last, to get more complete data, an interview was done.

Data analysis technique

According to Miles and Huberman's (1994: 10) paradigm for qualitative analysis, the data analysis process can be divided into three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing & verification.

Data reduction, according to Matthew B. Miles (1994: 11), is the process of choosing, concentrating, abstracting, and altering the data.In this instance, the researcher chose the data that included the results of the students' questionnaires, interviews, and observations, then summarized the data to analyse the key information from the group of data and choose the necessary data. Finally, the researcher formatted the data in the appropriate way to produce meaningful findings and conclusions.

Data display is the second step in Miles' method for interpreting qualitative data.In this stage, data is structured and collected in a way that allows for the formation of conclusions.The researcher displayed the condensed data to make it simpler to understand the data.

Drawing conclusions requires taking a step back to explore what the analysed data imply and to evaluate their implications for the research topic.The writer interpreted the data in a display during this stage.Verification, which is related to drawing conclusions, involves going over the data as many times as necessary to cross-check these emerging conclusions.Verification is the process that explains how to achieve the goals and answers of the research questions.

The data have also been examined for sturdiness and verifiability.Using a triangulation approach, the researcher verified the data's validity.By utilizing a variety of sources and types of information, triangulating is a technique for verifying or confirming conclusions, according to Miles (1994: 267).For this study's reliable results, the researcher thoroughly evaluated a variety of sources, including interview responses, observational data, and questionnaire data.

FINDINGS

According to the prior explanation, 26 students from the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Metro participated in this survey.The purpose of the study was to determine what elements contribute to students' speaking anxiety, so the researcher employed the Horwitz Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire.

Table1. RecapitulationofFLCASResultsScoreandCategory

Interval score on students' speaking anxiety	Category ofSpeaking anxiety	Results
10 - 20	LowAnxiety	1 respondent (3.84%)
21 - 25	ModeratelyLowAnxiety	4Respondents (15, 3%)

26 — 31	ModerateAnxiety	8Respondents (30%)
32 — 36	ModeratelyHighAnxiety	9Respondents (34, 6%)
37 — 50	HighAnxiety	4Respondents (15, 3%)

Using the information from the aforementioned questionnaire, it was determined that there was only one student who received a score between 10 and 20, indicating low anxiety. Then there were three students who received a score between 21 and 25, indicating moderately low anxiety. Next, there were nine students who received scores between 26 and 31, indicating moderate anxiety.Finally, there were nine students received scores between 32 and 36, indicating severe anxiety.

According to the data presented above, 3.84 percent of students have very low levels of anxiety; therefore, it can be claimed that pupils at this level speak with a high degree of confidence.Speaking is typically not viewed as frightening in their minds; rather, they actually find it to be rather enjoyable.Then, similarly to the prior statistic, 15.3% of students are still classified as low anxiety students.Although not as low as those in the group before them, pupils at this level seldom ever experience anxiety or trepidation when speaking.Though it may not occur frequently, they do occasionally experience anxiousness.

Based on the findings of the aforementioned survey, ten students were chosen for interviews, five of whom fit the category of students who have a high level of speaking anxiety and five of whom fit the category of students who have a low level of speaking anxiety (either from low anxiety or moderately low anxiety).

Causesofstudents'speakinganxiety

The authors identified the components that typically contribute to speaking anxiety based on the findings of interviews with two separate kinds of anxious students.The students' low English skills were the first thing that made them anxious, especially when speaking in front of a large audience.Students found it difficult to find the correct words, form sentences, and explain ideas because they lacked proficiency in the English language.

The second factor, according to student 9, was the worry that what they said would be misunderstood. When asked what made them anxious when speaking, the student said, "Again, the worry that I won't be understood when I speak, the worry that what I say won't be understood by others, and it will be misinterpreted,"Students were afraid to utilise English in conversation because of this problem.

Furthermore, ow self-esteem was the third contributing factor.Many students believed that their level of English proficiency was far lower than that of their peers, which made them feel insecure during speaking performances.They were worried that if they spoke, their buddies would make fun of them and laugh.Students with poor self-esteem frequently compare their appearance to others and feel inferior if someone is more talented than they are.

The fourth factor was that students were terrified of making mistakes, which made them worried about how the audience would see them (fear of negative evaluation).

The fifth factor was a lack of preparation. According to the student who gave the interview, when asked what makes them uneasy, student 1 said, "Then, maybe because the preparations were not good enough and the information was not adequate but I had to speak out."

As student 11 revealed in an interview when questioned about the moment they experienced anxiety and the causes, student answered, "I'm definitely afraid of being wrong, that's the biggest problem, especially during the test." They were worried of getting terrible grades or even failing the test.

Strategiestoreducestudents'speakinganxiety

The first approach is to change one's mindset.The majority of students' anxiety is mostly caused by their negative thoughts.We must learn to regulate our thoughts and quit worrying about unexpected outcomes if we want to avoid negative reactions in ourselves, such as feeling frightened, embarrassed, or overly nervous.This will harm our ability to communicate because these emotions will make it difficult for us to speak clearly.

