

THE TECHNIQUES OF OVERCOMING ANXIETY DURING SPEAKING

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Abstract

This research explains students' techniques in overcoming anxiety during speaking. It applied descriptive qualitative method. In collecting data, the researchers used questionnaire and interview. There were three significant aspects of the data analysis; data reduction, data display, and data verification. The result of this research shows that students implement fifteen techniques to overcome anxiety during speaking; 1) have good preparation; 2) memorize unfamiliar vocabulary; 3) practice with friends; 4) practice in front of mirror; 5) do eye contact with audience; 6) stay positive; 7) keep calm and relaxed; 8) holding object; 9) take a note or concept; 10) interact to the audience; 11) use simple words; 12) use code-mixing; 13) speak loud and clear; 14) use gesture; and 15) look at the other object around the audience.

Keywords: Technique, Overcoming, Anxiety, Speaking

BACKGROUND

People always interact and communicate with one another as social human beings. The first way to do the interaction is by speaking. In this case, people distribute their ideas, feelings, opinions, and information in their minds in spoken language. Speaking is a verbal process of communication to interact with others in the social community. Using speaking to communicate is good to avoid misunderstanding.

Speaking is an effort to develop words orally. It is a form of communication to construct meaning that involves producing, receiving, and processing information that occurs between speaker and listener. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) state, that speaking is one of the most essential skills to be expanded and strengthened as means of effective communication. According to Nuraini (2016), speaking is an interactive process of delivering words from someone to an interlocutor by using verbal language. It is the way people interact and socialize

with others by using spoken language. It becomes one of English language skills that English students should master. Corresponding to this, Rao, (2019) points out that speaking is the most fundamental skill for everyone who wants to learn English to enhance their career, improve business, build confidence, attend an interview, and so on because having good oral communication is the passport to get better employment opportunities. However, some English students feel anxious to express their ideas orally in English. Concerning this, Sari (2017) points out that anxiety has been the most prominent factor influencing students not to speak English in front of their friends in the classroom. When students feel anxious, they will not be able to convey their idea properly due to anxiety can cause nervousness, trembling, and even fear.

Speaking anxiety is always faced by learners in learning foreign languages, it contains the feeling of pressure, worry, and nervousness. Speaking anxiety can be

happened because of self-perceptions, beliefs, impressions, and behaviors towards the usage of a foreign language. It defines someone's fear toward unpredictable things in the future rather than in the present situation. During the anxious feeling, someone tends to create negative thoughts in their mind, and also predicts negative outcomes that might be happened when they speak English. On the other hand, anxiety constructs uncomfortable communication due to students who feel anxious will not speak clearly or even cannot deliver their idea and feelings. Some of common symptoms when we feel anxious during speaking are sweating, shaking, quick heartbeat, squeaky voice and butterflies in the stomachache. According to Asysyfa et al (2019), speaking anxiety has a crucial influence on students' self-confidence since it frequently makes students experience failure when unable to deliver their idea orally. As a result, students have low confidence and cannot understand explanations from the teacher.

Anxiety affects learners' speaking effort and performance. Anxious learners will not think and speak clearly because they have to struggle to cope with the anxiety that makes them worry and distracts their learning process. Commensurate to this, Aguila and Harjanto (2016) point out that there are five dimensions of speaking competence that have effects on speaking performance due to anxiety: 1) Vocabularies and expressions; learners feel unconfident to produce words because of lack of a vocabulary and uncertainty of the correct expressions. 2) Grammar; learners can use a variety of grammar structures however they still commit some errors. 3) Communicative Ability; speaking with hesitations and pauses because of disorganizing flow of thoughts. 4) Interactive Ability; in general, learners can communicate and respond appropriately although some others are having difficulty in this aspect. 5) Pronunciation and intonation; learners generally have good

voice quality; however, some others would speak at low volume and ask for clarifications about the correct pronunciation.

Anxiety is defined as someone's fear of facing something that can be a serious problem for them because it contains the uneasiness of feeling towards an unpredictable result of a particular attempt. It has some factors that are responsible for causing anxiety Daud et al (2019) state that there are three main factors causing speaking anxiety: (a) social factor, which shows the way participants react to people's responses during speaking activity that contains the fear of making mistakes and under pressure dealing with people, (b) linguistic factor, it is happened because of grammatical lexical, pronunciation issues and lack of English ability, (c) individual factor, it refers to personal issues experienced by particular participants with their parents, friends or teachers.

