

STRATEGIES USED BY STUDENT TO REDUCE ANXIETY IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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Abstract: Speaking English as a foreign language does not only need to pay attention to speaking skills, but also the psychological aspects too. Through the psychological aspects, students become anxious in speaking and need various strategies to overcome this speaking anxiety. This study aimed to investigate the strategies students used to deal with speaking anxiety. The research was conducted in a junior high school in East Jakarta. A total of 100 respondents were selected based on the criteria, which were students who felt anxious about speaking English. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. The instruments applied in this study were interviews and Likert scale questionnaires. The result of the Likert scale then calculated using Excel. Interviews answers were then tabulated and coding based on the interview questions. The data obtained were then narrated. The findings indicate that students do not only use one strategy. The highest strategy used by students was Preparation Strategy (69%). Meanwhile, the least strategy (30%), is the Positive Thinking strategy.

Keywords: English, Speaking, Anxiety, Students, Strategies

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the foreign languages taught to students in Indonesia (Tridinanti, Gaya. 2018). As social beings, human beings need to interact and cooperate (Eva Damayanti, Maria and Listyani Listyani, 2020). Since language is the primary tool for communication, it is essential to develop speaking skills in the language learning process. According to Fariadian (2014) speaking is an activity to connect people's conversations with the same language. By speaking we can share our thoughts, sense, and opinion or information. Meanwhile, Gowhary (2014) in Hakim and Syam (2019) said that speaking is one of the most multifarious cognitive, linguistic, and motor skills. It is used in natural communication, giving and getting information, and teaching and learning verbally. As claimed by Fariadian, Lejla (2011) says that speaking skill is the most significant one since foreign language learners are most concerned with becoming actual speakers of the language. In addition, there is a variety of speaking activities that can motivate and push students to speak, and they are primarily used only in school or English competitions. The first is storytelling. Ellis and Jean (2014) clarify that storytelling is an activity of telling a story without a book. Next, debate is one of the popular activities in school to improve speaking (Baruah, 2006; Wahyuni et al., 2020). Last, Grugeon, et. al, (2015) stated that drama is one of the activities that can improve English speaking skills. For example, through drama, students feel happy because they can create imaginative play while expressing the content of the dialogue (Erdiana et al., 2020). Speaking activities should focus on helping students to use and communicate in English (Richard, 2008). However, the successful development of speaking skills in language learning can be influenced by different factors, one of which is the notion of anxiety. The affective variable appears that anxiety can define as a vague fear (Scovel, 1978).

In the context of English as a foreign language, students tend to practice and develop their speaking skills only in the classroom. However, they do not use the chance to increase their speaking skills because of some factors. One of the factors is foreign language anxiety (Galante, 2018; Passiatore et al., 2019). The anxiety made students not comfortable speaking in front of people. Also, they cannot arrange their emotion-related to nervousness, lack of self-confidence, and shyness (Durdukoca & Atalay, 2019). The feelings of tension indicate emotions, worried thoughts, and physical changes such as increased blood pressure (American Psychological Association, 2020, n.p.) are anxiety psychologically (Netta, Ayuna, et al. 2020). According to Scovel (1978), anxiety is considered a trait as a combination of feelings, emotional states, and personality traits. Thus, it is a very complex experience. There are mainly three types of anxiety influencing the language learning process. As cited in Tulgar (2018), (Brown, 1994; Philips, 1992) stated the first is trait anxiety which is related to the learners' personality and can be observed in different situations as it is connected to personality characteristics. The second type is state anxiety which is about the response to specific conditions (Young, 1991). The last type is situation-specific anxiety, which is, like state anxiety, produced by specific events and situations (Wang, 1998). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) stated language learning could be an example of situation-specific anxiety.

In their previous study, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) mentioned that speaking in a second language causes the most anxiety for the students, and half use speaking skills as a confidence-building experience. Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with autonomic nervous system arousal (Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope, 1986). Most students have difficulty speaking a foreign language, especially in English classes. It is more worrying, especially as they struggle because they are not yet fluent in speaking English as a second language. Those who have difficulty feel strange and insecure when they want to express their ideas clearly. It makes them anxious when they have to speak English, even in front of their classmates. They feel nervous, especially during oral tests or responding to teacher questions. However, every teacher has different strategies for coping with students' anxiety in the classroom. Obtaining an English-speaking ability is challenging, considering the nature of what is involved in speaking. The reason for anxiety is that students are hesitant while speaking. Students also tend not to make a sound when the teacher asks or tells students to say it in front of the class (Hakim & Syam, 2019). Sari (2017) added that students can feel threatened and uncomfortable when asked to speak English in front of their friends in class (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020).

