

EXPLORING STUDENTS' STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING SPEAKING ANXIETY AT THE MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT OF BIMA INTERNATIONAL MFH

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the factors that cause speaking anxiety in students and the strategies used by students to reduce this anxiety. The focus of the study is on the experiences and strategies developed by students in dealing with speaking anxiety in the classroom. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with 16 first-semester students at Bima International University MFH as research subjects. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and field notes. The results show that students' speaking anxiety is influenced by several main factors, namely fear of making mistakes, limited language exposure, and language competency gaps. These factors encourage students to develop various strategies to reduce speaking anxiety, including preparing before speaking, applying relaxation techniques, building positive mindsets, and seeking support from peers. These findings indicate that personal and social strategies play an important role in helping students manage speaking anxiety in the learning environment.

Keywords: Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety Factors, Reducing Speaking Anxiety

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara pada siswa serta strategi yang digunakan siswa untuk mengurangi kecemasan tersebut. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada pengalaman dan strategi yang dikembangkan siswa dalam menghadapi kecemasan berbicara di kelas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan subjek penelitian sebanyak 16 mahasiswa semester satu di Universitas Bima Internasional MFH. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan catatan lapangan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kecemasan berbicara siswa dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor utama, yaitu ketakutan melakukan kesalahan, keterbatasan paparan bahasa, dan kesenjangan kompetensi berbahasa. Faktor-faktor tersebut mendorong siswa untuk mengembangkan berbagai strategi guna mengurangi kecemasan berbicara, antara lain melakukan persiapan sebelum berbicara, menerapkan teknik relaksasi, membangun pola pikir positif, serta mencari dukungan dari teman sebaya. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang bersifat personal dan sosial memiliki peran penting dalam membantu siswa mengelola kecemasan berbicara di lingkungan pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Kecemasan Berbicara, Faktor Kecemasan Berbicara, Mengurangi Kecemasan Berbicara

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of four language skills in English including listening, reading, and writing skill. That needs to be mastered by students in learning English. As Dash and Dash (2007) and Nasr (1994) as cited in Ashour (2014) states that speaking is one of the four English skills. Nowadays, speaking also becomes the most difficult one. Nunan (2003) as cited in Trissulfi & Leni states that the reason why speaking is difficult is because many people feel that speaking in a new language is harder than reading, writing, or listening for two reasons. First, unlike reading or writing, speaking happen in real time, usually the person that other people are talking to is waiting for her or him to speak right then. The second, when a person speaks, he or she cannot edit and revise what you wish to say, as you can if you are writing.

According to Ur (1996), there are some problems in speaking. Those are inhibition, nothing to say, low or uneven participation, and mother tongue use. Learners are often inhibited about trying to say things in a foreign language in the classroom. They worry about making mistakes. Some students cannot think of anything to say and also just have little time to speak. Besides, they will use their mother tongue because it is easier than foreign language. According to Horwitz (1986) as cited in Abdul (2015) state that language anxiety is the distinct complex of self-perception, feeling, beliefs and behaviour related to the classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process particularly in speaking English. According to Horwitz (1986) as cited in Abdul (2015) some learners may claim to have a mental block against anxiety when they come to learn to speak a second or foreign language. It makes students have less confidence, stress, and nervousness that impede their learning process.

The problem of speaking anxiety not only happens in the low grade of students but also it happens in the university students especially in the first Semester. It is supported by the experience of the researcher and also many students' opinion. However, students must be a master of English because they learnt English since they were in elementary school. But in reality, many students of the fourth semester students of English Education Department still have problem and anxiety in speaking. Most of students are still anxious and nervous when they are speaking in English in front of many people and their lecture in the classroom. Based on the problem students should have strategy to reduce the speaking anxiety in the classroom.

