STUDENTS’ ANXIETY FACTORS IN SPEAKING ENGLISH
(A CASE STUDY AT THE THIRD YEAR STUDENTS
OF SMPN 9 PAREPERE)

Muhamad Rafiq

1AMI AIPI Makassar, Jl. Gatot Subroto Baru No.54, Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia
Email: muhamadrafiq.mr@gmail.com

Article History
Received: 14-12-2023
Revision: 17-12-2023
Accepted: 18-12-2023
Published: 19-12-2023

Abstract. This study was conducted to determine the type of student speaking anxiety that predominantly occurs in English classes and to determine the factors of speaking anxiety faced by third-year students of SMPN 9 Parepare. The design of this study is descriptive qualitative. This study used questionnaires to determine the type of student speaking anxiety that was dominant in English classes totaling 35 students, then used interviews to determine the factors of student speaking anxiety in English classes by selecting a sample of 7 students from each class. Samples are taken using random sampling. The data analysis technique used is qualitative data analysis consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study showed that the dominant types of students’ speaking anxiety were (1) Communication Apprehension with a score of 1173, (2) Test Anxiety scored 1630, and (3) Fear of Negative Evaluation scored 745. This means that most students worry about failing the speaking test and they still feel worried even though they have prepared well for speaking classes. They also still feel less confident with their appearance in front of the class because of their language competence. The factors of speech anxiety faced by students are influenced by four factors, namely cognitive, psychological, social, and physical factors.

Keywords: Speaking, Students’ Anxiety, English, Qualitative Research

Abstrak. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui jenis kecemasan berbicara siswa yang dominan terjadi di kelas bahasa Inggris dan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor kecemasan berbicara yang dihadapi oleh siswa tahun ketiga SMPN 9 Parepare. Desain penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan kuesioner untuk mengetahui jenis kecemasan berbicara siswa yang dominan terjadi di kelas bahasa Inggris yang berjumlah 35 siswa, kemudian menggunakan wawancara untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor kecemasan berbicara siswa di kelas bahasa Inggris dengan memilih sampel sebanyak 7 siswa dari setiap kelas. Sampel diambil dengan menggunakan random sampling. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis data kualitatif yang terdiri dari reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa jenis kecemasan berbicara siswa yang dominan adalah (1) Communication Apprehension dengan skor 1173, (2) Test Anxiety mendapat skor 1630, dan (3) Fear of Negative Evaluation mendapat skor 745. Artinya sebagian besar siswa khawatir gagal dalam tes berbicara dan mereka juga tetap merasa khawatir meskipun mereka telah mempersiapkan diri dengan baik untuk kelas berbicara. Mereka juga masih merasa kurang percaya diri dengan penampilan mereka di depan kelas karena kompetensi bahasa yang mereka miliki. Faktor kecemasan berbicara yang dihadapi siswa dipengaruhi oleh empat faktor, yaitu faktor kognitif, psikologis, sosial, dan fisik.

Kata Kunci: Berbicara, Kecemasan Siswa, Bahasa Inggris, Penelitian Kualitatif

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important things people need to have to communicate each other is language. We need language to express our thoughts and feelings, language is also a means of communication that helps people communicate with each other because language helps us express our goals in communication. Without language, we have difficulty in expressing our thoughts and feelings to others. Every country has a different language. The language that makes the people easily to communicate with various countries in the world is English. English was chosen as the international language. In modern times, English's status as an international language is underpinned by its widespread use in many fields, including politics, education, commerce, diplomacy, science and technology, media, information technology, and popular culture.

Most people believe that mastering speaking skills is the most important aspect of learning a second or foreign language. When we argue with someone, our purpose may be to obtain or express an opinion, to persuade someone about something, or to clarify information. In some cases, we use speaking skills to give instructions and get things done (Richards & Willy, 2002). There are three main reasons to get people especially students talking in class. First, speaking activities give students the opportunity to practice speaking in real life or in the classroom. Second, speaking exercises where students try to use a language, they know in this case English to provide feedback for the teacher and other students. Everyone can see how well they are doing. The more students could activate the different elements of language that they have stored in their brains, the more automatic the use of these elements at the time of use. As a result, students gradually become autonomous language users. This means that they will be able to use words and phrases fluently without having much conscious thought (Harmer, 2007).

