



AN ANALYSIS OF ELEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY TOWARDS SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AT MA AL-SHIGHOR

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Abstract:

This study analyzes the level of speaking anxiety of grade XI students at MA Al-Shighor and its impact on speaking performance in formal and informal situations. The method used is descriptive qualitative with closed and open questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and participant observation. The results show that speaking anxiety affects students' fluency, clarity, intonation, and self-confidence. Students with high anxiety have difficulty organizing thoughts logically, resulting in decreased quality of presentation and verbal interaction. Factors such as fear of mistakes, concerns about negative assessment, and previous negative experiences also increase anxiety. Effective teaching strategies are recommended, including relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises and interaction-based learning through small group speaking practice and simulation. This approach is expected to significantly improve students' self-confidence and speaking ability.

Keywords: *speaking anxiety, speaking performance, grade XI students, qualitative methods, teaching strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

This research aims to investigate how anxiety influences the speaking performance of grade XI students at MA Al-Shighor. By using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research intends to identify and evaluate factors that lead to speaking anxiety, including the fear of making mistakes, worries about being judged negatively by peers and teachers, and prior experiences. This research involved 25 grade XI students as participants. The expected outcome of this research is to provide guidance for developing more effective teaching strategies that can help reduce speaking anxiety and substantially improve students' speaking proficiency.

In teaching English, students must master four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is regarded as one of the most crucial skills for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to create effective communication, as stated by Al-Roud (2016), who defines speaking abilities as the capacity to communicate ideas, motivations, reasoning, and feelings to people using spoken language while making sure the message is understood and accepted by the audience. It has been determined that talking is a basic human need for developing communication. Consequently, it is seen to be crucial to have a strong command of speaking abilities, particularly in the language of English for worldwide communication, as it is mentioned by Greg & Gautam (2015) that another advantage is that communication and interaction with people all over the world can be easily achieved by English users. Speaking English in EFL classes is not considered easy because a new language must be spoken by students with great confidence.

Even though English has been studied by students for several years, it cannot be denied that this language is still considered a challenge in the mastery of speaking skills by many students. Speaking ability problems, especially speaking performance, are still experienced by many English language learners. Speaking English is found to be a challenge for foreign language learners due to several reasons. Linguistic competence corresponding to expressions may be involved, as stated by Saville-Troike (2018), with linguistic competence associated with knowledge of target language elements such as vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and pronunciation. On the other hand, anxiety is identified as a factor related to psychological characteristics, as stated by Stephen D. Krashen (2019), who states that students' ability to speak fluently and confidently in a foreign language can be hindered by anxiety.

Anxiety is experienced as a sense of discomfort, fear, or worry in response to a specific situation or event, and it can psychologically influence a person's thoughts, emotions, and behavior, as supported by Arumsari (2018), who describes anxiety as a condition of deep fear, confusion, and pressure without an apparent solution, leading to emotional instability, which can result in illness, anger, laziness, etc. Suleimenova (2013), says that anxiety is defined as fear of danger or misfortune that causes distress or restlessness in the mind. One type of anxiety often experienced by humans is communication apprehension. The anxiety experienced and dominated by a public speaker is considered very disturbing and can affect his performance in public, as it is mentioned by Minghe and Yuan (2013) that anxiety is often seen as the primary barrier to success in learning a foreign language, particularly when it comes to speaking. To understand anxiety in language learning, it is first necessary for its sources to be identified, as explained by Horwitz et al. (1986) in Fikri (2018), who state that Language anxiety predominantly concerns speaking and listening skills, causing individuals to often experience nervousness when communicating in a foreign language publicly or trying to comprehend conversations in a language they haven't fully mastered.

High levels of anxiety are experienced by the average student in Indonesia when speaking English, caused by fear of making mistakes, ridicule from peers, or reprimands from teachers.

Negative thoughts about evaluations from others tend to be harbored by anxious students. This phenomenon is observed in several students at MA AL-SHIGHOR, especially in class eleven, where remaining silent during lessons is preferred due to reluctance to speak English. The lack of ability to speak English is felt by students, contributing to their fear of speaking due to factors that increase their anxiety. On the other hand, confidence may be displayed by some students who feel capable of speaking English and dare to answer the teacher's questions in English, even though what is said may not necessarily be true. Even though concepts have been mastered by students who are very good at English in terms of writing or theory, oral expression is often hindered by anxiety about making mistakes when speaking, as supported by Horwitz et al. (1986) in Ghafournia (2023), students often experience a 'mental block' when required to speak a foreign language, even if the student excel in other areas.