Based on the problem, the researcher needs to analyse how students' strategies reduce their speaking anxiety. To apply this as researcher needs to conduct a research, the research is qualitative descriptive as Isaac and Michael (1981) state that descriptive research is used in the literal sense of describing situations or events. Descriptive research is research that involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate or describe the data naturally occurring

phenomena without experimental manipulation. The study focuses on the factors caused students' speaking anxiety of first semester and students' strategies to overcome their speaking anxiety of first semester. The purpose of the study is to know how students' strategies to reduce their speaking anxiety. On the other hand, the research will be reported with no any kind of treatment.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative research aims to describe and interpret phenomena as they occur naturally without experimental manipulation. It focuses on presenting an accurate and systematic description of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors related to the phenomenon under investigation (Isaac & Michael, 1981). The research was conducted at the English Language Education program of Bima International University. The participants were 15 first-semester students from the Mathematics Department who were enrolled in English courses. The participants were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus.

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and field notes. Classroom observations were carried out to examine students' speaking behavior and indications of anxiety during learning activities. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of speaking anxiety and the strategies they used to reduce it. Field notes were used to record contextual information, researcher reflections, and important events that occurred during the observation and interview processes. Data analysis was conducted concurrently with data collection using qualitative analysis procedures. The collected data were first transcribed and organized. The researcher then reduced the data by identifying relevant information related to speaking anxiety factors and coping strategies. The data were subsequently categorized into themes and patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the findings and relating them to the research objectives.

RESULTS

Students Anxiety in Speaking

Based on the observation on 9th May, the observation list shows that speaking anxiety indications on the students. The observation shows that almost all of the students are rubbing their palm and they were blushing while speaking English about telling experience. While some of the students are playing with their clothing. And not many of the students were stuttering and remaining silent while speaking and also some of the students felt tension and nervous

when they were speaking English in front of the class. Some students felt apprehension, ashamed, afraid, and worry when they were speaking English.

In addition, in field notes indicates that some of students gaze their eyes such as moving from the left to the right and tried to say something, they were laughed by their friends while speaking English and have no idea to express their words, some of them put their hands behind their back and sometimes they said “aaa” while speaking.

Factors Causing Speaking Anxiety on First semester

In this research, the researcher found some factor that caused speaking anxiety on first semester such as: Firstly, fear of making mistakes. Based on the observation checklist almost of the students are fear of making mistakes it is indicates by students are nervous and afraid while they were performing in speaking English. In addition based on the result of the interview almost all of the students were afraid if they were speaking English because of their friends perception and students felt so afraid and worry about their friends assumptions if they were making mistakes while performing and almost all of them were afraid of their friends assumptions such as afraid being laugh by their friends, afraid of their friends assumptions that they were not smart and still not good in speaking English and that is why they were nervous while performing speaking English.

The second factor is limited exposure in English. Based on the observation checklist not many of the students are limited exposure in English. Their environment impedes the development of their communicative proficiency and students were seldom to practice English in their daily activities because English is not their mother tongue so the students got less vocabulary and made grammatical errors. It supported by the result of the interview that the students were seldom to practice English in their own classes and in their environment also English is not their formal language that is why they were limited exposure to English and it caused students anxiety when they were speaking English.

The last factor is gap of competence. Based on the observation checklist, some of the students' gap of competence it indicates by perceived poor performance. Gap of competence potentially leads students to anxiety, depending on certain situation or context. It became a big concern for students who perceived poor performance in the classroom or oral presentation. Students' uneasy feeling in the classroom. In addition, in interview result shows that students felt uncomfortable if they asked to answer question while speaking, did not mastered the material, and lack of the material, and it was caused students did not what were they going to

talk about and students should make preparation such as reading the text. It caused students' poor performance.

Overcoming Speaking Anxiety by first Semester Students of mathematics departement at Bima Internasional University

During the activities of teaching and learning, most of students felt anxiety such as feeling nervous, tension, apprehension, and worry. The researcher found that how students overcome their speaking anxiety such as: Firstly is preparation. According to the observation checklist almost all of students used preparation as their strategy to reduce their speaking anxiety because to achieve success in the process of teaching and learning, students prepared everything properly. It supported by the result of the interview, students also said that in order to teaching and learning process in speaking are running well, the students need the preparation before speaking in front of the class because the students' admit that with any preparation such as reading and learning the material, students knew what were they going to do or speak about but also students will speak good and if there is no preparation students did not what are they were going to speak about and it caused students are anxiety when they are speaking. In addition noted in field notes read Basmallah before performing in front of or when performing the students would not too nervous or felt anxiety because preparation not only reduce anxiety but also overcome their anxiety.