Most of students are anxious when they speak in front of their friends. However, it will not be a big deal if they know the techniques to face their anxiety. Generally, students will conquer anxiety by having good preparation in advance for their speech. Besides, practicing frequently can reduce the feeling of anxiety because the more students practice, the better their understanding will be. Moreover, making eye contact is also crucial to connect to the audience. It is hard and uncomfortable at first, however, it can invent a good relationship between students and audiences. It also can encourage students' confidence. Bogodad et al. (2021) state that there are three factors contributed to students' anxiety; factors from teacher (threatening acts, incomprehensible input, and pressure), factor come from students (lack of knowledge, fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem, and perfection of speech) and factors come from environment (non-intensive English school and unsupportive classmate).

Based on preliminary observation, the researcher found that most of the eighth-semester students of English Education Study Program feel anxious to speak English despite they had a lot of vocabulary. When the researchers give them a topic discussion, they can deliver opinions in English even though they speak ungrammatically and make mispronunciations. Some of them also speak in an overly low-pitched voice, tend to pause many times, and even laugh for no reason. Furthermore, students have passed all levels of speaking subjects and mostly they got a B as a standard score and an A as an excellent score.

Therefore, the researchers are interested in figuring out the students' techniques of overcoming anxiety during speaking.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

This descriptive qualitative research is aimed at discovering the techniques of the eighth semester English Tadris students of UIN Datokarama Palu to overcome anxiety during speaking. The researchers choose descriptive qualitative because this research is a study case to discover the techniques in overcoming anxiety. According to Nassaji (2015) states that descriptive qualitative research is a method used to describe the phenomenon and its characteristics to acquire a deeper understanding of individual subjects as well as their perspectives, opinions and attitudes.

This research used purposive sampling technique because there were three parallel classes but the researchers found and considered one dominant class which was TBI 1 due to the students had passed all speaking subjects with good marks but still felt anxious when they spoke English, nevertheless, they could get it through and overcame their anxiety.

In this research, the researchers used two instruments. They were questionnaire items and interview guides which the questionnaire items for the students and the

interview for the lecturers. There were six open-ended questions for the students and three open-ended questions for the lecturers. According to Hyman and Sierra (2016), "Open-ended questions offer respondents an opportunity to provide a wide range of answers because some of these answers will be unexpected, they will suggest follow-up questions in person-to-person interviews".

The questions in the questionnaire items are listed as follow:

1. What does anxiety mean to you in speaking?
2. What are things that make you feel anxious the most during speaking?
3. How do you get ready before speaking?
4. Do you exercise frequently before speaking? What do you do?
5. Do you look towards audience thoroughly when you speak? Why?
6. How do you overcome your anxiety during speaking?

The questions in the interview guides are listed as follow:

1. What does anxiety mean to you in speaking?
2. How do the eight semester students overcome their anxiety towards speaking?
3. What do you do to make students speak confidently without feeling anxious?

The obtained data from questionnaires and interview were analyzed descriptively by using data reduction, data display and data verification. This research used descriptive analysis by dividing the discussion theme based on the retrieved information from the subjects that became the research discussion and the result of the research. In data reduction, the researchers collected all of the answers and chose the relevant answers by examining it. In data display, the data was displayed into tables based on students' answers while in data verification, the researchers obtained the

data by checking the validation of the data based on the answers of questionnaires and interview, the researchers reviewed the data repeatedly to avoid mistakes, and eventually the convenient data were described.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

Findings

The researchers delivered six open-ended questions to the students by using Google form. There were 26 students who filled out the questionnaire. The data obtained from questionnaire were tabulated on the following table:

Table 1. Students' Understanding of Anxiety

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	Anxiety is an excessive feeling of fear, worry, and insecurity experienced by a person in his daily life that makes them difficult to deal with a problem.	ALA, DSM, FSR, MZB, MZM, MVD, NAZ, RFD
2	Anxiety is the feeling of nervousness faced by a person when they speak, it influences someone's communication and interaction because they think about something bad during speaking.	ASH, EFJ
3	It's a situation that makes someone unconfident and afraid of doing something.	CYN, MGT, NIF, NAL
4	An uncontrollable of apprehensive and uptight feeling.	DES, FIM
5	Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling that arises to someone when they get an unimaginable or unexpected situation.	, EEA, HRH
6	It is a term for psychological disorder when someone is afraid, worried, and nervous.	HNS, RND
7	It is a condition when someone is afraid of	IFA, MON, MHZ

	making mistakes in vocabulary, grammar, and fluency during speaking, and it is an obstacle in learning English.	
8	It is when someone feels a little bit confused and afraid to speak in front of people.	MHS, NMF, NFD