Horwitz et al (1986) in Suparlan (2021), claimed three influential anxiety-affecting factors: apprehension of verbal communication, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The first factor causing speaking anxiety is fear and anxiety about verbal communication. The second factor is anxiety during the exam. According to Dawood et al (2016), the anxiety test is a test performed to determine the psychological condition of students who experience extreme stress and anxiety in any test situation. The last factor is the fear of negative judgments. Watson & Friend (1969) explained fear of negative evaluation means that someone is concerned about other people's evaluations, fear of negative evaluations by others, and thoughts that people will negatively evaluate.

Shinji Kondo, David & Ying-Ling (2004) argued that five strategies are carried out to reduce anxiety. The first strategy is preparation; this strategy refers to attempts to improve learning and learning strategies to avoid unwanted things, such as getting bad grades and difficulty understanding. Next is the relaxation strategy; these strategies can involve a tactic or suggestion to reduce somatic anxiety. The third strategy is to think positively; it can be characterized by a

palliative function to suppress cognitive processes. An example is to imagine how one gives something or outstanding performance, trying not to think about it and enjoying tension. The purpose of this strategy is to divert the mind from stressful situations with positive and pleasant thoughts. It can reduce and provide relief when someone feels anxious. The fourth is peer seeking; when finding students experiencing the same condition, students feel they have equally anxious friends and can be a source of emotional regulation with a comparison of anxiety problems experienced by oneself and one's friend. The fifth strategy is resignation; students feel reluctant to do anything to reduce their anxiety. For example, students give up on lessons or sleep in class.

Based on all the statements above, this research intended to respond to the following questions: 1) What are the factors of students' English-speaking anxiety?, and 2) What strategies do students use in reducing speaking anxiety? Thus, this research aims to investigate the factors causing speaking anxiety and to discover the strategies applied to reduce discomfort in speaking based on the five strategies to cope with the feeling of anxiety suggested by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation.

METHOD

The research design applied in this study is descriptive qualitative to investigate the factors of students' speaking anxiety in English and the strategies students use to cope with the anxiety. The researcher uses a closed questionnaire to collect quantitative data of the factors causing students' anxiety. In addition, the qualitative interview was conducted to find the strategies used by students to cope with the feeling of anxiety. According to (Iskandar, 2016), a qualitative research approach is research and understanding process based on a method that investigates a social phenomenon and problem. In this research, the researcher makes a complex picture, examines words, reports detailed views of the respondents, and conducts studies in natural situations. This research applied the characteristics of qualitative research, especially in terms of in-depth data disclosure through questionnaires and interviews. The participants in this research were 100 students from a junior high school in Jakarta. They were students from grades seven and nine who studied English as a foreign language.

The researcher distributed a Likert scale questionnaire with 20 statements to 100 students on paper. The interview consisted of 12 questions and involved 5 students as the participants. The researcher recorded the interviews with participants. The researcher then turned the interview into a transcription after completion. The researcher asked the participants to fill in the questionnaire by choosing an answer from the statements with a Likert-scale of answers ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. In addition, interviews were conducted in a question-and-answer manner to collect qualitative data.