Another strategy to assist students in overcoming their fear of public speaking is to improve their speaking ability.Many students reported that their limited English proficiency prohibited them from speaking up, which made them feel insecure, especially in front of a large crowd, according to the results of interviews addressing the causes of anxiety.

Preparation is a further strategy that must be implemented. Some students claimed that one of the factors that made them nervous when speaking was their lack of preparation. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly prepare all of the necessary items.

The final strategy is to increase boldness.Negative experiences that students have had while speaking or simply the fact that they have never done it before may be the root of their negative thoughts.It causes pupils to think poorly before speaking, which makes them fearful,

uncomfortable, and anxious. As a result, they no longer desire to speak in front of large crowds.

DISCUSSIONS

According to this survey, the majority of students in the sixth semester of the English Education Department at Muhammadiyah University of Metro had relatively high levels of anxiety, while those with low levels of anxiety made up the minority.The results of the interviews revealed that speaking anxiety affected students of all anxiety levels, not just those who had high anxiety levels.

Sulfiani's study is just one of many that have discovered a link between students' English proficiency and speaking fear (2020).According to Sulfiani, there are five elements that contribute to students' anxiety when speaking English, the first of which is the students' fear of making mistakes as a result of their perceptions of their limited English skills and their fear of doing poorly.

However, RoliAsparanita (2020) only identified three characteristics that were associated with students' speaking fear.Asparanita claimed that three things contributed to the pupils' anxiousness in the eleventh grade of senior high school when learning English.According to Muaro Jambi's interpretation of Horwitz's (2011) theory, these issues include communication apprehension, which occurs when students feel hesitant to speak in English because they have limited exposure to the language and do not regularly practise it, test anxiety, which occurs when students are anxious about taking tests that their teachers assign, and fear of a negative evaluation, which occurs when students worry that the teacher and their peers will judge them negatively.

Additionally, Putri lndriyanti (2021) discovered that there are a wide range of potential contributing variables to students' anxiousness.Some students have anxiety when speaking in front of the class; they feel nervous because everyone is listening to them, they worry about being laughed at, they worry about making a mistake, they worry about their explanation being unclear, and they worry about their preparation.According to Sulfiani (2020), the speaking instructor must identify the nervous students and provide treatment in accordance with their anxiety categories.In order to assist students to feel less anxious and speak more freely about their fears of making errors or receiving unfavourable feedback, teachers should also establish positive classroom relationships with their students.

The strategy presented in this study was similar to RoliAsparanita's(2020)According to Asparanita, teachers must be able to comprehend the peculiarities of their students in order to examine their anxiety-related problems and come up with solutions.Different student characteristics call for various approaches to be used. The teachers ought to provide their students the chance to express any challenges they may be experiencing. The teachers also have a duty to create a comfortable learning environment in the classroom so that students can talk more freely and without feeling under pressure.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

According to the data presented in the previous section, the majority of English Education Department Semester VI Muhammadiyah University of Metro students have a moderately high level of speaking anxiety, which is around 34.6%; 15.3% of students have a high level of speaking anxiety; 30.7% have a moderate level of speaking anxiety; and only 3.84% of respondents overall have a low level of speaking anxiety.

Based on the findings of the interviews, the researcher came to the following conclusions about what causes students' speaking anxiety: first, poor English proficiency; second, communication anxiety; third, low self-esteem; fourth, fear of making mistakes and receiving criticism (fear of negative evaluation); fifth, fear of failing the test or test anxiety; and, finally, anxiety can also occur when students have a latent learning disability.

The researcher concluded from this result that students' negative assumptions had a significant role in the majority of the causes of speaking anxiety in pupils.Thus, it was found that students' unfavourable judgements of speaking were the key factor contributing to their speaking anxiety.

Suggestion

In light of the findings of the study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations. (1) Students shift their perspective, stop thinking negatively before or during speaking, stop being fearful of making mistakes, and avoid overthinking when taking an oral exam.Practice to boost your confidence and English proficiency.They must have courage to talk in English since, without it, they would never be able to gauge their true capabilities.To prevent a sudden fear due to ill-prepared speaking, they must be well-prepared. (2) The teacher needs to be aware of speaking anxiety.Because anxiety has grown

to be a significant component that influences students' language learning process, this study found that teachers' understanding of students' anxiety is insufficient.Since anxiety has a significant impact on pupils' speaking abilities, teachers must become more aware of the issue.The teacher should then recognise the suffering.For students to become more engaged and to speak English with boldness and confidence, teachers must encourage them.The teacher should foster a welcoming environment in the classroom where the students can speak freely with one other. (3) It is advised that future studies investigate anxiety-provoking factors in more detail and consider them from other angles, such as the learning context, which refers to the environment in which something is learnt or comprehended and can affect how it is learned or what is taught.

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