Emotions play an important role in the learning process, especially in learning English. When students experience positive emotions such as curiosity, enthusiasm, and happiness, they are more likely to engage with the material, retain information better, and be more creative in their approach to learning. Conversely, negative emotions can hinder learning by disrupting and affecting student concentration. In other words, emotions can facilitate or hinder student learning. For example, students learn more effectively when they are confident, satisfied, and excited about what they are learning, emotions can stimulate students' thinking and can also interact with learning. Likewise, negative emotions such as anger, fear, and sadness can hinder student learning efforts (Brown, 1991).
Anxiety is a person's physiological reaction. In physiological cases, anxiety may include bodily reactions such as rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, nausea, dry mouth, or sweating. In the case of behavior, it can sabotage the ability to act. Psychologically, anxiety is a subjective state of fear and restlessness. In its most extreme form, it can cause people to feel detached from themselves and even fear death or going crazy (Bourne, 2010). Anxiety is a feeling of tension, and fear associated with learning a second language or English. In other words, anxiety is a vague fear born of subjective resulting tension, fear, nervousness, and worry. And it can be concluded that anxiety is a feeling of discomfort, anxiety, or nervousness due to certain situations that are happening (Gopang, 2016).

Based on observations at SMPN 9 Parepare, researchers identified signs of anxiety among students. Many of them seem to be restless, evasive, and reduce participation in class. They were afraid and embarrassed to practice speaking English because they were worried about making mistakes. One of them thought if he made a mistake, the teacher would get angry, and his friends would ridicule him. So, he preferred to be quiet and sit passively. While some of them also believe that English is a difficult subject. Such beliefs can affect their psychic and make them feel worried in class. In the end, when they were asked to practice, they started stuttering. In addition, some of them could not produce sounds or intonation even after a certain number of repetitions they felt unsure if they can practice English well. Research significance is the most extreme form, it can cause people to feel detached from themselves and even fear death or going crazy (Bourne, 2010).

The expected benefit of this study is to expand knowledge about some of the types and factors that cause student anxiety, especially in English classes. There are several advantages expected from the study, namely: Theoretical benefits are expected to be useful for other researchers who want to conduct research related to the analysis of English-speaking anxiety. Next is the Practical benefit. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits to teachers to find out the type of student speaking anxiety that is dominant in English, and the trigger factors that cause student anxiety in speaking English so that the problem can be overcome. And the last is that this study benefits students to know more about themselves and know the types and factors of anxiety during speaking in English class.

Framework of thinking

Generally, previous research used qualitative methods and interviews as instruments in making observations. They also focused on the causes of students' anxiety about speaking
skills. The difference between this study and previous research is that this study uses two instruments, questionnaires, and interviews, with the aims that after the results of the questionnaire data appear, it will be deepened by interviews. In addition, the difference in this study was respondents. Previous studies only focused on one grade or two classes to be analyzed, but in this study, researchers took a sample of 5 students for each class where in this school for the third year there were 7 classes. The aim is to represent the entire population of third-year students at SMPN 9 Parepare. So, the total students analyzed in this study were 35 students.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Figure 1.** The conceptual framework

Based on the conceptual framework above, researcher conducted a descriptive study by analyzing students' anxiety in speaking English of third-year students of SMPN 9 Parepare. This study focused on three aspects of measuring anxiety in speaking English that is fear of communicating, anxiety test, and fear of negative evaluation.

**METHOD**

**Location and Time of Research**

This research was conducted by SMPN 9 Parepare. The reason for conducting this study on Student Anxiety Factors in Speaking English is because most students are afraid and embarrassed to practice with the target language, in this case the target language is English, for fear of making mistakes.
Research Design

This study is classified as a case study using descriptive qualitative study. This method helps researchers to collect, analyze and conclude research information to answer research objectives. Design is used to guide and gather facts to obtain an accurate description of the existing status but also attempts to trace the interrelationships between the facts providing deeper insight into the phenomenon. In addition, the research design provides a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the situation. Therefore, this study used a descriptive method to reveal the phenomenon of speech anxiety of students in the third year of SMPN 9 Parepare.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consists of 200 third-year students of SMP Negeri 9 Parepare for the academic year 2023/2024 with a study group of seven classes representing the study population with the following description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not.</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Man</th>
<th>Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>VIII.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>VIII.2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>VIII.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>VIII.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>VIII.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>VIII.6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>VIII.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entire 200 students

Source: data from SMPN 9 Parepare

In this study researchers used simple random sampling. The sample of this study came from the population described earlier. In this study, 5 samples were taken from each class. The total sample in this study was 35 third-year students of SMPN 9 Parepare.

Kinds and Source of Data

Data is a reference source used to perform analysis. There are two types of data used in this study, namely:

Questionnaire

The study used a closed questionnaire with a five-point foreign language class anxiety scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The questionnaire item is a modified version of the item developed by Horwitz et al (1986) This open questionnaire
has been used and validated by many researchers. Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), in its function, measures the level of anxiety felt by foreign language learners, one of which is Ardi Marwan (2007) The following are the items used in this study items with the symbol (√).

This Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) uses 33 questions with answer options for questions from 1-5 in each item. The 5-point Likert scale begins with "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Disagree or disagree" (N), "Disagree" (D) and "Strongly Disagree" (SD). This type of questionnaire corresponds to the language learning context of the participant associated with the word. "Foreign Language" is used in FLCAS (foreign language class anxiety scale). It is a word often used in "English". Therefore, if the points are summarized by adding each answer point from each statement. The higher the total score, the more anxious the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Anxiety</th>
<th>Question Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Fear</td>
<td>1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Negative Evaluation</td>
<td>2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Test</td>
<td>3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview**

Interview is a data collection technique by interviewing selected individuals as respondents. In addition, it is a face-to-face effort to obtain reliable and valid measures in the form of verbal responses from one or more respondents. According to Bungin (2007), in-depth interview is a process to obtain information for research purposes by means of face-to-face questions between interviewers and informants or sources, with or without using interview guides. Researchers asked ten questions that referred to the description of students' anxiety levels in learning English. These questions are adopted from previous research related to the research problem. And some questions are modified to fit the conditions of the participants.

The participants were recruited, students whose responses showed high levels of anxiety, and researchers asked and invited them to participate. During the initial process with the student, the researcher explains the nature of the study and that all interviews will be conducted in Indonesian, the student's first language, to get answers without limiting or hindering the student. Those who show willingness to participate will be scheduled for an
interview. Then, 7 participants from each class were interviewed. Each interview will be recorded with the participant's permission. The interview guide is adapted from Price (1991).

**Data Analysis Techniques**

To answer the research question, data analysis is necessary. It covers the dominant level of anxiety felt by students in learning English, the source of their anxiety in learning English as well as their strategies for coping with it.

- **Questionnaire Analysis**
  
  The Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) consists of two types of statements: positive and negative. The scale of positive statements ranged from 1-5 with the answers "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". While the negative statements ranged from 5-1 with answers "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree".

- **Data Calculation**
  
  Data is calculated manually with a score range ranging from 33 to 165. After each score from the students, the results of the Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) were obtained.

- **Data Categorization**
  
  The data is categorized into several levels of anxiety ranging from "Very Anxious", "Anxious", "Somewhat Anxious", "Relaxed", and "Very Relaxed" based on the Oetting’s scale (Mayangta, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabel 3. Positive statements &amp; negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questionnaire is one of the supporting techniques that aims researchers to identify feelings, opinions, problems, and situations of students in the process of learning English. In this test, the questionnaire form is closed with alternative answers chosen by students. Students choose only the best answer that works for themselves. Questionnaires need to be answered honestly and correctly by students.

\[
P = \frac{F}{N}
\]
Where:
P = Percentage  
F = Frequency  
N = Number of Respondents  
The liker scale formula is as follows:

Table 4. FLACS anxiety scale adapted from Oetting's scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Statements</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Negative Statements</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totally Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Totally Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree or disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Disagree or disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Classifying English anxiety scales by criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124-165</td>
<td>Very anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108-123</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-107</td>
<td>Somewhat anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-86</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-65</td>
<td>Very relaxing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Interview Analysis

The data analysis process falls into three main phases following the qualitative analysis framework developed by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

RESULTS

There are two kinds of data used in this research, the data analysis of students' level of anxiety and the description of their anxiety. According to the theory, this research used the qualitative descriptive method, which is the process of answering the research question, the first research question was answered by the questioner, and the second research question was answered by an interview. The objective of this study is to know students’ speaking anxiety speaking in the third years in SMPN 9 Parepare. The result of this data is taken from the 9th grade and selected a sample of 5 students from each class. The researcher found the data on the students’ level of anxiety as explained below:
Based on the table above, accumulation of questionnaire form, the researcher found 2 students who experience a "Very Anxious" level with a range score of 124-165, 12 students who experience an “Anxious” level, with a range score of 108-123, 12 students who experienced "Mildly Anxious" level with a range score of 87-107,8 students who experience "Relaxed" level with a range score of 66-86, and nothing student who experience "Very Relaxed" level with range score of 33-65. The following is a summary of students' responses to the statements about each type of speaking anxiety. For more details, the researcher shows the image below:
From the summary above, the researcher found that: statements for each type of speaking anxiety were scored: Test anxiety (1640), communication apprehension (1174), and Fear of negative evaluation (745). So, from this statement, it can be concluded that the most dominant type of speech anxiety in the third year students of SMPN 9 Parepare is "Test anxiety" (1640) and the lowest score for speaking anxiety is "Fear of negative evaluation" (745).

