An Analysis of Students' Anxiety Factors of EFL Students' Speech Production

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Abstract

English Foreign Learners (EFL) students are considered to master English when the students can speak English fluently which can be seen from their speech production. Nevertheless, becoming fluently competent is particularly difficult for foreign language learners as it is influenced by a number of factors. Among the several factors which affect foreign language learning especially speaking, anxiety emerges to be the crucial one that has a debilitating effect on the oral performances of students. This study was purposed to analyze speaking anxiety levels and factors of English Foreign Language students' anxiety in speech production. The data were gathered from qualitative research with random sampling conducted in the second semester consisting of 30 students taking the Speaking for Academic Communication class at Hamzanwadi University. A closed-ended questionnaire on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and semi-structured interviews were administered to the participants to explore their anxiety level and the factors of their anxiety in speech production. The results show severe anxiety levels which indicated that students are highly anxious when speaking English. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the factors that contributed to the students' speaking anxiety were shyness with the audience, fear of not being able to convey the message well, lack of preparation, low self-confidence, and low proficiency.

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety, speaking anxiety, speech production, anxiety factors*

1.   Introduction

Speaking is one of the English skills that must be mastered for English Foreign Learners. Tarigan (2009) states that someone who mastered a language intuitively was able to speak the language. Studying a language is not about how often someone is learning it but how often someone pronounces it. In other words, English Foreign Learners (EFL) students are considered to master English when the students can speak English fluently which can be seen

from their speech production. Nevertheless, Anandari (2015) states that performing spoken English in front of an audience is particularly difficult for EFL students as it is influenced by many factors.

Among the several factors that affect EFL students, especially speaking, anxiety appears to be a crucial factor that has a debilitating effect on the oral performance of students. Tanveer (2007) emphasize that feeling of anxiety, apprehension, and nervousness are commonly expressed by foreign language learners in learning to speak a foreign language in public. When such anxiety is expressed by students majoring in English Language Education, the stakes are higher since they are future teachers. In this profession, they are required to have the confidence to demonstrate their skills before an audience: their students. Therefore, anxiety can bring a great problem for this group of students.

Since anxiety has been considered a very important factor that affects the learning process, a great number of studies focusing on this research area has been undertaken since the 1970s. The major purpose of the study was to explore the causes of language anxiety. Genard (2015) stated that there are other factors associated with the learners' speaking anxiety such as self-consciousness in front of a large group, fear of preparing nervously, the concern that others are judging you, past failure, poor or insufficient preparation, comparing ourselves to others, etc.

Furthermore, Sjaifullah (2018) show the causes of students' anxiety may vary depending on the context where English is taught, the characteristic of the students, and the location where the study is conducted. In short, understanding the nature of this anxiety and the sources it springs from thoroughly should help both teachers and learners to gain more insight and find ways with which to deal with anxiety in the EFL classroom.

In contrast to the above condition, Anandari (2015) demonstrate that self-reflection helped the students deal with foreign language anxiety because it helped the students identify their strengths and weaknesses, conduct problem solving, and increase confidence. In speaking class, students needed to have a certain source that could help them evaluate their performances. For instance, using video recording as a means to help students conduct written self-reflection also provided fruitful and helpful insight into the students' effort to evaluate their performances.

From the discussion above, this study attempts to investigate how is the level of students' anxiety in speech production and what are the students' factors of EFL students' anxiety in speech production. This study was conducted in the second semester of the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Hamzanwadi University. The researcher gathered the data through FLCAS closed-ended questionnaire by Horwitz to obtain crucial information on the students' foreign language anxiety levels. Furthermore, an interview was conducted to know the students' anxiety factors of EFL speech production.

While the discussion in this study can be a reference to enrich knowledge in the related area. It can also be a reference for the teachers to determine the possible challenges that may appear in the speaking classroom, particularly in the EFL context.

2. Method

This present study aimed to find anxiety levels and factors of anxiety for the students in the speaking class. Since this is qualitative research, each problem category was discussed thoroughly which applied descriptive analysis to gain an understanding of the phenomena that happened in the speaking classroom. The study was carried out from March to July. It

was conducted in the second-semester students taking the Speaking for Academic Communication class of the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) in the academic year 2021-2022 at Hamzanwadi University. The University is located at Jalan TGKH. Abdul Madjid, Selong, Lombok Timur.