Secondly is relaxation. As the result on the observation checklist some students need relaxation. When the students were afraid of being asked by the lecturer, they did relaxation such as take a deep breath and tried to calm down. In additional based on the interview students said that preparation can overcome or reduce their speaking anxiety. Thirdly, another strategy to reduce speaking anxiety is having positive thinking. Based on the checklist not many the students are positive thinking. In addition according to the interview result, the students used this strategy to reduce their speaking anxiety because think negatively influence their focus in speaking and think positively and the one who accepted it will be positive too and it marked by students confident when they were speaking while think positively toward their friends perception .

The last strategy is peer seeking. It was characterized by students' willingness to ask for a help from others friends who could help them when they had difficulty in speaking English during process teaching and learning. Based on the observation checklist not many the students used this strategy. based on the observation checklist sometimes some students were shy to

asked their lecture about their difficulty. One another way to share difficulty was to their friend. If they share their difficulty was to their friend it could reduce their speaking anxiety

DISCUSSION

The Factors of Speaking Anxiety by First Semester of mathematics departement at Bima Internasional University

Based on the result of research were done by doing depth interview, participant observation checklist, and field notes. Some students felt tension and nervous when they were speaking English in front of the class. Some students felt apprehension, afraid, and worry when they were speaking English. It suitable definition of anxiety that is stated by Horwitz et.al (1986). Almost all of the students were rubbing their palm and they were blushing while speaking English about telling experience. While some all of the students were nervously touching their pen or book when speaking English the students were stuttering and remaining silent while speaking. It supported by Sulaimenova (2013), anxious students show symptoms such as “squirming, fidgeting, playing with hair or clothing, nervously touching objects, stuttering”. From the result of the research findings, the researcher got the data caused speaking anxiety those were fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to English, and gap of competence.

Rip Herwanto conducted a research he found that the factors caused speaking anxiety such as: type of task that is given from the teachers, fear of making mistakes, the role of language teachers, self-perception, gaps of competence, and limited exposure to English, but the present researcher find that there are three factors caused speaking anxiety those are fear of making mistakes, limited exposure to English, and gap of competence.

Overcoming Speaking Anxiety on First Semester at of mathematics departement at Bima Internasional University

Based on the findings, this study reveals that first-semester students of the Mathematics Department at Bima International University employed several strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in English classes. Four main strategies were identified: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, and peer seeking. Preparation involved practicing speaking materials in advance to increase confidence. Relaxation strategies included calming techniques used before or during speaking activities to reduce nervousness. Positive thinking helped students manage fear of making mistakes by encouraging self-confidence. Peer seeking referred to students' efforts to seek support and reassurance from classmates when experiencing anxiety.

These findings are consistent with the framework proposed by Kondo and Ling (2004), as cited in Faizah (2017), who identified preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, and peer seeking as effective strategies for reducing students' tension in the language classroom. This alignment indicates that the strategies used by the students are theoretically grounded and relevant in addressing speaking anxiety among first-semester university students, particularly those from non-English majors such as mathematics.

CONCLUSION

This research was done to describe students' speaking anxiety, the factors that caused speaking anxiety, and also students' strategies to overcome speaking anxiety. Based on the results of depth interview, participant, observation and field note. The researcher gets the conclusion that can be drawn. The results of depth interview, participant observation checklist, and field notes. Almost all of the students are rubbing their palm and they were blushing while speaking English about telling experience, while some of the students are playing with their clothing. And not many of the students were stuttering and remaining silent while speaking. Based on the results of research well done by doing depth interview, participant observation checklist, and field notes. Some students felt tension and nervous when they were speaking English in front of the class. Some students felt apprehension, afraid, and worry when they were speaking English.

From the results of finding the data before, it can be concluded that all of the subjects have various causes of speaking anxiety. Those are (a) fear of making mistakes, (b) limited exposure to English, and (c) gaps of competence. The ways to overcome speaking anxiety, they also used various strategies. Those are (a) preparation it is related to how the students prepare about everything before the class such as read the material, and (b) relaxation it is related to students do the relaxation such as take a deep breath and trying to calm down, (c) positive thinking it is related to students keep positive thinking to their ability, (d) peer seeking is related to how students discussion, share their difficulty to their friends and ask suggestion

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