



An Analysis of Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom: A Mixed-Method Study

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan berbicara mahasiswa, menemukan pengaruh kecemasan, dan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi partisipasi berbicara siswa. Penelitian ini melibatkan 62 mahasiswa semester II Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain mixed method untuk mengeksplorasi dan menjelaskan data kecemasan siswa. Untuk mengumpulkan data, mahasiswa dalam penelitian ini diberikan satu set kuesioner berdasarkan Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) oleh (Horwitz et al., 1986) dan interview. Hasil dari angket FLCAS mengklasifikasikan kategori kecemasan siswa menjadi lima kategori. Sejumlah 8 siswa masuk kedalam kategori very anxious level, 29 siswa dengan anxious level, 23 siswa dengan mildly anxious level, dan 2 siswa dengan relaxed level. Siswa dengan mildly anxious level dan very anxious level diwawancarai. Selanjutnya, peneliti menemukan efek kecemasan berbicara siswa pada partisipasi berbicara mereka: mempertimbangkan ide yang ingin mereka ungkapkan, menolak untuk bertanya atau berdebat, dan ragu-ragu untuk berpartisipasi. Peneliti juga menemukan beberapa faktor yang mempengaruhi partisipasi berbicara siswa, seperti tingkat kemahiran bahasa Inggris, harga diri siswa yang rendah, takut membuat kesalahan, kurangnya persiapan, motivasi, metode yang digunakan dosen, dan sikap dosen.

Kata Kunci: efek kecemasan, kecemasan berbicara, partisipasi berbicara.

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the students' speaking anxiety levels, find the effect of anxiety, and identify the factors influencing students' speaking participation. This study involved 62 students in the second semester of the English Education Department, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. This study employed a mixed-method design. To gather the data, a set of questionnaires was utilized based on the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale by (Horwitz et al., 1986) and an interview. The result of the FLCAS questionnaire classified the category of student anxiety. There were 8 students categorized as very anxious level, 29 students as anxious level, 23 students as mildly anxious level, and 2 students as relaxed level. Students with mildly anxious levels and very anxious levels were interviewed to probe richer data. Further, the study found the effect of students' speaking anxiety on their speaking participation: considering the idea they want to express, refusing to ask or argue, and being hesitant to participate. This study also found several factors influencing students' speaking participation, such as English proficiency level, students' low self-esteem, afraid of making mistakes, lack of preparation, motivation, the method used, and lecturer's attitude.

Keywords: anxiety effect, speaking anxiety, speaking participation.

Histori Artikel

Received	Revised	Accepted	Published
20 Mei 2022	02 Juni 2022	11 Juni 2022	01 Oktober 2022

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i5.2999>

ISSN 2656-8063 (Media Cetak)

ISSN 2656-8071 (Media Online)

INTRODUCTION

As English is used globally as a means of communication, English-speaking skills should be developed along with other skills, particularly in the internet world, so that these integrated skills improve the performance of communication with all native speakers of English and other members of the international community (Boonkit, 2010). Therefore, speaking performance plays a significant role in making good communication through enhancing the elements that support speaking performance.

According to Bozoğlu and Yılmaz (2016), some elements are needed to enhance learners' speaking performance. It can be divided into two main factors. First, knowledge factors that relate to grammatical rules, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc. Second, cognitive factors are related to interaction management, discourse organization, and communication strategies. For this reason, speaking is a complex skill to master. Those who have argued that research has also shed significant light on the complexity of spoken interactions are encouraged (Richards, 2008).

However, speaking is critical. This skill is as important as the others. We only have to convey it through our speaking ability when words are read, written ideas, and shared thoughts. What you speak will determine your expressiveness (Sadiku, 2015). But, sometimes, many things can influence speaking, sharply speaking English as a foreign language. It could be the vocabulary knowledge, grammatical rules, and feeling anxious before and during speaking. These factors are some of many that influence students' speaking performance and speaking classroom participation. It is in line with a statement that the students face three major speaking obstacles; linguistic hardness, the use of the mother tongue, and inhibition (Woodrow, 2006).

Furthermore, anxiety turns into an exciting idea that can influence language learning outcomes in language teaching circumstances. According to Hilgard, Atkinson, and Atkinson (1971) cited in (Abrar, 2018), anxiety is thought to be a psychological construct, generally defined as a state of apprehension or concern implicitly connected with an object. One of the language skills, speaking, became the main effect of language learners' anxiety. At least one in three of all foreign language learners sense some level of language anxiety (Horwitz, 2001) cited in (Sutarsyah, 2017). This means anxiety can heavily disturb students' participation in learning activities and affect their speaking skill development.