The subjects of this study were selected using a simple random sampling technique to get comprehensive data. There were four classes of Speaking for Academic Communication for the second-semester students of Hamzanwadi University, which consists of 125 students. The researcher took some students for each class which consisted of 30 student participants in the study.

The instrument used in this research were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was done before conducted the interview. An adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire by Horwitz in Anandari (2015) was distributed through a Google Form which was used to know students' foreign language anxiety levels. There are originally 33 statements in the FLCAS, but the researcher only used 16 statements that were suitable for the research, i.e., statements that focused on Speaking for Academic Communication. To know the classification of students' anxiety levels, the present researcher used Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (1959) with each item being scored on a scale of 0 (not present) to 4 (severe), with a total score range of 0-56.

Table 1

Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)

Score Range	Level of Anxiety
0-13	No anxiety
14-17	Mild anxiety
1-24	Moderate anxiety
>25	Severe anxiety

In order to identify the factor of students speaking anxiety, the researcher conducted some interviews with ELESP of second-semester students at Hamzanwadi University. Four students were chosen to be respondents whereas the researcher took one student for each class. The interview data were collected by tape-recorded with the subject's permission. The interview was last for 5 - 10 minutes for each participant. Questions were asked one by one and directly answered by the respondents. These questions totaled about 5 key questions, leading to the response of the anxiety and the factor that caused respondents' anxiety which focused on psychological indications when speaking in front of the class. The researcher took the semi-structured question in interview the participants. Semi-structured questions are conducted so that the researcher can dig deeper into information about the topic. The purpose of this technique was to know the student's anxiety factors of EFL speech production in the second semester of Speaking for Academic Communication students.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data according to Miles and Huberman (2018) in three steps: reduction, display, and conclusion/verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions. As data collection proceeds, the researcher transcript the data from audio to written text. Next, both audio recorded and text were read and listened to familiarize the data. Then, made coding/focusing

data that focused on the variable of the study. Furthermore, the theme suitable to the concept of the study was made by adding some sentences/phrases that have the same meaning.

The second major flow of analysis activity was data display. Generally, a display is an organized, compressed, and assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. The researcher displayed the data and make an interpretation of the data by adding verbatim arguments to support the statements. Last, a conclusion/verification of the data was conducted to get the result about students' anxiety factors in speech production.

The third stream of analysis activity was conclusion drawing and verification. From the start of data collection, the qualitative analyst began to decide what things mean was noted regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions. Conclusions were also verified as the analyst proceeds, and verification may be as a brief as fleeting second thought crossing the analyst's mind during writing, with a short excursion back to the field notes, or it may be through an elaborate with lengthy argumentation and review among colleagues to develop "intersubjective consensus" or with extensive efforts to replicate a finding in another data set.

In checking the validity of data, verification of data was required so that the results can be accounted for accuracy. The researcher used data triangulation in this research to verify the collected data from the interview with the participants to know their anxiety factors in speech production. Hales (2010), the use of data triangulation is already used in many sectors to strengthen the conclusions of research findings and to reduce the risk of false interpretation.

The certain truth informant through various methods and sources of data acquisition was a source of data in this research. Thus, triangulation of data was needed because the researcher gathered several sources of data in the same study with the researcher as data checking from other sources and previous studies so that the researcher got the truth.

3. Discussion

What is the level of students' anxiety in speech production?

In order to know foreign language anxiety levels in speech production, the researcher distributed a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (1959) in order to comprehend the students' foreign language anxiety. The results were shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Results of Anxiety Level

No.	Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1.	I never feel quite sure of myself when l am speaking English in Speaking for Academic Communication class.	13,3	46,7	23,3	13,3	3,3
2.	I don't worry about making mistakes in speaking English in Speaking for Academic Communication class.	16,7	36,7	13,3	26,7	6,7
3.	I tremble when l know that l am going to be called on to speak in English.	13,3	56,7	20	6,7	6,7
4.	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than l am.	26,7	46,7	16,7	10	0
5.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in Speaking for Academic Communication class.	20	46,7	30	3,3	0
6.	I worry about the consequences of failing my Speaking for Academic Communication class.	10	50	20	16,7	3,3
7.	In Speaking for Academic Communication class, I can get so nervous, I forget things I know.	13,3	53,3	23,3	10	3,3
8.	I would not be nervous speaking in English with native speakers.	0	43,3	26,7	23,3	6,7
9.	Even if I am well prepared for Speaking for Academic Communication class, I feel anxious about it.	10	50	16,7	23,3	0