In previous research entitled "An Analysis of Student's Speaking Anxiety and its Effect on Speaking Performance" by Sutarsyah (2017), It was revealed that student anxiety had a detrimental effect on their speaking performance. The study's findings indicate that students experiencing high levels of anxiety tend to achieve lower scores in their speaking performances. The research emphasizes the connection between anxiety and speaking performance, underscoring the significance of addressing psychological factors to enhance students' speaking skills.

Another study entitled "A Study of Anxiety Experienced by EFL Students in Speaking Performance," conducted by Erdiana, N., Daud, B., Sari, D. F., and Dwitami, S. K. (2020), measured the degree of anxiety using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The level of anxiety was found to be measured in the study results, showing that of the 29 students studied, low levels of anxiety were experienced by 38%, moderate levels of anxiety by 59%, and high levels of anxiety by only 3.4%. These findings indicate that moderate levels of anxiety are experienced by the majority of students when speaking English. This is most likely due to concerns about grammatical and pronunciation errors, as well as a lack of self-confidence. Further investigation into the causes or factors that influence students' anxiety in speaking English is suggested by research conducted by Erdiana et al. (2020), which may be used as a subject for scholarly investigation in the future.

Based on this background, there is an interest among researchers in conducting a study aimed at analyzing the level of speaking anxiety and the factors that influence speaking anxiety on students' speaking performance at MA AL-SHIGHOR. Therefore, this research is titled "An Analysis of Eleventh-Grade Students' Speaking Anxiety Towards Speaking Performance at Ma Al-Shighor."

METHODOLOGY

This study used qualitative research methodology to analyze the level of speaking anxiety of eleventh grade students at MA Al-Shighor and its impact on speaking performance and the influencing factors that affect student participation. The main data collection instruments used in this study were closed and open questionnaires, interviews and observations aimed at collecting students' responses and experiences regarding cooperative learning. The questionnaire used in this study was created by considering the definition of a qualitative questionnaire according to Creswell and Creswell (2018) as a guideline stating that a questionnaire is a data collection tool consisting of a series of questions designed to collect information from respondents. The researcher also added his personal thoughts and experiences to ensure that the questions fit this study on speaking anxiety in eleventh grade students at MA Al-Shighor.

This observation was carried out without direct intervention from the researcher in the situation being observed, with the aim of understanding more deeply the patterns of behavior,

social interactions, or phenomena that arise in the environment. In accordance with Creswell & Poth (2018), observation as a data collection method involves the direct observation of phenomena in their natural context. The data collected in this study will focus on how speaking anxiety affects students' speaking performance. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' speaking anxiety and its related factors. To select participants, purposive sampling, which is considered effective in qualitative research, was used to select 11th grade high school students who had been exposed to cooperative learning in the classroom.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, 25 class XI MA Al-Shighor students completed a 25-item questionnaire, and 10 selected students participated in a follow-up interview with 5 questions about the impact of speaking anxiety on speaking performance and the factors influencing their speaking participation. The following is a presentation of the results.

Impact of Speaking Anxiety on Speaking Performance

Based on the results of the questionnaire and interview, researchers identified several impacts of speaking anxiety on speaking performance, namely: decreased self confidence, hampered speaking performance, and the effect on preparation.

First, what emerged from the data was a decrease in students' confidence when speaking in public. Speaking anxiety often causes significant feelings of fear and nervousness, negatively impacting students' self-confidence. Most respondents expressed that speaking anxiety makes them feel unsure about their ability to speak in front of an audience. For example, in Q17, student 9 and student 3 stated,

"Yes. Because the nervousness always arises."

"Certainly, because if I feel anxious when speaking in public, I will forget what I am going to say. Blank out."

These statements reflect how speaking anxiety can directly damage students' self-confidence.

Second, what was identified were obstacles to speaking performance due to anxiety. Students report that speaking anxiety causes them to have difficulty conveying material clearly and fluently. Physical symptoms such as shaking, stuttering, or difficulty speaking fluently often appear. For example, in Q17, student 7 and student 19 said,

"Yes, it greatly affects my speaking performance. Because the anxiety makes me nervous and stammer in speaking"

"Yes, because when speaking anxiety hits, it also affects how I speak (not being able to convey the topic well and correctly). I often stumble over my words."

These two statements suggest that speaking anxiety can cause significant obstacles to a student's ability to communicate effectively. This data is also supported by student 3's answer to interview question 1, which states,

"Usually, I try to control my breathing to stay calm, which helps reduce my anxiety or nervousness."

This answer shows that anxiety can cause nervousness, which affects speaking performance. Regulating breathing is one method used to reduce the negative effects of anxiety so that speaking performance can be maintained.

