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Students' English Speaking Anxiety in Classroom Context

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Abstract

This research was designed to investigate students' English speaking anxiety in a classroom context. There were 23 students from Unismuh Makassar who participated in this research by using the purposive sampling method. This mixed-methods study looked into the students' English-speaking anxiety and how they overcame it. A structured interview and a questionnaire adapted from the Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) were used to gather the data. According to the findings of the study, (1) the majority of English Education students at Unismuh Makassar experienced excessive anxiety, with 74.2% anxious, 21.7% anxious in the middle, and no one anxious in the low. (2) Based on the students' experiences, there were six strategies to deal with anxiety: keep silent, take a deep breath, relax with the circumstances, reiterate the lesson, avoid eye contact, and drink water. The finding indicated the excessive level of students' anxiety and the strategies to cope with it. According to these findings, lecturers should be more aware of their students' worries in order to push them to speak up confidently and clearly in English class. Telling a joke, expressing gratitude, and making a pleasant gesture are all strategies to assist kids overcome their fear of public speaking. As a result, teachers are encouraged to be slightly innovative in developing new strategies to enable students to speak more effectively.

Introduction

Instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (EFL) places a significant emphasis on the importance of speaking as a component of communication; as Belcher (2006) puts it, it requires specific attention and instruction. This is due to the fact that verbal communication allows for instantaneous feedback and answers. According to Hashemi (2011) the capacity to hold a conversation in the target language is the best sign of a learner's success in language learning. For the most part, we need to engage in conversational activities with one another. It's not easy to put into words what's in our heads, but we should give it a shot because of the

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benefits. But there are many challenges to mastering speech in the modern classroom, both in terms of teaching and learning. Students who are under emotional duress may show agitated and stutter in their written work and may have trouble focusing on lectures. Conversations and classroom activities that are infused with emotion have a positive effect on students' ability to retain information. Brown, (2004) argues that the emotional foundations of a learning strategy and method are the primary way in which emotions influence the learning process. It refers to any mental or emotional state that a student experiences, whether it be on a small or large scale.

There are two main categories of emotion: those that involve the senses and those that involve the mind. Sensory emotions, such as cool, sweet, fatigued, satisfied, and hungry, are all triggered by exterior stimuli to the body. As a second point, psychiatric underpinnings are present in mental emotion. As an illustration, consider the following feelings: intellectual, social, morality, aesthetic, and divine. Consequently, the origin of the feeling lies in a shift in the physical or mental state of the person experiencing it. Mental or emotional state relate with the anxiety which majority of the students experience it, however there are different levels for each. According to Zhiping & Paramasivam (2013), anxiety is a term used to describe a variety of negative emotions, including worry, fear, and unease. Anxiety over public speaking can take many different forms, according to Toubot & Seng (2018) (e.g., high blood pressure, trembling hands, weakness, nervousness, forgetting the prepared information, and avoiding eye contact with the audience). Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) identifies three primary causes of foreign language classroom anxiety: (1) fear of speaking in front of a group; (2) a negative self-evaluation of performance; and (3) fear of failing a language-related exam.

Students with social anxiety have a hard time speaking up in class and eventually stop trying altogether. Anxiety can heighten the affective filter, producing a negative impact that limits the ability to learn a language from understandable input. Anxious students will have a hard time focusing on the teacher and participating in class discussions. As a result, they might not fully grasp the material and never put it to use. as reported by Saputra, (2018) Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a higher level can be challenging for many students. Ten factors, Another study (Suparlan, 2021) found that students' fears of speaking in English, teacher repercussions, lack of confidence, fear of being less competent than other students, embarrassment, insufficient preparation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, habit of using the English language, and language test. The discussion portion of the paper provides a thorough explanation of the findings. The goal of this study is to clarify how anxiety may affect students' speaking skill success and to provide a representation of foreign language anxiety among language learners. Anxiety is one of the most significant elements during the EFL learning process.

The second point is that students often have more negative than positive attitudes about language acquisition. Anxiety might make the task more challenging. Multiple types of anxiety make it harder for pupils to learn and utilize a foreign language. The vast bulk of linguistic research demonstrates a negative relationship between anxiety and performance. Consider the situation in which the instructor invites the pupils to perform for one another. Some of them afraid that their peers would make fun of them if they made a mistake. Thus, they opted for quiet. Anxiety produced by this disease may inhibit a student's ability to participate in class discussions. Anxiety may affect a student's academic performance in a variety of ways, including worry, self-doubt, and a lack of motivation.

