

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON SPEAKING ANXIETY IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM: PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW

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Abstract

The world has seen significant changes as a result of globalization. As English is widely used all over the world, there is a need for learners to acquire communication skills in classrooms. Thus, learners should be able to overcome their psychological problems while learning in the classroom, such as anxiety. This study aims to investigate the student's perception of psychological problems faced in terms of anxiety in SMPN 30 Malang. The researcher used sampling technique to select the sample. The respondents from this study are 9th-grade students in SMPN 30 Malang, which has a total number of 49 students. The data was collected from junior high school. In this study, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative study. The researcher collected the data through a questionnaire. The finding of this study shows that twenty students of the 9th graders in SMPN 30 Malang have speaking anxiety. Especially, when they are going to take an exam. Test Anxiety was the most influencing factor affecting 9th graders' speaking performance. The test anxiety was found because of their fear of failure and high pressure in their English class.

Keywords: *Anxiety, English Speaking Skills, Mental Health, Perception, Psychology*

Introduction

In order to become proficient in a language, there are Four skills should be mastered by students in learning a language. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are interconnected and work together to help individuals fully understand and communicate in a language (Ali et al., 2022). Speaking is one of the language skills that students must master when learning a foreign language. In addition, learning to speak is quite hard, because it is used for expressing thoughts, and feelings and also responding to spoken words (Hasanah, 2022).

Speaking consists of producing an oral skill with the ability to develop and share verbal and non-verbal meaning (Nunan, 2015). Various fields in the world use English.

In Indonesia, English in schools is not only a foreign language but a language that must be taught in every class at school (Noviasmy et al., 2023).

Speaking skills in Indonesia are becoming increasingly important in the context of a foreign or second language (EFL). Indonesians rarely use English to communicate with each other. The importance of speaking still becomes essential to learn, according to (Sookermany, 2011) speaking is important because it can be an indicator of a person's quality. Later, Nilufar Kadamovna (2021) asserted that speaking skill is not only useful for the use of speaking in the classroom but also beneficial for bringing success to their career.

Anxiety is a state of mind in which a person is unsure of their abilities or what they wish to do. It is an important issue faced by university language teachers and needs to be further researched and seriously handled (Liu et al., 2021). Many students faced difficulties in speaking English as a foreign language. Speaking anxiety is one of the challenges that students frequently experience when speaking in a foreign language. Zam (2020) declared that lack of confidence and limited vocabulary are factors which can affect the student speaking performance. He explains that anxiety is a type of anxiety that occurs when a person performs speaking in front of people.

In Psychology, Public Speaking Anxiety can show the symptoms of a phobia, which is known as Glass phobia. Glass phobia is a fear of public speaking. According to Psy.com 'Gloss phobia is a fairly prevalent phobia that may impact up to 75% of the general population'. Meaning that public speaking anxiety can occur at any kind level of learner. Public speaking anxiety can be derived from several factors such as HORWITZ et al., (1986) stated there are three factors influencing speaking anxiety which are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Furthermore, Trembling or shaking, cold, clammy hands, shaky voice, rapid heartbeat, sweating, blushing, dizziness, shortness of breath, intestinal pain, or forgetting something you know or were going to say are all symptoms of public speaking anxiety. Having Public Speaking Anxiety affect negatively on student learning process.

A study conducted by (Sugiyati et al., 2021), from their research found that Students' anxiousness had a negative effect on their performance in public speaking

class, causing them to forget their speech and disorganize their speech preparation. They also frequently interrupted their speeches and felt uncomfortable speaking in English in front of others.

There are a variety of factors that can trigger student speaking anxiety as well as the diction used on the utterances (Sardi et al., 2017). One of the factors is called the Affective aspect. The affective aspect is a factor related to feeling and emotion. Mental health is included in the affective aspect. (Afebri et al., 2019) also states having low motivation, lack of self-confidence, and feeling anxiety are included in affective factors. Anxiety plays a major contribution to student speaking performance.

There is numerous research conducted about Mental health and Student Speaking Performance. It affects student performance in a speaking activity. The student's ability to talk could be hindered by their anxiety (Rahman et al., 2022).

Most of the students refused when the educator requested them to perform speaking in front of the class in English. Although some of the students are voluntarily performing speaking English when the teacher asks (Sanjata et al., 2022). Some factors can make most students unwilling to speak English in the classroom. Therefore, the researchers intend to investigate the perception of students on how the factors influence their speaking performance. Furthermore, discovering which factors of Speaking anxiety affecting the most of 9th-grade students speaking performance in SMPN 30 Malang.