Third, what was found was the impact of speaking anxiety on students' preparation before a presentation or speech. This anxiety often reduces students' motivation and confidence in preparing their material. Some respondents reported that student felt less confident and less enthusiastic about preparing the material. For example, in Q5, a respondent (student 24) stated,

"Can make someone feel less confident, less motivated to practice, and less able to prepare the material well."

This statement shows that speaking anxiety not only affects students' performance when speaking but also affects students' preparation process, which in turn can worsen students' speaking performance.

Factors that Influence Students' Speaking Participation

Based on the presentation of the results of questionnaires and interviews, researchers identified three main factors that influence students' speaking participation, namely social support, speaking experience, and techniques for overcoming anxiety.

Social support from friends and family plays an important role in increasing students' courage and confidence to speak in public. Respondents emphasized the importance of this support in various forms, such as verbal encouragement and moral motivation. One of the respondents (student 1) in Q13 stated,

"Always providing support."

These answers indicate that continuous support from their social environment helps in reducing speaking anxiety. Apart from that, family support is also considered very important by students, as shown by 72% of students answering "very important" in Q20. These findings confirm that social support is a critical factor that can influence students' readiness to speak in public. This statement is supported by one of the respondents' answers (student 3) in interview question 3,

"Convincing me that I can actually speak in public and reassuring me that I am a confident person."

This answer shows that family support, especially through confidence and encouragement, really helps students feel more confident when speaking in public. Emotional support and reassurance from the family can reduce anxiety and increase student participation in speaking in various situations.

The second theme is speaking experience outside the classroom, which has a significant influence on students' confidence in speaking in class. Data shows that the more speaking experience students have, the greater their level of confidence. Activities such as presentations or discussions outside of class provide opportunities for students to practice their speaking skills in a variety of contexts, which in turn improves their speaking abilities in class. Respondents noted the great influence of this experience in Q21 with the statements (72% very large [influence]) and (26% Great [influence]), which were then supported by the answer from student 4 in interview question 5,

“One of the experiences of speaking outside the classroom that greatly boosted my confidence was when I participated in an inter-school debate. Although I initially felt very anxious, I became more confident after several practice sessions with my team. When I successfully delivered my arguments and received positive feedback from the judges, it gave a significant boost to my confidence in public speaking.”

This shows that speaking practice in various environments can build stronger self-confidence in students.

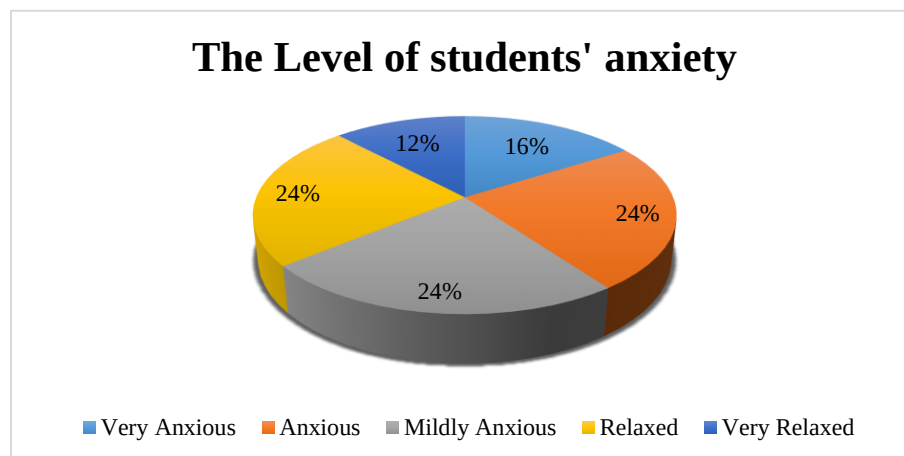
Techniques for dealing with speaking anxiety were another important factor that emerged from the data. Students report using a variety of strategies to reduce anxiety and increase confidence when speaking in public. Some of the techniques mentioned include practicing well before the presentation, taking deep breaths, and speaking in front of a mirror. In Q22, a respondent (student 2) shared his experience,

“Yes, usually i will practice well in advance before speaking in public, or i will take a deep breath before going up to reduce nervousness.”

These techniques help students prepare themselves mentally and emotionally. Another respondent (student 4) added,

“If you feel anxious, it's better to use this method: (inhale then exhale slowly) do it a few times until you don't feel anxious. If that method doesn't work, the next technique is (speak often in front of a mirror so you get used to speaking/presenting in public.)”

These answers confirm that breathing techniques are also effective in reducing anxiety. Implementation of these strategies indicates that students are actively seeking ways to overcome their anxiety and are working to improve their speaking abilities through consistent practice.