Table 2. Things That Trigger Anxiety the Most During Speaking

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	Judgment from people and dealing with new situations.	ALA, FIM
2	People who give too much attention make me uncomfortable and anxious.	ASH, HRH
3	When I am asked to speak in front of my friends.	CYN, DSM, DES, EEA, MGT, MZB
4	Lack of vocabulary	DES, IFA, MHS, RND
5	Afraid of making mistakes because of my pronunciation.	EFJ, FSR, IFA, MZM, NIF, NFD,
6	Lack of confidence	MZM, MHS, HNS, NMF
7	Grammar	IFA, MON, NAL, NAZ
8	Fluency	IFA, MZB, RFD
9	When I don't understand the topic	MVD

Table 3. The Things That Students Do for Getting Ready

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	Prepare mentally and physically, be calm and set my mind that I can do it and no need to be	ALA, MON, RFD, MVD, MHZ, MHS, NIF

	afraid of making mistakes, I will keep going.	
2	Prepare and understand the topic well before conveying it.	ASH, ALA, DES, FSR, FIM, HRH, IFA, MGT, MZM, MVD, NAZ, NFD, RFD
3	Practice speaking and pronunciation many times.	CYN, ALA, FSR, FIM, HRH, MZB, NAL, RND
4	Memorize some vocabulary that relate to the topic.	DSM, DES, MZM, NMF, RND
5	Practice in front of mirror	EEA
6	Memorize texts/dialogues to reduce mistakes.	EEA, MON
7	Take a deep breath and try to arrange simple sentence.	EFJ
8	Write some points of the topic, so I don't forget what to say.	HNS, MHS, RFD
9	Drink water could relax myself before speaking	MHZ

Table 4. The Exercises That Students Do Before Speaking

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	Practice speaking in front of mirror.	ALA, CYN, DSM, DES, HRH, NIF, NAZ, NMF, RFD
2	I practice my pronunciation.	ASH, FSR, FIM,
3	I don't do it, just say what I want to say.	EEA
4	I practice many times before speaking or doing presentation by reading my paper.	EFJ, FSR, HNS, MGT, MZB
5	I will try to speak and film myself so I know if I have mispronunciation.	EEA

6	I always practice my speaking by doing repetition to the sentence or unusual words	MON, MHS, MVD, NAL
7	I practice my jaw by reading tongue twister.	MHZ
8	I talk to my friend to increase my confidence	MZM, RND
9	I sometimes talk to myself.	NFD

Table 5. The Students' Eye Contact Towards Audiences/Friends

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	Yes, I do. I look at the audience when I speak because they will be interested in my speech and it helps me to more focus on my speech also increases my confidence	ASH, DSM, DES, EEA, EFJ, FSR, FIM, HNS, IFA, MHS, MON, MHZ, MZB, MZM, MVD, NAL, NAZ, NMF, NFD, RND, RFD
2	No, I don't. I feel unconfident if I look at them so, I don't look at listeners' eyes but I look at the object around them and it reduces my anxiety.	ALA, CYN, HRH, MGT, NIF

Table 6. The Students' Techniques in Overcoming Anxiety During Speaking

No.	Students' Answers	Students' Initial Name
1	I fight my anxiety by changing my negative thoughts into positive ones, such as building a confidence and ignoring people's judgments.	ALA, ASH, EEA, EFJ, FIM, MHS, MON, MVD, NAL
2	I write some important points about the topic in case I forget what to say.	CYN, DSM, HRH, RFD
3	I try to look at the other objects not audience.	CYN
4	When I feel anxious during speaking, I try to be calm or relaxed and silent for a moment and control my	DSM, FSR, RFD, NAZ, NMF, RFD

	breath then continue my speech.	
5	I have to focus on my audience and always try to focus and interact with the audience, creating the connection makes me easy to overcome anxiety	DES, MHZ, MZM
6	I have to hold something in my hand when I talk in front of people, because it can release my anxiety.	HRH, HNS, MGT, NFD
7	I try to not use hard or unusual vocabulary. I choose the simple words that are easy to be understood.	IFA, RND
8	If I am anxious and I don't know how to say some words in English, I will use mix by using Indonesian and English.	MHZ
9	I use gesture when I speak to release the anxiety and pretend that nobody is in front of me.	NIF
10	I speak as loud and clear as possible.	MZB