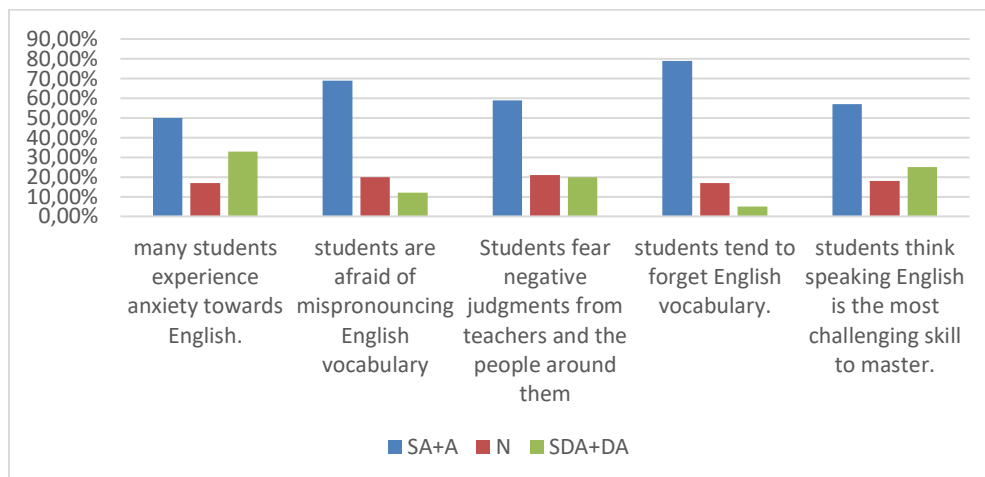
The results of the questionnaires and interviews focused on problem statements concerning the factors and strategies related to students' speaking anxiety. The researcher used the references of previous researchers and the results of the data that had been collected for identification and classification. In addition, it is analysed by comparing theories from several expert opinions. With the result, it is expected that the level of trust, transferability, dependence, and certainty of data can be presented objectively and can be responsible.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaires were distributed to 100 participants. The questionnaires consist of 9 statements of factors and 11 statements of strategies adopted from Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) about five

strategies to overcome anxiety in speaking. The findings of this study are presented in the following sections.

Figure 1: The Factors of student Anxiety in Speaking English



The questionnaire results show that the factors of anxiety in speaking English for junior high school students include six components: (1) many students experience anxiety towards English. (2) students are afraid of mispronouncing English vocabulary. (3) Students fear negative judgments from teachers and the people around them. (4) students tend to forget English vocabulary. (5) students think speaking English is the most challenging skill to master.

In the previous study, several factors in speaking English have been identified. Mukminin (2015), in the context of EFL learners' speaking anxiety in an EOP Program, discovered five major themes related to students' English language speaking anxiety using semi-structured interviews as a data collection technique: (1) a lack of speaking skills due to a lack of vocabulary and grammar; (2) a fear of negative responses from others; (3) a lack of self-esteem to speak in English; (4) a fear of being evaluated by teachers; and (5) cultural influences on speaking English due to a more teacher-centered style.

Strategies of student Anxiety in Speaking English

The data from the questionnaires concerning the strategies used by students to cope with the feeling of anxiety in speaking English indicate that there are five strategies applied by the students. The strategies and the percentages of the students' responses could be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Strategies and the Percentages of the Students' Responses

No	Indicators	Item Number in Questionnaire	SA + A	N	DA + SDA
1.	Preparation	11, 14, 18	69%	14%	17%
2.	Relaxing	10, 15	67%	18%	15%
3.	Positive Thinking	19, 20	30%	28%	42%
4.	Peer Seeking	12, 13	39%	23%	38%
5.	Resignation	16, 17	40%	11%	50%

Total	11			
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Strategies 1: Preparation

A preparation strategy is one that students use to improve themselves through learning. This strategy can be implemented by performing home exercises, writing summaries or notes, and studying diligently. According to the research findings, 69% of 100 junior high school students agreed to use the preparation strategy, while 14% chose neutral and 17% did not agree to use this strategy. It demonstrates that most students choose the preparation strategy to alleviate their anxiety about their lack of English proficiency. According to Zaidner (1998) (as cited in Kondo and Ying Ling, 2004), anxious people have high levels of task-relevant thinking in assessment.

Strategies 2: Relaxing

Relaxation strategies are used to alleviate anxiety symptoms such as racing heart, sweaty hands, or symptoms that can be felt directly by the body. This relaxation strategy involves causing the body to relax by doing something (Hakim&Syam, 2019). Grasha (1987, cited in EFL Students' Strategies in Relieving Anxiety in English Speaking Performances) discovered that compelling deep breathing in and out for 3 to 5 minutes reduces stress.

