# INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE IN OVERCOMING SPEAKING ANXIETY THROUGH SELF-TALK STRATEGY

## **A THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN 2024

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#### ABSTRAK

Kemampuan berbicara memainkan peran penting dalam konteks pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing (EFL), namun banyak pembelajar EFL menghadapi tantangan dalam berbicara, terutama kecemasan berbicara. Kecemasan ini merupakan hambatan umum dalam pembelajaran EFL. Hal ini menekankan perlunya strategi yang efektif. Salah satu strategi tersebut adalah self-talk, yang didefinisikan sebagai bentuk dialog internal atau komunikasi dengan diri sendiri, yang melibatkan pernyataan afirmatif untuk mengelola pikiran negatif dan meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dalam berbicara. Peneliti bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi penggunaan strategi self-talk dalam mengatasi kecemasan berbicara. Penelitian ini akan menggunakan pendekatan naratif, dengan wawancara semi-terstruktur dan dokumentasi. Studi ini akan dilaksanakan di sebuah universitas di Pekalongan, Jawa Tengah, melibatkan dua mahasiswa yang secara aktif menggunakan self-talk sebagai strategi kognitif. Analisis tematik akan digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil penelitian ini akan membantu mahasiswa dalam mengatasi kecemasan berbicara melalui penerapan strategi self-talk.

Keyword: Speaking Anxiety, Self-Talk Strategy, Student Experience



## ABSTRACT

Speaking skill plays an important role within the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) but many EFL learners face challenges in speaking, particularly speaking anxiety. This anxiety is a common obstacle in EFL learning. It emphasizes a need for effective strategies. One such strategy is selftalk, defined as a form of internal dialogue or communication with oneself, involving affirmative statements to manage negative thoughts and boost confidence in speaking. The researcher aims to explore the use of the self-talk strategy in overcoming speaking anxiety. The research will adopt a narrative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews and documentation. The study will be conducted at a University in Pekalongan, Central Java, involves two students actively employing self-talk as a cognitive strategy. Thematic analysis will be employed to analyze the data. The result of this study will help college students in overcoming speaking anxiety through the implementation of the self-talk strategy.

Keyword: Speaking Anxiety, Self-Talk Strategy, Student Experience



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#### PREFACE

Alhamdulillah, all praise be to Allah who has allowed me to complete this thesis. Hopefully this thesis can provide benefits for all readers. This thesis focuses on students' experience in overcoming speaking anxiety through self-talk strategy in English education department in university in Pekalongan. The researcher was interested in choosing this topic because there are many English education students that often experience speaking anxiety and the researcher find that self-talk can be a learning strategy.

The reasercher try to get deeper insight related to self-talk strategy used by student. For All the readers if you find mistakes in my thesis it might be from the writing accurateness, unclear sources of quotes or others, do not be doubt to notice me. Thank you.



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#### **CHAPTER I**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Speaking skill is an important aspect of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Effective communication in English involves not only understanding the language but also being able to express oneself clearly and confidently. There are four fundamental skills in the process of English as a foreign language (EFL) learning, i.e speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these skills, the speaking skill plays an important role due to it is used in effective communication. Communication is a necessity because humans cannot survive without interaction; this is inherent in the existence of humans as social beings (Akhter et al., 2020).

Speaking is an essential skill that students should master because it requires oral communication such as, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension (Brown 2004). According to Harmer (2001), grammar refers to the sentence and tenses, vocabulary can be described as the words used in language covering content word and function word, pronunciation refers to sentences structure and tenses, vocabulary can be described as the words used in language covering content word and function word, pronunciation refers to the way of a person produces the sound of the word meaningfully and accurately to be understood in communication, fluency could be described as the capability to speak fluently and accurately, and the last is comprehension refers to the speakers' understanding about what they are saying to the listener. Meanwhile, the most problem faced by EFL students is they not fluent in English. It could be irritating at the point when students are supposed to speak in a foreign language before the fluency is accomplished. Thornbury (2005) says that absence of vocabularies, grammatical error, and fear of mistakes are a few aspects that can add to failing in speaking and making an intense feeling of tension with regards to speaking.

Aside from linguistic competence, students also have difficulty relating to their psychological traits, such as lack of confidence, fear, and Anxiety (Woodrow, 2006). It will be a problem when anxiety is experienced by students especially in English education department because they are prospective English teachers, where their skills and confidence are needed in teaching. Students speaking anxiety tend to be triggered by some factors. In many cases, students may have a tension response which blocks their capacity to perform effectively in a foreign language class. When a student felt anxious to speak it could influence their speaking performance.