Besides, anxiety in a foreign language context means a different complex of self-perceptions, values, emotions, and attitudes related to classroom language learning that derives from the variety of the process of foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986) cited in (Abrar, 2018). In foreign language learning circumstances, some usual problems occur, such as lack of vocabulary, idiom, and feeling anxious when talking in front of the class. Students' feelings of anxiety sometimes can make them barely participate in classroom activities because they are worried about making mistakes, lack confidence, etc. When students can not actively participate in a classroom, they will lack English communication practice, which will affect their fluency in speaking, communication skills, and confidence. However, it has become a significant concern for educators in language education because it can be a major obstacle to learning foreign languages, and learners need to accomplish it.

There is a prevalent perception that anxiety becomes a constraint in acquiring a foreign language, mainly when speaking in the foreign language ((Debreli & Demirkan, 2015; Hidayat et al., 2022; Kurniatillah et al., 2022). Hence, anxiety plays a significant role in students' learning process and learning achievements by bothering their self-esteem, confidence, etc. In contrast, a study conducted by Anandari (2015), cited in (Sutarsyah, 2017), reveals that students demonstrated foreign language anxiety, and self-reflection strategies made them understand strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles to boost their speaking performance. Anxiety is understood to be a natural response to a stressor, and it can help people cope with a problem by prompting them to deal with it. Feeling anxious is a sign that they desire to be a strong language learner. In this case, anxiety can be considered a positive variable in language learning. The optimistic aspirations of foreign language students about their performance are significant predictors of their potential success (Daley et al., 1999, cited in

Sutarsyah, 2017). It can conclude that anxiety also can be positive when students are not struggling with that but trying to overcome and get an insight into it.

Felicity (2018) states that severe language anxiety may significantly affect students' self-esteem and self-confidence and interfere with language acquisition proficiency. Sutarsyah (2017) also said that anxiety has a direct effect: learners are discouraged, lose faith in their abilities, escape from participating in classroom activities, and even give up the effort to learn a language well. Based on these statements, it is essential to discover the effects and the factors that cause anxiety to help students who have anxiety during the learning process.

Researchers have conducted several studies concerning anxiety. The first study investigates the conceptualization of English language speaking classroom anxiety, attitudes to speaking English in class, self-ratings of English-speaking ability, and perceived sources of this specific anxiety situation (Akkakoson, 2016). The study revealed the anxiety in the participant is situation-specific anxiety. In addition, there is a moderate amount of anxiety about speaking in class among Thai EFL students. The second research is to determine students' anxiety when speaking in English in front of the class (Siregar, 2019). Employing qualitative descriptive methods, this study found that students are at a medium level, and profound anxiety levels related to different abilities matter. This study also revealed students with a medium level of anxiety are more relaxed, fluent, and have better pronunciation when speaking in front of their friends. Another study, Mufaridah (2017), focuses on the design of activity in teaching, and how it can reduce anxiety, enhance students' involvement in learning, and improve students' speaking competency. The study concluded that students' involvement could enrich the students' creativity, lower anxiety, and enhance their speaking ability optimally. From the abovementioned studies, it can be seen that anxiety plays an important role in students' speaking matter. The first and second studies revealed that anxiety is highly related to students' attitudes during the learning process. It provokes students to be quiet, and anxiety can also arise from their abilities. The third study discovers that teachers' classroom activity design determines students' involvement in the learning process. However, all studies did not mention the relation between anxiety and students' speaking participation. It is believed that anxiety influences how students' activity is going, particularly in students' speaking participation. As mentioned above, anxiety is related to nervousness, worries, and fear, which has a connection to students' participation in any activities, especially speaking activities. Based on that, it will be crucial to investigate anxiety and its relation to students' speaking participation in the EFL classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study has chosen a mixed-method design to understand better anxiety in English-speaking participation in first-year English education students at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta in the 2021-2022 academic year. Based on Creswell (2012), mixed methods research design is a method for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" quantitative and qualitative methods in a single series of studies to understand a research problem better. Thus, the researchers integrate two types of methods in this research to sharpen the result. The research design used in this research was the explanatory design. The explanatory design process requires collecting quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012).