10.	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in Speaking for Academic Communication class.	16,7	63,3	16,7	3,3	3,3
11.	I don't feel pressured to prepare very well for the Speaking for Academic Communication class.	13,3	53,3	33,3	0	0
12.	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	10	50	23,3	16,7	0
13.	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in Speaking for Academic Communication class.	3,3	50	33,3	13,3	0
14.	When I'm on my way to Speaking for Academic Communication class, I feel sure and relaxed.	6,7	16,7	36,7	43,3	0
15.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the lecturer says.	10	50	23,3	16,7	0
16.	I get nervous when the lecturer asks questions that I haven't prepared in advance.	10	56,7	20	13,3	0

Referring to the data questionnaire results, it was clear that there was indeed anxiety among the students, especially in the area of having to speak in English in public Speaking for Academic Communication because 14 statements out of 16 (more than 50% of the statements) are 50% and over. After calculating the mean, it was figured out that the mean was 39. The present researcher found that students in the Speaking for Academic Communication class in the second semester of Hamzanwadi University were severe anxiety levels.

It was a type of social anxiety disorder which was differed from normal experiences of anxiety, nervousness, or fear in the sense feelings are excessive and debilitating. Stein (2008) social anxiety disorder is the most common anxiety disorder. According to Pull (2012), symptoms of public speaking anxiety are the same as those that occur for social anxiety disorder, but they only happen in the context of speaking in public. It felt as though students had lost control of their body that was make public speaking very hard to do and may cause students to avoid situations in which they may have to speak in public.

In addition, it could be said that the existence of speaking anxiety can affect the fluency of a learner's speech and learning in general.

What are the students' factors of EFL students' anxiety in speech production?

To connect the anxiety level with anxiety factors in speaking class, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview. In this semi-structured interview, four students were chosen to be respondents whereas the researcher took one student for each class. Questions were asked one by one and directly answered by the respondents. These questions totaled about 5 key questions, leading to the response of the anxiety and the factor that caused respondents' anxiety during speaking in front of the class. The results were shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Factors Contributing to Anxiety

Interviewee	Participant Answers/Factors Contribute to Anxiety
1	Nervous, called by lecturer, fear, anxious, unconfidently, fear of making mistakes, tremors, shocked, unprepared topics, size of the audience, blank of forgetting the material, shyness.
2	Fears, nervousness, incorrect grammar, afraid people do not understand, anxious, lecturer rarely asks us to train the capability of speaking, lack of vocabulary and knowledge, can not speak in front of many people, shyness and scared of being laughed at by the audiences.
3	Called by the lecturer, can not speak, cold sweaty, afraid, nervous, forget my memorization, lack of vocabulary, difficult to speak in English, shy.
4	Unconfidently, anxious and afraid, limited practice in speaking, nervous, weaknesses in listening and limited vocabulary, blaming myself, don't understand what the lecturer said.

Based on Table 3, it shows that the most salient factors of anxiety experienced by the students in speaking classrooms deal with cognitive and affective factors which include shyness with the audience, fear of not being able to convey the message, lack of preparation, low proficiency, and low self-confidence. One student said shyness was a big factor that influenced students' ability to control their body movements, facial expressions, and hand gestures. Audience size also has a strong impact on a student's performance and level of nervousness as the student may feel it will be difficult to handle the audience's interest, especially when there is a very big audience.

The second deal with the fear of not being able to convey the message as the cause of high speaking anxiety that made students speak very little when the lecturer called to speak in front of the classroom, as they could not think of anything to say because of fear of making mistakes. They became frightened of fears and unwilling to participate in the speaking classroom. The situations make speaking anxiety connected to a lack of preparation. Lack of preparation makes students feel unconfident with themselves. The participants responded that they feel anxious when the lecturer called to speak in front of the classroom without preparation. They had prepared and practiced some times before their performance.

Besides, students with low proficiency are afraid of making mistakes. They usually underestimate their linguistic knowledge and they were not sure of their capabilities when speaking. Others, students with low self-confidence always feel that the other students are smarter than him/ her. Again, they also spoke of the fear of being ridiculed by peers so they became anxious. Students worry too much that the audience will not comprehend their speech and be laughed at. They thought that they felt anxious because only had limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

In addition, such factors deal with certain areas which covered shyness with the audience, fear of not being able to convey the message, lack of preparation, low proficiency, and low self-confidence.