also feel anxious to speak in front of many people, friends or audiences, and the percentage is 23%, it happens because students do not get used to speak in public place. Lack of vocabulary's percentage is 15% and it makes students hard to say something orally even though they have many things in their mind. The percentage of grammar is 15%, they worry if they speak with ungrammatical sentences. There are 15% students lack of confidence and they cannot speak or even think clearly because they are unconfident with their capability in speaking. Fluency's percentage is 12%, it makes them nervous to speak because they compare their ability with others who are fluent in speaking. The percentage of excessive attention is 8%, students feel uneasy to speak in front of people or friends if they give too much attention, because it makes student nervous and forget what they want to say. Judgment's percentage is 8%, it really makes students down and afraid to speak up, some students might have strong mentality but others might be not and will be pessimistic and there are 4% students feel anxious if they do not understand the topic because they have no good preparation about it.

The third question for students was about how students get ready before speaking, because students who have good preparation before speaking or presenting their speech in front of their friends will be ready and better than others without preparation. The data shows that 50% students get ready before speaking by preparing the topic and understand it well. The percentage of students practice speaking and pronunciation is 31%, they try to speak and learn the pronunciation of unusual words, they practice it by themselves and also with friends. Students prepare themselves mentally and physically by assuring and motivating themselves in 27%, they will be calm and set their mind that they can speak well. There are 19% students learn and memorize unfamiliar or

Discussion

The first question for students and lecturers in questionnaire and interview was same. It was about the definition of anxiety during speaking based on students and lecturers' opinion. From the response of students and lecturers, it was found that anxiety is a part of psychology. It is an excessive feeling of fear or uneasiness, worry, nervousness, insecurity, and lack of confidence. Anxiety during speaking happens when students have uncomfortable and uncontrollable uptight feeling towards people's judgment when they speak in front of people.

The second question was about the things that make them anxious the most during speaking and it was given to the students only. The data shows that there are 23% students are afraid of mispronunciation, especially if people do not understand their speech well. Students

unusual vocabulary related to the topic, so they will not be confused to convey something and 12% students make a note, in this case students will write some important points about their topic in order to have better scheme of speaking. There are 8% students also memorize simple sentences or even dialog when it comes to new topic to reduce mistakes. The percentage of practicing in front of mirror is 4%, it helps them to not be too nervous in front of people besides, 4% students take a deep breath, it is good to boost their mind, and the last is 4% drinking water.

The fourth question for students was to find out whether they do exercise frequently before speaking or not and the things they do. It reveals that 35% students practice speaking in front of mirror, they imagine that they talk in front of people and it reduces their nervousness. Reading's percentage is 19%, students read the material many times because the more they read the better their understanding will be. The percentage of repetition is 15%, in this case student will repeat their sentences over and over to increase their confidence. There are 12% students practice pronunciation, they will practice to pronounce unusual words properly, besides 8% students talk to friends, it is because they have partner to speak so they can practice their speaking skill, however, 4% students talk by themselves, this exercise helps students who are shy to practice with their friends but want to develop their skill in speaking. Filming's percentage is 4%, students film themselves to know if they make mispronunciation or not and also to develop their confidence. Reading tongue twister is 4%, because it trains their jaw and tongue, nevertheless 4% students don't do exercise at all.

The fifth question for students was to discover whether students look at the audience when they speak or not. The data shows that 81% look at the audience/friend with various reasons for instance, student feel more confident when they have an eye

contact to the audience because they can see audience's expression, response and enthusiasm, students will get used to speak in front of many people and it is good for public speaking, students want to respect the audience, and eye contact can reduce their nervousness. On the other side, 19% students do not look at the audience when they speak because it makes them unconfident, nervous and uncomfortable, however students look at the object around the audience and it reduces their anxiety.

The sixth question was to find out students' techniques in overcoming anxiety during speaking. There were ten techniques collected from the data; Keep the positive mindset's percentage is 35%, students always try to stay positive and change the negative thoughts into the positive ones, for instance ignoring people's judgment or what will be happened in the future and do their best by believing in themselves that they can perform well, also think that this is the only way to develop their speaking skill. Besides, students always be confident and speak by their own style without being afraid of making mistakes. The percentage of being calm and relaxed is 23%, students will not convey their speech perfectly if they are nervous, so they try to be calm and relaxed in this situation such as take a deep breath, smile and focus on their speech, also try to not in rush when they speak. Holding something is 15%, some students need to have something in their hand to release the anxiety. It can be a pen, paper, marker or other stuffs. There are 15% students have a note, they will bring their book or note which contains some points or vocabulary about the topic. It helps them to remember what they want to deliver in case they forget it so that they become less worried. The percentage of interacting and focusing on the audience is 12%, it creates good connection between speakers and listeners and students are more confident when they realize audiences are interested in their speech. They also try give a chance to the audience to ask or give opinion. Besides,