According to the questionnaire survey, 67% of students agreed to use the relaxation strategy, 18% were neutral, and 15% did not agree. Relaxation strategies demonstrate how relaxation strategies are implemented by taking deep breaths, remaining calm, and doing best while ensuring proper Preparation. However, this strategy is only effective for a few minutes. This method is helpful if people are suffering from situational anxiety (Dena et al., 2021)

Strategies 3: Positive Thinking

This strategy refers to efforts to inhibit complex cognitive processes that underlie students' anxiety. Positive thinking is when students think everything can be fine, imagine good results without consequences, and try to feel comfortable. The questionnaire results stated that 10% strongly agreed, 21% agreed, 28% were neutral, 33% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed with these strategies. It is related to previous research, as cited in Hakim & Syam (2019) notes that this strategy aims to shift attention from stressful situations to positive and enjoyable things, thereby relieving anxious students. This strategy can be done by imagining oneself can perform well without worrying about the consequences, by imagining speaking English fluently, or by feeling motivated by someone else's speaking ability. Positive thinking is essential to realize that everyone makes mistakes in language learning, which is a language learning process.

Strategies 4: Peer Seeking

Students use this strategy to find other students who seem to have the same problem in speaking English to control their anxiety. The questionnaire results explained that 13% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, 23% were neutral, 30% disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed with these strategies. The awareness that others are experiencing the same problem can be a source of emotional regulation by social comparison. Through this strategy, students can also create peer-seeking groups with their friends. Therefore, it can provide a sense of security and calm. As cited in Suar, D., Etc. (2021), peer-seeking is one of the best strategies to relieve anxiety.

Strategies 5: Resignation

This strategy is known when students are reluctant to do anything to reduce anxiety. The questionnaire results showed that 13% strongly agreed, 28% agreed, 12% were neutral, 26% disagreed, and 25% strongly disagreed with this strategy. They avoid facing problems. They choose to give up, do not pay attention, accept the situation, and do not want to do anything during English class. This strategy is shown by ignoring assignments or falling asleep in class. The questionnaire results said that most students disagreed with this strategy. These results are related to previous studies cited in Suar. D et al. (2021) this strategy can negatively affect student scores. This strategy is suitable for relieving student anxiety but not great for student grades. Students who do this strategy usually have many failures in the past, so students no longer have the desire to succeed. Students become pessimistic after going through an accepted failure.

Based on the interviews, it was revealed that the student had applied some anxiety and strategies to cope with speaking English. Students said they do not really like English because English is complicated and others also claimed they are afraid of making mistakes. Students were anxious when asked to speak English. The first interview answers the question, do you like English? He said he do not really like it, same as the second and fourth interviews. Meanwhile, the third interview likes English. In general factor they find it difficult to understand students' English lessons. On the question, do you often feel anxious when someone asks you to speak English? All interviewees experience anxiety and anxiety. The symptoms are nervousness, headache, stammering, and anxiety. In case to cope with this anxiety, most of the students mentioned they did relaxation to deal with anxiety, while others stopped speaking to overcome anxiety. Most the other students used preparation before speaking English, such as taking notes for words or sentences they did not understand. Some students mentioned that they were amazed when they heard people speak English. They claimed they felt insecure but were still interested in learning English. Most students feel more secure with people who lack the same English-speaking skills as they are. One of the students used resignation as an anxiety-reducing strategy. However, most students do what they should do as a student. They try to calm down, prepare and take notes on important things or vocabulary as learning material. The reason is that English is considered difficult such as difficulty memorizing vocabulary and fear of making mistakes in speaking. Researchers found that students experienced nervousness, so they stuttered. It is in line with Alsowat (2016), which proves the highest cause of student anxiety is concern about the consequences of failing, forgetting things they knew, and feeling uneasiness during language tests. However, there are strategies for coping with speaking English anxiety.

The students also said that they had a hard time formulating the words they wanted to speak because they felt inadequate in their vocabulary and in their knowledge of English grammar. Furthermore, students also show some attitudes related to their anxiety such as talking stammering, shy, and confused when they have trouble remembering a word. For students who experienced anxiety in speaking, they applied several strategies to this study such as preparing the material well before the English lesson started approximately the day before to be on guard to answer spontaneous questions given by the teacher. One female student also said that her practice of speaking in front of the mirror could also be used to reduce the nervousness of speaking. Another student said that when anxious he usually does a relaxation strategy. He would take a breath first until his anxiety disappeared. As for the student who implemented the resignation strategy where he slept in the classroom because the student didn't like English lessons at school at all. Therefore, the student sleeps and does not do English assignments.