Anxiety makes students nervous and scared, which can cause poor oral performance. One of factors which greatly correlates with anxiety, is self-confidence. With regard to speaking anxiety issues, positive self-talk have suggested that it can reduce anxiety, increase effort, and enhance self-confidence (Finn, 1985). Positive self-talk can greatly improve confidence, enhance effort and increase intensity by creating a positive mood. Intuitively, it makes sense that self-talk can affect learners' performance.

Self-talk can help students to deliver their thinking and feeling easy because self-talk gave good contribution for the students to explore their knowledge and makes the students was the creative one. Self-talk can be defined as a dialogue or communicating with oneself. According to Purba & Sihombing, (2018), self-talk is characterized as the utilization of language or internal thoughts within an individual's intrapersonal communication framework. They propose a conceptualization of intrapersonal communication where in it operates within a model comprising a sender, a receiver, and a feedback loop, illustrating its occurrence within the individual's mind. Self-talk may serve as a practical and accessible strategy to alleviate anxiety. By engaging in positive and affirming self-talk, individuals may be able to reframe negative thoughts, boost self-confidence, and manage anxious feelings associated with speaking.

Several previous studies discussed self-talk and its benefits in addressing mental issues, indicating that self-talk can influence and enhance self-confidence. Therefore, the researcher will attempt to explore the use of the self-talk strategy to overcome speaking anxiety by investigating the experiences of students who engage in self-talk. The researcher selects this title due to his interest in self-talk. The result of this study will help college students to overcome speaking anxiety through self-talk strategy.

#### **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background description above, it raises a question to be investigated in this research, "how do students cope with speaking anxiety through self-talk strategy?" The answer to the investigational question is expected to guide students in overcoming speaking anxiety.

## **1.3 Limitation of the Problem**

The scope of this study focuses on students' personal experiences, feelings, and reflections on using self-talk to manage speaking anxiety. The study will contribute to understanding how self-talk can be an effective tool for students struggling with speaking anxiety.

### **1.4 Operational Definition**

Based on the thesis title, the researcher provides some definitions as follows:

- 1. Speaking Anxiety: A type of shyness characterized by fear about communicating with people (Elmenfi, 2016)
- 2. Self-talk: The act of talking to oneself, either out loud or as a little voice inside one's head (Theodorakis et al., 2000)
- 3. Self-talk strategy: Making positive statements to help oneself get through challenging tasks (Hermansyah, 2021)
- 4. Experince: The way of thinking used to understand how people interact with surrounding environment (Vygotsky, 2001)

## 1.5 Aim of the Study

The research aims to explore the impact of employing self-talk as a strategy in overcoming speaking anxiety.

## **1.6 Significance Study**

- 1. **Theoretical use**: This study will support theory that using self-talk can reduce speaking anxiety and will give information about the benefit when we use self-talk strategy.
- 2. **Empirical use**: This study will provide insight into self-talk can be a learning strategy of speaking.
- 3. **Practical use**: This study will provide information to readers about how students cope with speaking anxiety and the implementation of self-talk strategy in speaking.

#### **CHAPTER V**

### CONCLUSION

#### **5.1** Conclusion

The results and discussion show that students often experience variety types of speaking anxiety such as trait anxiety, generalized context, personal group and state anxiety. Therefore, student use the self-talk strategy to cope with these anxiety. There are four categories of self-talk student use such as follows:

1. Self-reinforcement

Self-reinforcement allows students to use positive affirmations to boost their confidence and motivate themselves before and during speaking tasks, reinforcing their efforts and progress.

2. Self-management

Self-management enables students to regulate their emotions and anxiety by employing calming, constructive self-talk, helping them stay focused and composed in high-pressure situations.

3. Self-criticism

Self-criticism can initially contribute to heightened anxiety, when used constructively, it can foster personal growth by helping students recognize areas for improvement without damaging their self-esteem.

4. Social assessment

Social assessment assists students in moderating their perceptions of external judgments, reducing the fear of negative evaluations by reframing

how they anticipate their audience's reactions. Collectively, these strategies provide students with practical, cognitive tools to better manage and reduce speaking anxiety, fostering a more positive and confident approach to public speaking.

#### **5.2 Recommendation**

The researcher understands that this study is still far from perfect. Because this study only included two participants, it can be expected that this research would give insight into EFL students' experience while using self-talk strategy to overcoming speaking anxiety. This research might be a starting point for additional studies from a different perspective, providing new insights into the same background.



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