Research Setting and Participants

This research was conducted at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. The time spent conducting this research was a month, including three key activities. The first activity required students to complete a FLCAS questionnaire to measure their level of anxiety. The second activity was conducting interviews with students who have a low degree of anxiety. Interviewing students with high levels of anxiety was the third activity. The research subject in this study is the students in the first year of the English Education of Department, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, in the 2021-2022 academic year. The prior participants were 2A, 2B, and 2C classes as a

sample. This research used purposive sampling as the sampling method. Creswell (2012) stated that, in purposive sampling, researchers purposefully choose people and places to learn about or understand the central phenomenon. Purposive sampling chooses people with rich information. Furthermore, the population is classified based on predetermined criteria (high-level and low-level anxiety students). Then, several people were chosen from each of these categories to participate in interviews to assist the researcher in answering the research questions.

Tools of Data Gathering and Analysis

The first tool used to gather the data is Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The researchers used Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to classify learners into high-level anxiety and low-level anxiety. The questionnaires were distributed via Google Form, and each student answered all FLCAS questions. The second tool used to gather the data is the interview. The interview was conducted after the students had been classified into low anxiety levels and high anxiety levels. Students were interviewed based on their anxiety level category. Students with high anxiety levels were the first to get interviewed and followed by students with low anxiety levels. Based on their category, students were asked several questions that discover the effects of anxiety and factors that influence students speaking participation from both students' anxiety levels category's point of view. Furthermore, the interview result has been analyzed to know the effects of anxiety and factors that influence students speaking participation from both students' anxiety levels categories.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study used the questionnaire to classify students' anxiety levels, while the interview was used to gather substantial information as the data needs analysis. The data's outcome is as follows:

Table 1
Distributions of Students' Anxiety Levels

Score Range of Anxiety	Level	Frequency
124-165	Very Anxious	8 (12.90%)
108-123	Anxious	29 (46.77%)
87-107	Mildly Anxious	23 (37.09%)
66-86	Relaxed	2 (3.22%)
33-65	Very Relaxed	-

Questionnaire Result

Based on the result of the FLCAS questionnaire that the 62 students filled, the highest distribution of anxiety levels is from the anxious level, which produces almost half of the students, which is 46.77%. The mildly anxious level is in the second with 37.09% of the students, followed by the very anxious level, which gets 12.90%. The level with the lowest distribution is the relaxed level which is 3.22%, and then the very relaxed level with zero distribution.

Interview Result

Based on the findings of two types of student anxiety interviews, the study found the effect of students' anxiety on their speaking participation. The first effect of students speaking anxiety on their speaking participation that the researcher found in students with very anxious levels is always considering the idea they want to express, especially when speaking in front of the class. In this case, students are worried that the audience cannot accept the idea they deliver. Students also worried that the ideas they expressed were not excellent. As student number 42 said,

"I always think before I participate, such as the grammar, think carefully about ideas, which makes me more passive in speaking class".

The second effect that the study found is refusing to ask or argue. As mentioned by student number 17,

"I am so afraid to make mistakes, and sometimes it makes me don't participate in asking questions or giving opinions".

Because of so afraid of being wrong and nervous, a student did not take a chance to participate in speaking activities. The student lost their chance to practice their English to improve their English. The third effect is doubt about participation. Anxiety also affects students with mildly anxious levels. Anxiety lead students to hesitantly participate in many speaking activities such as question and answer session. It might also make students in doubt give their thoughts and opinions during classroom discussions. Student number 9, during the interview, said:

"It doesn't seem to interfere with its activities. At least I just hesitated when I wanted to answer questions from the lecturer".

It makes students hesitant, which leads them not to participate in speaking activities. There are several factors that the study found with a major influence on students speaking participation. The first factor is English proficiency level. Students' inferior English skills, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, make them nervous about speaking in front of others. As student number 45 said,

"Internally, I feel that my knowledge is still lacking and sometimes makes me less confident".

Students with low English proficiency levels mostly have difficulties participating in speaking activities. Students' lack of English language abilities made it difficult to find the correct words, form sentences, and communicate their ideas or messages. It makes students worried about intensively participating in speaking activities. The second factor is students' low self-esteem. As students number 42 and 17 said,

"Less confident. I still often conflict with myself such as fear of making mistakes, insecure seeing friends who speak better and fluently than me."

"It could also be when I am not sure if my answer, have not prepared anything, and see friends who have very good speaking skills."

They always think that their ability is far behind their peers. Students with low self-esteem often compare their appearance to others and feel humiliated when someone has more abilities than them. Those feelings lead them to insecurity about their speaking performance. The third factor is afraid of making mistakes. Concerning the fear of making mistakes, this fear is related to the issue of correction and negative evaluation.

Furthermore, this is heavily influenced by the students' fear of being mocked by their peers or chastised by the teacher. As a result, students frequently discontinue participation in the speaking activity. As mentioned by student number 43, the student's mentality to show up is weak.