A person cannot use intelligible input to learn a foreign language, according to Young (1992), who also asserts that extreme worry can raise the effective filter and cause a "mental block."

Anxious students will find it difficult to concentrate in class and communicate their ideas (Ewald, 2007). They might pick up less information and end up lacking in the ability to put what they did learn into practice. Worse yet, they may continue to fail, which will only make their anxiety levels rise. Meanwhile, lecturer at Unismuh Makassar analysed first semester graduates in the field of English Education and found several evidence of anxiety. Many became nervous, causing avoidance and diminished participation in class (Lane, 2015). Students struggled to raise their hands and participate in class discussions because they lacked self-assurance and many were uninterested and passive in improving their speaking skills (Marais, 2016).

Besides that, several of them are still unable to yield the sound or even the intonation after numerous attempts because they are hesitant to speak up in English. Additionally, the researcher found it challenging to carry out fruitful conversational activities with them. Although the lecturer there noted that even though the respondents are from the English department, they tend to feel more apprehensive in class, this study will be unique because the respondents are from the English education department. Yoskapela et al. (2022) advise teachers to use strategies to assist pupils in overcoming their fear of speaking in front of an audience. In a similar spirit, students should take precautions to reduce their anxiety before speaking in front of an audience. Additionally, this aids another researcher.

Jurmasari et al. (2021) indicates that sometime in the middle of the academic term, the students enrolled in Islamic Economics at the UIN Alauddin Makassar started to get concerned. Students who already have high levels of anxiety may feel additional symptoms of anxiety as a result of factors such as a lack of practice, a lack of speaking confidence, a reluctance to speak in front of others, and a fear of obtaining a low mark from their classmates. Students who suffer from low levels of anxiety, on the other hand, feel anxiety during speaking class due to the competitive nature of the environment. (Rafada & Madini, 2017). According to Cassady (2022) students with low levels of anxiety feel anxiety that is enabling, whereas students with high levels of anxiety experience anxiety that is crippling and has negative repercussions. Students with high levels of anxiety will exhibit more symptoms than students with low levels of anxiety, according to research by (Aeni et al., 2017).

Everyone has a different manner of dealing with or reducing anxiety. Other techniques to cope with anxiety include smiling, practicing, and arranging where you will go. According to Zhiping & Paramazivam (2013), nonverbal behaviour and nonverbal communication features that can be expected in response to substantial classroom fear include smiling in hiding students' actual feelings. Furthermore, low anxiety students handle their anxiety by practice and preparedness (Abdous, 2019). As a result, there are numerous techniques to overcome anxiety that will require the student to at least minimize their anxiousness.

Even while a plethora of studies have been conducted on English-speaking anxiety, only a few have focused on it; this is the focus of the first semester of the graduate program, especially in the English Education Department. Because anxiety has such a profound effect on English as a foreign language, and because of this, many scholars are interested in finding solutions to the problem of how to help students overcome their fears of speaking in English. To better understand the concerns of students' English-speaking anxiety in the classroom setting, the researcher seeks to investigate the extent to which students experience English-speaking anxiety and how they overcome it.

Research Methods

A mixed-methods approach was employed in this study to examine the various types of questions posed by lecturers to students, as well as the effects of such queries. The researcher employed a questionnaire to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the first-year English education students at Unismuh Makassar's level of worry. The questionnaire was developed using modified versions of the Foreign Terminology Classroom Nervousness Scale (Horwitz, 1987), with some linguistic changes and the most pertinent questions selected to measure students' anxiety. Answers ranged on a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree in the thirty-three-question version utilized in this study. This questionnaire was modified to precisely examine English education students' feelings of anxiety when approaching English class by selecting subjects from the original survey that were most relevant to English education students, translating them into Indonesian, and in some cases rephrasing them. All of the questions were designed to determine whether or not students are worried in English class. To avoid any potential misunderstandings for the students, the questionnaire is delivered to participants entirely in Indonesian. 23 people took part in this study. Listed below are a few questionnaire statement samples :

I feel anxious speaking English during speaking class.