Based on the results of the study, students were categorized into five groups of anxiety levels when speaking in public: "Very Anxious," "Anxious," "Mildly Anxious," "Relaxed," and "Very Relaxed."

Of the total 25 students, about 16%, or 4 students, showed a very high level of anxiety. Students feel very anxious when speaking in public, indicating that a small number of students experience very high levels of tension and may need special interventions to help reduce their anxiety.

A total of 24% of students, or 6 students, were in the anxious category, indicating that student feel anxious but not at an extreme level. These students may need additional support, such as speaking exercises or stress management techniques, to help overcome their anxiety. In addition, the "somewhat anxious" category also includes 6 students, or 24% of the total, indicating that student experience a little anxiety but are still able to function well.

On the other hand, 24% of students felt relaxed when speaking in public, indicating that student feel comfortable and are not bothered by the activity. Meanwhile, 12% of students showed very low levels of anxiety and felt very relaxed when speaking, demonstrating good speaking skills and not requiring additional support related to anxiety.

Indicators of Speaking Anxiety

In the analysis of the percentage of types of student anxiety, it was found that Communication Anxiety is a fear or anxiety related to speaking in front of others or in social situations. Based on the questionnaire filled out by 25 students, there were 2 students (8%) who very often experienced anxiety before speaking in public, 7 students (28%) often experienced anxiety, 15 students (60%) sometimes experienced anxiety, and 1 student (4%) never experienced anxiety. The total number of students who experienced Communication Anxiety, either very often, often, or sometimes, was 24 students (96%).

Meanwhile, Test Anxiety is a fear or anxiety related to exams or assessments. From the interviews, all students stated that student had experienced anxiety before or during public speaking, especially in formal assessment situations such as presentations in class or speech competitions. This shows that all students (100%) experienced Test Anxiety.

In addition, Fear of Negative Evaluation is the fear of negative judgment from others. Based on the questionnaire answers, there were 2 students (8%) who very often felt anxious because they were afraid of being evaluated negatively, 7 students (28%) often felt anxious, 15 students (60%) sometimes felt anxious, and 1 student (4%) never felt anxious. The total number of students who experienced Fear of Negative Evaluation, either very often, often, or sometimes, was 24 students (96%).

From the results of this analysis, it can be seen that most students experienced Communication Anxiety (96%), Test Anxiety (100%), and Fear of Negative Evaluation (96%). This shows that almost all students feel anxious when student have to speak in public, especially in formal assessment situations, and are worried about negative assessments from others. This anxiety can affect their performance during presentations or speeches, causing them to feel nervous and less confident.

To help students overcome this anxiety, it is important for schools and families to provide adequate support, such as public speaking exercises, relaxation techniques, positive feedback, and exam simulations. With this strategy, it is hoped that students can reduce their anxiety levels and improve their performance in public speaking situations and formal assessments

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research aims to provide comprehensive answers to the problems posed in the research based on the results of the questionnaire and interview data analysis. The

impact of speaking anxiety on students' speaking performance and the factors influencing the speaking participation of class XI MA Al-Shighor students are focused on in this research.

It can be concluded from the research results that a significant impact on students' speaking performance is caused by speaking anxiety. Feelings of nervousness, trembling, and fear that hinder the ability to speak clearly and confidently are experienced by students due to speaking anxiety. The main factors that cause speaking anxiety are the fear of making mistakes and feeling nervous. This results in students often experiencing "blanks" or forgetting material when speaking in public.

Additionally, students' preparation and performance are negatively impacted by speaking anxiety. Difficulty in preparing well is caused by anxiety, which leads to less-than optimal performance. Lack of self-confidence and motivation to practice cause students to be unable to prepare the material well. This impact is long-term, where students' confidence in public speaking can be reduced by ongoing anxiety, making them tend to avoid speaking situations.

Several factors that influence students' speaking participation were also identified in this research, namely: (1) Friends and Teacher Support: An important role in increasing students' courage and participation in public speaking is played by support from classmates and teachers. Verbal encouragement, positive reinforcement, and a supportive environment help students feel more capable and motivated. (2) Personality and confidence: Students' participation in speaking is greatly influenced by their personalities, such as shyness or openness. More difficulty in speaking in public is experienced by students with shy personalities compared to students who are more open. Self-confidence also plays an important role, as students with higher self-confidence tend to speak more actively. (3) Speaking Experience Outside the Classroom: Students' confidence in the classroom is increased by speaking experiences outside the classroom, such as presentations, discussions, or speeches. This experience helps students become more confident and ready to speak in public.

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