Rumiyati & Seftika (2018) stated, anxiety can give negative impact to the students. The students cannot manage or control their anxiety. It will be difficult to them to learn English. Stated

by Riffat-un-Nisa Awan, et. al (2010) (as cited in Rumiya & Seftika 2018) speaking in front of people is the biggest source of anxiety speaking causes. Students are worried about grammatical mistakes, pronunciation, and being unable to speak spontaneously. Moreover, the students will feel unsure of themselves because they are too afraid of mistakes when speaking English.

With regards to the five strategies to cope with the feeling of anxiety suggested by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation, this study revealed that students applied those various strategies with different degrees among them. The first strategy is Preparation. The third interviewer said that she did the exercises at home, but when asked, she immediately answered. It can reduce anxiety over students' unpreparedness to speak English. The researcher also found that, as relieved by Yuliani & Fadhly (2020), the perception of students' limited vocabulary might lead to some limitations in their EFL personal performance in mainly writing skills, such as limited vocabulary. Moreover, the problem of making mistakes. According to Arianti, the result of his study showed that the fear of making mistakes is still a problem faced by students in English speaking skills.

The second strategy is relaxation; interview data showed that three students minimized anxiety by taking a breath. This relaxation strategy can be done by making the body relax by doing something. According to Tseng (2012), exercise can make nervousness into positive energy by releasing breath relaxation (Hakim&Syam, 2019). As a result, the more a person relaxes, the more anxiety is reduced. The third is positive thinking strategies; this strategy is intended to divert attention from anxiety to positive cues and reduce student anxiety. Interview data showed that all students felt less confident and imagined themselves as fluent English speaker in front of the class but still maintained to learn English. However, the preparation strategy can increase students' capacity, and when knowledge increases, the anxiety about speaking English skills will decrease (Dena Suar Deni, Maskur, 2021). Furthermore, this peer-seeking strategy is the most often used by students to compare other students with lower abilities. Students who have been interviewed stated that they feel secure and safe because they have friends with the same trouble. It will bring consciousness that they are not alone in the same problem to bring calmness to anxious students (Hakim&Syam, 2019).

The last strategy is resignation; this is the behaviour of students who tend to avoid a learning process. For example, students sleep or give up doing something to reduce their anxiety (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004). Resignation is meant to reduce anxiety by refusing to face problems. However, based on the interview data, the students did not use the resignation strategy to avoid their inability to speak English. It is supported by students who say they have never had an English problem and have never started an English class.

CONCLUSION

Speaking English is one of the most challenging skills. It is caused by students being afraid and anxious when speaking English. The first factor causing speaking anxiety is fear and anxiety about verbal communication. Fear and anxiety are caused by the presence of feeling intimidated and thinking others will evaluate them. Next, the second factor is anxiety during the exam. Students assume that learning foreign language processes is a test, so they may feel anxious and have difficulties or even fear failure. The last factor is the fear of negative judgments, such as people's judgments. Therefore, there is a solution to coping with this anxiety by using five strategies: Preparation, Relaxation, Positive Thinking, Peer Seeking, and Resignation.

The first strategy is Preparation. This strategy refers to efforts to improve learning and learning strategies to avoid unwanted things. The second strategy is Relaxation. A strategy that involves a tactic or suggestion to reduce somatic anxiety. The third strategy is Positive Thinking. A palliative function characterizes them to suppress the complex cognitive processes underlying anxiety. An example is to imagine how oneself gives something or an outstanding performance, trying not to think about and enjoying tension. The fourth strategy is Peer Seeking. Students who feel anxious will look for other students in the same situation: the fifth strategy, Resignation. Students feel reluctant to do anything to reduce their anxiety.

The findings of this study can assist English teachers in helping their students improve their English-speaking skills. Teachers should be aware that anxiety is one of the reasons students struggle to learn English, mainly speaking skills. The researcher hopes that by understanding the barriers and strategies students use to deal with anxiety when speaking English, they will be able to assist teachers in developing various ways of teaching English that is appropriate for students. After reviewing the findings and discussions, the researcher made recommendations for teachers and students, as well as other researchers, regarding the importance of lecturers providing proper treatment to students. Given the diversity of the class, teachers must pay special attention to students who are passive and less engaged in learning English speaking skills. Students should be encouraged to speak English actively in class.

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