3.1. Shyness with audience

The common factor that could be obtained was shyness. Shyness/shamefulness in this case was related to the students' discomfort when speaking in front of an audience, although the audience was their classmates. Moreover, audience size also has a strong impact on a student's performance and level of nervousness as the student may feel it will be difficult to handle the audience interest, especially when there is a very big audience. Students felt afraid to speak in front of many people. They were afraid of making mistakes and laughed at by other students.

One student described that he felt shocked and awkward when called to speak while standing in front of his friends because he was not accustomed to speaking in public. Horwitz in Anandari (2015) distinctively stated that the inability to control stage fright and shyness due to their existence could create unwanted chaos in the speaking performance.

3.2. Fear of not being able to convey the message well

Based on the result of the FLCAS questionnaire and interview section, it was obvious that students were already anxious about the fact that they had to speak in front of the class individually. Although they had been classmates since the first semester, they had anxiety about what was to come in the class. Thus, it was evident that they experienced foreign language anxiety.

The major cause that contributed to the fear of not being able to convey a clear message was the students' perception of their performance. Some students described that they felt that the speech content was not clear enough. Although they had to practice several times before their performance, they still felt unconfident with themselves, fearing that the audience would not comprehend their speeches. These conditions heightened the students' foreign anxiety level. This result was the exact result that Horwitz in Anandari (2015) found in their initial research on FLA one of the causes of FLA was fear of negative feedback from the listeners.

3.3. Lack of preparation

Lack of preparation was also a factor that contribute to the student's anxiety. They experienced the same thing, i.e. they would feel anxious whenever they were asked to speak because they felt that they were unprepared. They had prepared and practiced a number of times before their performance. Few admitted that they usually get very anxious when they did not prepare enough for tests or speaking practice. Others even had prepared, but they still felt worried and afraid about their performance. One blamed himself for getting so worried because he was studying less.

A similar result was found by Marwan (2007) that lack of preparation was the major contributor to students' anxiety. In addition, Lizuka (2010) also found that participating in class without enough preparation often leads to anxiety.

3.4. Low self-confidence and low-proficiency

Low self-confidence and low proficiency are the other backgrounds of students speaking anxiety in this case in speaking. The student with low self-confidence always feels that the other students are smarter than him/ her, and has low proficiency for instance grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students still felt insecure about their English competence and were afraid of making mistakes. The students thought that as English learners, they must speak English flawlessly without any missing pronunciation or grammatical.

These conditions were also evident not only in this class but also in other Asian countries. In China, FLA resulted from a lack of vocabulary, no confidence in him/herself, and helplessness (Liu, 2007). Another result revealed that FLA existed among Indonesian students due to insufficient preparation, not enough confidence, and fear of not passing the class (Marwan, 2008).

4. Conclusion

Referring to the result of 16 statements instrument of FLCAS by Horwitz that given to 30 students of ELESP at Hamzanwadi University in the academic year 2021-2022 as the participants proved that the students were severe anxiety which was indicated a high level of speaking anxiety which could be seen from the mean score in anxiety rating scale that was 39,56. Severe anxiety was a type of social anxiety disorder which was differed from normal experiences of anxiety, nervousness, or fear in the sense feelings are excessive and debilitating.

From the interview result, the factors that were affecting students speaking anxiety in speech production were shyness with the audience, fear of not being able to convey the message, lack of preparation, low proficiency, and low self-confidence. Students felt afraid to speak in front of many people. They were afraid of making mistakes and laughed at by other students. The major cause that contributed to the fear of not being able to convey a clear message was the students' perception of their performance. Some students described that they felt that the speech content was not clear enough. Lack of preparation was also a factor that contribute to the student's anxiety. They experienced the same thing, i.e. they would feel anxious whenever they were asked to speak because they felt that they were unprepared. Moreover, the student with low self-confidence always feels that the other students are smarter than him/ her, and has low proficiency for instance grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Students still felt insecure about their English competence and were afraid of making mistakes.

In addition, it has known that anxiety is a real problem faced by English Students. There are a number of strategies that you can use to cope with speech anxiety and become better at public speaking in general. Before the students are prepared to speak in front of the whole class, the lecturer could familiarize the students with actively speaking in everyday life, and may use pairing methods, or in small groups. When students have been accustomed to speaking in English with their friends, then speaking in front of the class is not a big problem for them, and the anxiety can be minimalized.

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