8% students use familiar words, they feel more comfortable and confident to use simple words and it is good to avoid misunderstanding. Code mixing is 8%, some students who don't speak English fluently will be nervous to deliver their speech, that is why sometimes they use Indonesian when they are really anxious and stuck because they don't know or forget what to say. The percentage of speaking loud and clear is 4%, it decreases students' anxiety and 4% for gesture, when students speak with gesture, they feel free to express themselves and increase their confidence when they speak. However, 4% students look at the other object because some of them are anxious to look at the audience when they speak, so they try to focus on their speech and look at the other object around the audience to reduce the nervousness. The data from lecturers' interviewee also supported the students' answer. It showed that students have good preparation before speaking, so they understand the topic well. They even do drill or repetition to practice their ability in speaking. Moreover, students are relaxed during speaking, they try to be themselves and speak with their own way. They also prepare a concept or note to write important parts or words so they will not forget everything and if they are stuck and confused, they will use Indonesian or mix the language.

The last question was for lecturers, it was to figure out the things that lecturers do to make students speak confidently. There are ten points that lecturers apply to encourage students speak without feeling anxious. The points were demonstrated as follow:

- a. Lecturers try to change students' mindset that tend to be afraid of making mistakes when they speak. Making mistakes means students learn something and have progress.
- b. Lecturers do not correct students' mistakes during speaking but at the end of students' performance, because it

will make students down and be afraid to speak.

- c. Lecturers give a chance to students to choose their own topic in speaking class, theme will be given and students can decide what they want to talk. It helps students to speak without burdening their mind.
- d. Lecturers allow students to mix the language (code mixing) when students have no idea what to say or forget the things in their mind.
- e. Lecturers suggest students to practice their English with drilling or repetition. It is good to make students get used to in English also practice their jaw.
- f. Lecturers recommends students to memorize vocabulary based on their need, so they will always use it and will not forget it.
- g. Lecturers ask students to find out the best way of learning English their interests, because some people like to study by reading a book, speaking in front of mirror, filming themselves while speaking, etc. That is why, students have to know what they like and want.
- h. Lecturers give tips and tricks how to develop English skill such as watching movie or listening to the podcast.
- i. Lecturers motivate students to be aware about their future by giving preview about it every time when the class is started.
- j. Lecturers suggest students to interact with other people or foreigners to practice their English, also ask them to join an English study club to improve their capability in English.

Based on the obtained data through questionnaire and interview, it shows that the way students overcome anxiety is not only because of some techniques they apply during speaking but also the techniques they implement before speaking, most of them do exercises and have good preparation in advance before delivering

the topic, for instance, they prepare the topic from lecturers and understand it well. If the topic is unfamiliar with them, they try to learn or even memorize about the unusual words related to the topic. Students also practice with friends but if they have no partner to talk to, they speak in front of mirror or film themselves. Moreover, most of them also develop their confidence by having an eye contact with audience. Therefore, students can overcome their anxiety during speaking.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The researchers concluded that there are fifteen techniques to overcome anxiety in speaking carried out by the eighth semester of English Tadris students taken from the techniques before and during speaking; 1) they are well-prepared about the topic; 2) they memorize unusual words; 3) they practice with friends 4) they practice in front of mirror; 5) they do eye contact to the audience; 6) they keep the positive mindset; 7) they try to be calm and relaxed; 8) they hold something or object; 9) they have a note or concept; 10) they interact to the audience; 11) they use simple or familiar words; 12) they use code mixing; 13) they speak loud and clear; 14) they use gesture; 15) they look at the other object around the audience.

Suggestion

After seeing the result of the research, the researchers have some suggestions for the students and lecturers. It is better for students to understand more about their weaknesses and things that make them anxious so they know how to minimize or even not anxious anymore during speaking. Students are suggested to practice their speaking with friends in different settings such as market, bookstore, park, cinema, so that students can gain more phrases or expressions and increase their confidence to interact with other people especially in

public places. Besides, lecturers are suggested to provide more various speaking activities. It can be indoor or outdoor activities, so students will not be bored and can express themselves more.

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