"Personally, I'm more mentally inclined to show up. I'm not strong enough like I'm not confident and afraid of being wrong."

It shows that the student's mentality is not ready to be criticized. In this case, they would instead remain silent rather than participate. The fourth factor is lack of preparation. Students who have not prepared anything before entering the class will make them quiet in class because of less understanding of the subject of discussion. In addition, lack of preparation caused students confused and not know what to discuss and what to ask. As student number 62:

"Subject of discussion. If I don't understand the material, the participation will usually be lower."

Student participation will be disturbed because they will not be active in discussions and do not give arguments due to lack of preparation. The fifth factor is motivation. Students' determination to master speaking

skills can highly influence students speaking participation. Motivation is important because it can influence students' reluctance to speak English. When students have an obvious motivation to be better speakers, it will enhance their interest in speaking English. Student number 57 said,

"I want to learn and speak English fluently, and in this class, I have the opportunity to speak English. Hence, I feel I have to make the most of it".

The sixth factors are learning method and lecturer attitude. When the method is fun and appropriate, students' participation will be boosted. In addition, a friendly lecturer also can make students want to participate in class. As mentioned by students number 45 and 25,

"From external factors, the attitude of the lecturers who are not cool can influence me to be less active in class and their learning methods".

"The method used by the lecturer in teaching also greatly influenced me. When the method is fun, it can boost my participation and vice versa when it is not fun, and it will reduce my participation."

A lecturer with appropriate methods and an excellent attitude can be the solution to enhance students speaking participation. Still, inappropriate methods and an unfriendly manner built a barrier that can hinder students' participation in speaking activities.

Discussion

This study aims to determine students' speaking anxiety levels, the effect of anxiety on students speaking participation, and factors with a major influence on students speaking participation. In this part, the researcher will present the overall findings of the research data collected to answer all the research questions: the level of students' speaking anxiety, the effect of anxiety, and factors with a major influence on students speaking participation.

According to the findings of this study, the majority of students from the second-semester students of the English Education Department, State Islamic University of Jakarta, were at anxious and very anxious levels, and students with mildly anxious levels in the minority. Then, the interviews revealed that not only did students with high anxiety start to experience nervousness while speaking, but so did students with low anxiety.

The effects of anxiety on students' speaking participation was the first case examined in the research. This study revealed three effects of anxiety on students' speaking participation. The researcher found that considering the idea they want to express, being hesitant to participate, and refusing to ask or argue is the main effect of anxiety on students' speaking participation. Some students said they had speaking participation issues due to considering the idea they wanted to express. When speaking in front of their friends, students are worried that the idea they tried to convey is not an excellent idea. Students are also worried that there will be a misunderstanding between students and their friends. As Horwitz et al. (1986) said, one of the major contributors to anxiety is communication apprehension, fear of communicating with others. The next effect of anxiety is doubt about participating. Anxiety lead students to hesitantly participate in many speaking activities such as question and answer session. It might also make students doubt giving their thoughts and opinions during classroom discussions. Many things can cause students' hesitation, such as their self-confidence and the classroom climate. To make students more active, promoting students' self-confidence was one of the significant strategies (Vongsila and Reinders, 2016) cited in (Chi & Mai, 2020). In addition, creating a friendly environment in the classroom is among the most effective ways to increase student participation in-class activities (Peng and Woodrow, 2010) cited in (Chi & Mai, 2020). The last effect was refusing to ask and argue. Students did not participate in speaking classroom activities because they were afraid of being wrong and nervous. Students are also scared of looking foolish to others and are particularly worried about how others will perceive them. Middleton's statement (2009) is in line with this as she said that most EFL students are afraid to try and speak

in a foreign language they are learning (Al, 2016). As a result, students frequently discontinue participation in the speaking activity (Hieu, 2011) cited in (Al, 2016).

Furthermore, many studies discuss factors that influence students' speaking participation. Otherwise, the researchers have not found a study discussing anxiety's effect on students' speaking participation. Despite that, based on the result of this study, the researcher is confident that there are effects that anxiety produces on students' speaking participation in the classroom. The second point discussed in the findings was the factor that has a major influence on students speaking participation. At least the researcher has found six factors that influence students speaking participation: English proficiency levels, students' low self-esteem, afraid of making mistakes, lack of preparation, motivation, the method used, and the lecturer's attitude. English proficiency levels are known as the most factor producing anxiety. Low English proficiency levels are also known as language barriers. Low English proficiency levels can be a language barrier for students. Language barriers such as poor grammar, a lack of vocabulary, unclear pronunciation, and the language deficiency of interlocutors have been identified as major contributors to FL learners' anxiety about speaking in a target language. It is in line with Adam's (2016) statement. He said that EFL students' real communication is greatly hampered by a lack of vocabulary knowledge (Thi et al., 2020).

