

**STUDENTS' STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN SPEAKING ENGLISH: CAUSES
AND STRATEGIES**

A THESIS

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



By :

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING
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K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN
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Dengan ini mohon agar skripsi tersebut segera dimunaqosahkan.

Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatian bapak/Ibu, saya sampaikan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr.Wb.

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“This world is cruel but I still love you”
(Shingeki no Kyojin)

“If your start line slower than others, give your all-out
effort to get you to the finish line”
(Author)

ABSTRAK

Studi ini menginvestigasi masalah yang kerap muncul di pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa asing yakni kecemasan berbicara yang mana menimbulkan komunikasi berjalan tidak afdal. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi penyebab dan strategi siswa dalam menghadapi kecemasan saat berbicara bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui wawancara langsung. Dalam penelitian ini data di analisis menggunakan analisis tematik milik Braun and Clark (2006). Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 2 mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris, UIN Pekalongan. Studi ini secara teoritis berkontribusi pada teori Horwitz and Kondo & Ling, yang mana mencakup penyebab kecemasan siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris serta strategi apa yang digunakan untuk mengatasinya. Selanjutnya, setelah mengidentifikasi hasil wawancara, peneliti menemukan enam faktor penyebab kecemasan siswa yaitu kurangnya kemampuan bahasa Inggris, ketakutan salah tafsir, rasa rendah diri, takut akan evaluasi negatif, kekhawatiran pada saat test, dan kurangnya persiapan. Peneliti juga menarik beberapa solusi yang bisa digunakan untuk mengurangi kecemasan siswa; melakukan persiapan, relaksasi, berpikiran positif, menggerakkan fisik, audience depreciation, dan pasrah.

Kata kunci: kemampuan berbicara, kecemasan berbicara, bahasa Inggris, strategi siswa

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the problem that often arises in learning English as a foreign language, namely speaking anxiety, which causes unsuccessful communication. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the causes and strategies of students in dealing with anxiety when speaking English. This study uses a qualitative method. The research data was collected through direct interviews. In this study, data were analyzed using Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis. The participants of this study were 2 students majoring in English, UIN Pekalongan. This study theoretically contributes to Horwitz and Kondo & Yang's theory, which include the causes of students' anxiety in speaking English and what strategies are used to overcome them. Furthermore, after identifying the results of the interviews, the researcher found six factors causing students' anxiety, namely lack of English skills, fear of misinterpretation, fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem, anxiety during tests, and lack of preparation. Researchers also draw several solutions that can be used to reduce student anxiety such as doing preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, physical movement, audience depreciation, and resignation.

Keywords: *speaking skill, speaking anxiety, English language, students' strategies*

PREFACE

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The Writer

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The ability to speak English well is a goal for every second or foreign language student. Because in learning a language, speaking skills become skills that students must have. It allows students to communicate and express thoughts and feelings effectively. To develop effective communication, students must incorporate speaking skills because it is one of the main productive skills besides from writing. While, reading and listening are classified as receptive skills (Al-Eiadeh et al., 2016). Thus, speaking skills are very principal because they are needed to communicate well in this global world. This applies to essentially any language, English is no exception.

The case in Indonesia, English is not the dominant language, but English is the main foreign language that being learned. English is the first foreign language taught as a compulsory subject in secondary and higher education in Indonesia (Kusuma, 2018). However, there are Indonesian students who still find it difficult in speaking English language. Burhanuddin et al. (2021) found that 83% Indonesian students experienced fluency and accuracy difficulties in speaking English. Other than fluency and accuracy issues in speaking English, there is an anxiety problem that affect performance in speaking English. According to Horwitz et al. (1986)

difficulty in speaking in class is probably the most frequently cited concern of the anxious foreign language students seeking help. There are many factors cause students anxiety in speaking English. Suparlan (2021) on his research showed that lack of self-confidence, fear of being less competent than other students, embarrassment, poor preparation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, fear of speaking in English, fear of teachers' outcome, the habit of using English and language tests are factors are contributing to students' speaking anxiety.

To overcome the issues above, every student must have any ways to be able achieve their goal in speaking English effectively. For this reason, a strategy is needed so that students no longer experience speaking anxiety when speaking in English. Students can reduce their speaking anxiety with practicing English words for a better pronunciation, practice speaking in front of mirror to encourage students to speak in front of their peers, and having a positive outlook can help students when their teachers (Anita, 2021). To determine the goals of speaking English fluently it is very important to understand what are its current situation and the causes anxiety that students would have. Through successfully applying strategies learners can realize its way to minimalize their anxiety.