Method

The research used a descriptive qualitative study design to investigate the participants' perceptions of speaking anxiety. The research used a sampling technique in order to select a sample. The participants of this research are junior high school students in SMPN 30 Malang. More precisely, the ninth graders of SMPN 30 Malang that have learned English. Specifically, the total number of participants was 48 students. The Population from this research is the ninth graders students of SMPN 30 Malang. The reason why the researcher chooses the ninth graders students was because the student of the ninth grader were the most anxious when they are asking to perform speaking in English besides the seventh and eighth graders.

The researchers used a questionnaire as the instrument to collect data. The

questionnaire which been used in this research was originally created by HORWITZ et al., (1986). The researcher adopted and adjusted the question with the research question and student classroom setting. There are six negative items and four positive items in the questionnaire. The participants were given ten questions related to the student's anxiety in speaking class. This scale is used to identify someone's perception, response, or opinion. Five statements can be used as indicators to find the perception of the students namely strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, slightly agree, and neutral. The data on this research was based on the result of the questionnaire. Then, the data collected by hand was analyzed using the following measurement:

$$P = F/N \times 100\%$$

In which:

P: Percentage,
F: Frequency,
N: Number of sample
%: Constant Value

Results

The participants for this research are two classes from 9th Grader at SMPN 30 Malang, which have a total amount of 48 students. The researchers focused on two aspects which were used in the questionnaire as a method to collect the data. The aspects are: Speaking Apprehension and Test Anxiety. From the data analysis, there were 249 points for communication apprehension which had 81 points (32%) for positive statements and 43 points (17%) for negative statements.

While for the aspect of test anxiety, the total point was 250 points. Specifically, which had 87 points (34%) for positive statements and 47 points (18%) for negative statements. Furthermore, From the data analysis taken, between two aspects which are being examined in this article, the most influential factor which contributes to student speaking performance was Test Anxiety. While, in the second is Speaking apprehension.

Table 1: Students Responds regarding on
"Communication Apprehension and TestAnxiety"

Types	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
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Speaking Apprehension	81 (32%)	43 (17%)	125 (51%)
Test Anxiety	87 (34%)	47 (18%)	116 (42%)

The figure below shows that the most type of anxiety which is faced by the 9th grade students in SMPN 30 Malang is Test anxiety. This result is based on the respondent's answer on a questionnaire which is focusing on Factors affecting student speaking anxiety. A same condition happens in Mahmudi et al., (2021)'s research, the findings revealed three kinds of anxiety experienced by the participating student in his public speaking class such as trait anxiety, situational-specific anxiety, and state anxiety. The study also documented that the causes of speaking anxiety were communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

The question number one to five is for the speaking apprehension aspect. While, the question number 6 to ten is for Test Anxiety. The further explanation about the questions is below:

A. Speaking Apprehension:

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.
2. It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English Class.
3. I feel confident when I speak English in my English class
4. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers
5. It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in foreign language

B. Test Anxiety:

1. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.
2. I am usually at ease during my tests in my English class
3. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class
4. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course
5. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class

All of the questions which being listed is taken originally from the questionnaire created by HORWITZ et al., (1986). The questionnaire reflects three dimension or aspects. Speaking Apprehension, Test anxiety and Fear of negative evaluation.

Speaking Apprehension and Test anxiety are correlated between each other. Those aspects are in a same dimension regarding to Public Speaking Anxiety. And, both of the aspect can bring a determinant role to the student speaking performance. This questionnaire has been validated as a measurement to test student foreign language toward their public speaking anxiety level.

In addition, the questions listed above have a strong connection with the object of this research, which is speaking anxiety indeed (Mujahidah, 2015). The questions itself individually represent a random situation which can portray a specific situation related to the speaking anxiety encounter in every kind of learner. Especially, In Foreign language Classroom setting. Later, the responses of the respondents can provide extensive information on which situation the participants experienced the most between those of factors being examine. In the end, the researcher can conclude which factor influencing the most on student speaking performance.

Having a high level of anxiety can bring a significant effect to the student academic performance. Having anxiety before or during an exam brings a huge effect to student exam performance. A Study created by Hamza et al., (2022) addressed that having an anxiety reduction can bring motivation to the student (Thahir et al., 2020). Later, it can drive them to work hard and perform well in their subsequent tests.