Thus, students with low English proficiency levels will find difficulties participating in speaking classroom activities. The second factor is students' low self-esteem. Students with poor self-esteem tend to compare their skills to others and feel ashamed when someone has superior qualities. However, as mentioned by Bandura in Ahmad & Safarian (2013) cited in (Pradestina & Agustin, 2020), there is a link between self-efficacy and self-confidence. They said it had been proven that students with low self-esteem avoid verbal participation in English classes (Pradestina & Agustin, 2020). As a result, students' self-esteem will lead them to be a passive audience during the learning process. The next factor is afraid of making mistakes. Concerning the fear of making mistakes, this fear is related to the issue of correction and negative evaluation.

Qashoa (2013), cited in (Pradestina & Agustin, 2020), said that students might not want to participate fully in class because of the teacher's bad personality, such as fierce, unfriendly, and rigid. Thus, students' participation in speaking activities will be low. The fourth factor is less preparation. The knowledge about the subject of discussion is something students need to add before the lesson starts. Students who haven't prepared anything before entering the class will make them quiet in class because of less understanding of the subject of discussion. As a result, according to Indrianty (2016) cited in (Pradestina & Agustin, 2020), students' oral involvement is influenced by their preparation for the lecture. If students do not have enough preparation for the lesson, they will avoid contributing verbally during the learning process. The fifth factor is motivation. Students' determination to master speaking skills can highly influence students speaking participation. When students have an obvious motivation to be better speakers, it will enhance their interest in speaking English. Students' lack of motivation can be caused by boredom, a lack of perceived relevance of materials, and a lack of knowledge about the instructional program's goals (Gardner in Nunan (1999), cited in (Al, 2016)). When students have a good stimulation of their motivation, their desire to master a speaking skill increases, leading them to be more active in speaking class. The last factors are learning method and lecturer attitude. A lecturer with appropriate methods and an excellent attitude can be the solution to enhance students speaking participation. Still, inappropriate methods and unfriendly manner built a barrier that can hinder students' participation in speaking activities. According to Harmer (1991) cited in (Thi et al., 2020), if students are constantly corrected, they may become demotivated and fearful of speaking. In addition, Cohen (2001), cited in (Thi et al., 2020), also stated that language assessment is viewed as a threat to their oral performance because they are concerned about their language ability.

This study is similar to the finding of Pradestina and Agustin (2020), as they mentioned 5 factors that cause the lack of students' verbal participation: a lack of self-efficacy in English lessons, a lack of self-confidence, the fear of the teacher's responses and behavior, a lack of preparation before class begins, and a fear

of making mistakes and being laughed at by others. The researcher finds four similarities between these studies: self-esteem, lack of preparation, afraid of making mistakes, and the fear of the lecturer's behavior. Furthermore, the researcher also found 2 similarities to the findings from (Thi et al., 2020). There are low English proficiency levels and teaching methods and attitudes in learning. One factor is different from this study which is anxiety feelings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data described in the previous chapter, it shows that the majority of students from the second-semester students of the English Education Department, UIN Jakarta, were at anxious levels, which is around 46.77%. It means that almost half of students from the second semester suffer from moderate anxiety, then 37.09% of students are at mildly anxious levels, and 12.90% of students suffer from high anxiety at the very anxious levels. This study concludes that there are some effects caused by anxiety on students speaking participation, such as considering the idea they want to express, refusing to ask or argue, and being hesitant, which becomes the main effect on students speaking participation. Thus, high-level anxiety and low-level anxiety have their effect. High-level anxiety caused students to consider the idea they wanted to express, which led them to participate passively and refuse to ask and argue. Low-level anxiety causes students to doubt when they want to participate in speaking activities. The interview result also discovers some factors that have a major influence on students' speaking participation. Students' speaking participation is highly influenced by English proficiency level, students' low self-esteem, afraid of making mistakes, lack of preparation, motivation, method used, and the lecturer's attitude. Most of the students have a bad influence of low English proficiency levels, low self-esteem, afraid of making mistakes, and lack of preparation. Furthermore, most of the students have a good influence caused of their motivation and the lecturers' method and attitudes during the process of learning to speak.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i5.2999>
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