The researcher chose this topic because many studies have investigated anxiety but this study focuses on some university students in Central Java's experience with the causes of their anxiety and explores their strategies for overcoming speaking' anxiety. Therefore, this study aims to

find out how undergraduate students use any strategies to overcome anxiety in their English speaking so that this study filled the gap. By conducting the research, this research aims to enrich knowledge and also to add empirical data.

1.2 Formulating the Problem

This study provides two research questions as follows:

1. What are the causes of university students' anxiety in speaking English?
2. What are university students' strategies used to overcome their anxiety in speaking English?

1.3 Operational Definitions

1. **Speaking:** is the act of conveying thoughts or information to others verbally, it does not only produce sound but also uses gestures, facial expressions, and the entire body movement; and its function is for communication (Razaq et al., 2022).
2. **Anxiety:** is an uncontrollable, diffuse, unpleasant, and persistent state of negative affect, typified by apprehensive anticipation regarding unpredictable and unavoidable future danger, its physiological symptoms are tension and a continuous state of elevated alertness (O'Neill & Sorochan, 2014).
3. **Speaking anxiety:** refer to a dread of verbally expressing oneself, which is identified by physiological indications including sweating,

tension, and increased pulse (Basic, 2011).

4. **Strategy:** is a plan of action used to develop goals and objectives, as well as the methods to achieve these goals and objectives (Athapaththu, 2016).

1.4 Aims of the Study

The objectives of this study are listed as follows:

1. To reveal the causes of students' English speaking anxiety at the university level.
2. To describe students' strategies to overcome their English speaking anxiety at the university level.

1.5 Significances of the Study

This study provides some insight as follows:

1. **Theoretical use:** This study aims to construct Kondo & Ling's theory strategies for coping with English speaking' anxiety in learning a language.
2. **Empirical use:** This study presents seven strategies that university students used when they feel anxiety in speaking English such as preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, physical movement, peer seeking, audience depreciation, and resignation. Meanwhile, in the previous study by Horwitz et al. (1986), there were five strategies to overcome foreign language anxiety in speaking in the classroom such as

preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation.

3. **Practical use:** This study provides useful information and hopefully the readers can know and understand the causes of the students' speaking anxiety and also can help the students to reduce anxiety.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Findings

Based on the analyses and discussions in the previous section, it can be concluded that English speaking anxiety occurred which was provoked by several factors. Addedly, it is clear that some of the English learners who took part in this study experienced anxiety in their English speaking and they used different strategies to cope with anxiety in speaking English. Therefore, in this study reports two important data themes which include the causes of students' anxiety in speaking English and what strategies are used to overcome them.

A. The causes of speaking anxiety

First, low English proficiency was the main cause provoked anxiety because its difficulty for students to speak English fluently. This factor includes students' inability to understand grammar and students' lack of vocabulary. Second, communication apprehension also meant fear of misinterpretation. Third, fear of negative evaluation which contained students' fear of making mistakes, fear of being humiliated, and fear of being judged. Fourth, lack of confidence was factor related to students' low esteem about themselves. Fifth, lack of preparation was common cause of anxiety because students did not prepare well in their performance in speaking English. Last, test anxiety which means fear of failure that come upon students when they faced exam/test.

Among those several causes of students' anxiety in speaking English, it can be concluded that low English proficiency and fear of negative evaluation are crucial factors that caused student's speaking anxiety from both participants' experience.

B. Strategies to overcome English speaking anxiety

First strategy is preparation, where it can be students studied hard, take small note, open google translate, memorize the vocabulary and practice pronunciation before their performance. Second, relaxation is the strategy that its purpose to make their body more relax so that they less feel anxiety. Third, the next strategy is positive thinking. This strategy was intended to distract students from unnecessary thoughts that may happen at the time of speaking. Fourth, physical movement becomes the strategy they used when they speak English. This strategy can be indicated as an efficient strategy because it allows students naturally do what they want with their body so that the anxiety they felt is lessen. Fifth, audience depreciation is common way for some students to made them feel more comfortable to be able speak in front of audience. Sixth, the next strategy is peer seeking. In this case students prefer to choose their friends that are equally for them in the level of intelligence. Last, the seventh strategy is resignation. This is the final strategy that students used when they really cannot understand and know what will they do because of the high anxiety they felt.

5.2 Recommendation

Although the researcher has provided revealing data in this study about causes and coping strategies for English speaking anxiety. It is that in this study, the researcher did not explore more about strategies to overcome anxiety in speaking English that seen from teacher's perspective. Furthermore, this study covered only two samples of English education department university students. It did not include the learners of each year students in the university so it still has not covered various background to more have a valid data for this study.

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