Furthermore, Robinson et al., (2013) believed that when anxiety levels are high, distracting thoughts emerge that don't relate to the test and prevent students from focusing on the test. As a result, they could fail the test.

Discussion

The result of the study shows that most of the 9th grade students in SMPN 30 Malang have Speaking Anxiety. Speaking anxiety is caused by several factors such as, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, worry about the consequences of failing foreign language class, feeling difficulty and uncomfortable during tests, and lack of vocabulary. Test anxiety was the dominant anxiety faced by the 9th grade students in SMPN 30 Malang. This result was shown in the previous part of the research, which is viewed from the perspective on terms of total negative and positive response votes from the aspect of speaking apprehension and test anxiety. Test anxiety has more

negative respond than Speaking Apprehension. Test Anxiety has a number of 47 negative responds while, Speaking Apprehension has 43 Negative responds.

Afebri et al., (2019) concluded that students' speaking abilities can be impacted by a variety of factors, such as motivation, confidence, anxiety, listening skills, topical knowledge, and feedback during speaking activities. Then, HORWITZ et al., (1986) stated that there are three factors affecting student speaking performance, which are Speaking Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Negative evaluation.

The researcher found the factor which influences the most student speaking performance is Fear of speaking tests, which is shown in the result of the questionnaire. Some previous research shows a similar phenomenon as the finding found in this research. Mitha et al., (2018) discovered from 88 university students, 44% of them are having speaking anxiety. The most dominant factor which influenced their speaking performance was test anxiety.

Test anxiety can be triggered by a lot of factors. There is fear of failure, Lack of preparation, Poor test history, High pressure, Perfectionism. The main causes of exam anxiety were a heavy course load, a worry about failing the test and staying up late studying. Furthermore, Yusefzadeh et al., (2019) establish that it is believed that a variety of factors affect test anxiety. Students' perceptions of their knowledge and their inability to improve their learning have been examined as variables influencing student performance and stress levels.

One of the factors affecting student test anxiety is High pressure. In the questionnaire, the respondents have been asked about "I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class". From 49 Respondents, 11 respondents agreed with that statement. That suggests that some students are under stress as they get ready for their speaking test. Later, Fear of failure is another symptom found related to factors affecting student test anxiety. The respondents have been asked "I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class". There 19 respondents said they agree with the statement. This indicates nearly half the population of the sample was fearful of the result of their exam.

Beside all of the aspects which can trigger Test anxiety to a learner, test anxiety associated with psychological aspect. One of the psychological aspects is called

effective physiology. Pace-Schott et al., (2019) declared that a person's evaluation of their physiological condition, such as tightness in their muscles, tenseness in their body, a rapid heartbeat, anxiousness or even shaky hands and trembling voices. From having a rapid heartbeat, it can lead us to have a shaking or trembling hand and voice. Because, when our brain releases adrenaline, it speeds up our heart rate and results in sweating, trembling hands or voice, and parched lips. Trembling or shaking is one of the symptoms of someone who has anxiety. Especially, anxiety to speak.

This condition happens with the respondent of this research. The respondent asked about "I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class". 18 respondents said that they agree with the statement. This indicated, almost half of the population of this research experience nervousness when performing speaking. Particularly, when they are required to speak in front of the classroom.

The researcher found there are a lot of factors which can cause test anxiety to the student. Test anxiety itself can be brought up by numerous aspects. The factors found are Fear of failure, High pressure and Effective Physiology. Fear of Failure and High Pressure were the most dominant factor which contribute to the student test anxiety in this research.

Conclusion

The result of the study shows that the 9th grade student in SMPN 30 Malang have Speaking Anxiety. Speaking anxiety is caused by several factors Such as, lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, worry about the consequences of failing foreign language class, feeling difficulty and uncomfortable during tests, and lack of vocabulary. Test anxiety was the dominant type of speaking anxiety faced by the 9th grade students in SMPN 30 Malang. The most influence factor affecting the student speaking performance are High pressure and Fear of failure.

While learning heavily relies on one's cognitive ability, not so many psychological factors are considered to be the cause when dealing with challenges found in the classroom. Further research should take place to investigate other factors related to speaking anxiety and discover whether the level of anxiety the students experienced needs a treatment or not based on the level of their anxiety seen from psychological perspectives. From the level of the anxiety, it is hoped that students and teachers will

become more aware of mental health problems found in the classroom during the teaching and learning activities, not only in English speaking class. This is due to the importance of finding more effective solutions in order to overcome the challenges in language classroom setting.

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