The Factors That Trigger the Students’ Speaking Anxiety

There are some factors faced by students that triggering the anxiety in speaking in front of the class. Referring to the findings, the researcher classified those factors into four indicators, namely cognitive factor, psychological factor, social factor, and physical factor.

Cognitive Factor

The construct of speaking anxiety was related to the students” cognition because they may be aware of their limited competence in English. Students” speaking anxiety may be led by the fear of not being able to speak correctly without errors due to the lack of knowledge or low level of lexicon, pronunciation, and grammar. The finding showed that students have limited knowledge of English was clearly seen. That was why they felt worried about their cognition. It has a relation with the interview result. Respondent stated that:

"I rarely learn English, because I wasn't interested the first time, I started learning it, and that's what makes me always nervous whenever I'm asked to speak English". I really find it very difficult to compose English sentences correctly”.

Psychological Factor

The deeper information from the follow-up interview showed that almost students revealed that they were worried to fail in their performance. To prove this, one of the respondents acknowledge that:

"I'm afraid of failure and my hands and feet keep shaking when I stand in front of the class", and "I'm afraid of being laughed at by my friends when I speak English in front of the class”.

Speaking in front of class was my first speaking performance. Furthermore, it let him encounter speaking anxiety that he concerned about his performance. That statement indicated that he was fear to fail and to be evaluated negatively took a great role in triggering his anxiety in speaking in front of the class.

Besides being afraid of negative evaluations, some of the students were also lack confidence, and it can be caused by their background or experience which made them have
many bad feelings when performing in front of the class. One student thought that his English is not good, he did not want to speak in front of the class. He acknowledged:

"My English is not good, and I’m not sure about myself. I feel confident, but I’m afraid to make mistakes". and other said that "No, I don’t like speaking in front of people".

Social Factor
The relationship between the students and the teacher was one thing that cannot be forgotten. The findings showed that the relationship between student-teacher and student-student in Speaking class did not affect the increasing anxiety of students in Speaking English because they had a supportive relationship. All of the interviewees talked about how supportive their class was. They felt comfortable with their class because friends are supportive and humble friends. Most of them felt unconfident just because they were afraid of making mistake, it was not because they were afraid of being judged by the other students when performing. Also, they were satisfied with the teacher as he was kind and motivated.

The positive relationship among the students can also be seen from their bounding and willingness to help each other. From the observation, the researcher found that the students were supportive and cooperative as they helped their friends to find some words, appreciated other students’ presence and performance by putting their attention, and gave applause whenever their friends performed. Besides, the researcher felt welcomed by the students as they communicated and joked with the researcher. They treated the researcher as the students in the class. This proved that the students were friendly and welcoming, as stated by one of the respondents stated that:

"Our teachers are very friendly and always give us advice when we have difficulties.

Physical Factor
According to Effiong, he finds that a relaxed classroom atmosphere contributes an important role in foreign language learning; meanwhile, a quiet class contributes to the raising of speaking anxiety levels where all audiences will only focus on the speaker. Based on the observation, the class was conducive. This class was relaxed to study as it was far from a crowded spot. The class was a well-organized room with all the chairs facing the whiteboard. The findings from the interview found that the classroom was fair to conduct a learning activity. Based on the interviewees” answers, stated that:

"I feel comfortable in class, and my friends are fun and supportive friends who make it easy for me to go to class, especially in English class".
CONCLUSION

After distributing questionnaires related to foreign language anxiety to students to answer the first research question, about the type of speech anxiety dominant in students. The results showed that the most dominant type of speaking anxiety was the "Test Anxiety" which scored (1640), based on the number of test anxiety, indicating that most students were worried that they would fail the language test and they also remained worried even though they had prepared well for the speaking class. In fact, even though they have known each other since the first day of school, they also still feel insecure about their appearance in front of the class because of their language competence. The students fear they cannot achieve good performance because they cannot avoid evaluative situations in speaking class activities.

There are several factors faced by students that are responsible for triggering students' speaking anxiety in speaking in front of the class. Researchers classified these factors into four indicators, namely cognitive factors, psychological factors, social factors, and physical factors. From the interviews, most students mentioned that they were afraid of making mistakes when performing in front of the class. Their fear of making mistakes in grammar. Researchers also found that students were supportive and cooperative whenever their friends showed up. As well as teacher behavior also tends to motivate and support them. In addition, the finding that physical factors of speaking classes also had a negative correlation with increased speaking anxiety of students. Referring to these results, researchers concluded that cognition, psychological, social, and physical factors of students' English influenced the appearance of speaking anxiety in front of the class. The relationship between teachers and students in the Speaking class did not affect the increase in students' speaking anxiety because they had supportive relationships, making them less anxious about class activities.

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