I never feel confident in myself when I speak English in class.

I trembled when I knew that I would be asked by the lecturer during English class.

My heart skipped a beat when I faced English class.

When I speak English, I feel so anxious that I forget what I know.

I feel tense and anxious when I speak English compared to reading English texts.

I feel tense and anxious when speaking English compared to listening in class.

I worry when the lecturer or other students ask questions that I have not prepared in English class.

Data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, and an interview was added as support. After students completed the questionnaire, the interview was held in the following class. The interview was undertaken to investigate how the pupils overcame their anxiety when speaking English. To represent the data, the researcher interviewed five pupils. This is a set of questions from the researcher's interview.

Have you ever felt anxious when speaking English in class?

Does this happen often?

What worries you?

What factors can increase your anxiety in class?

What are the effects of anxiety?

Do you have your own strategy or solution to reduce anxiety when speaking in class?

Has your anxiety reduced after implementing this strategy?

Was there anything your lecturer did when he realized you were nervous?

Has it been effective?

Results and Discussion

This section examines the questionnaire's findings and their significance. The conclusions are presented in accordance with how the problem of the study is described in the introduction. The researcher releases participant data, which includes a modified FLCAS assessment of each student's anxiety level (Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale). Arguments and further interpretations of the findings are presented in the discussion section.

The students' level of anxiety in speaking

The FLCAS questionnaire was altered in order to ascertain whether the students had high, moderate, or low anxiety. The researcher scored the surveys once the subjects finished them. Each participant's responses to each question are recorded. The responses to every item on each participant's FLCAS questionnaire were summed together to create an overall anxiety level using the Likert scale presented in Table 1 to score survey questions according to whether they were positive or negative. The statistics, with possible values between 25 and 125, were calculated by hand. A composite score was created by combining each student's FLCAS results, and it was then divided into three categories: high (90-125), intermediate (67-89), and low (67-89). (25-66). Table 2 shows the range of ratings for each level of anxiety. Table 3 lists the findings of the modified FLCAS questionnaire along with the number of students and the percentages at each level of fear. Additionally, assessments of students' anxiety levels during a subsequent oral communication challenge were made using the questionnaire responses.

Table 1. adapted from Likert scale

Statement	Scoring				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive	1	2	3	4	5
Negative	5	4	3	2	1

Table 2. Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B., & Cope, J. (1986)

Range	Level
L	High Anxious
67-89	Middle Anxious
25-66	Low Anxious

Table 3. The percentage of students' Anxiety

Level of Anxiety	Number of students	Percentage
High Anxious	18	78,2 %
Middle Anxious	5	21,7 %
Low Anxious	0	0%

Table 3 depicts an analysis of the level of anxiety experienced by students at Unismuh Makassar's English Education Department during speaking class in the first semester. According to the data, the majority of students (18 students) have high anxiety, and some have middle anxiety (5 students). Furthermore, no student has low anxiety levels. Furthermore, according to the FLACS results, the highest number of students chose in the questionnaire is 31, with the statement "I worry when lecturers or other people ask questions that I have never felt before. So among the list of questionnaires, this represents the negative statement, and it can also be concluded that the majority of the students were feeling very anxious when the lecturer or other members of society asked about the question that the students had never felt before. To summarize these findings, it can be said that the students of English were mostly

anxious, and the students were most anxious when the lecturer or other individuals posed questions about which they had never been anxious before.

Students Overcome their Anxiety

To address the next issue, how do students overcome their anxiety in a classroom setting? A structured interview was used by the researcher. The students' anxiety is relieved after conducting an interview with them in a classroom setting. The interview is conducted following the administration of the FLCAS in order to investigate the students who tend to be anxious in the classroom and who will be chosen as interviewees, a group of five students. As a result, the students had their own method of dealing with their anxiety. The researcher discovered six distinct anxiety-coping strategies while investigating the students' strategies. These techniques include remaining silent, taking a deep breath, relaxing with the situation, repeating the lesson, avoiding eye contact, and drinking water.

Silence, Milliken et al. (2003) believed that the students' silence was caused by their fear of being labelled as incompetent. When compared to smarter students, the students are afraid of being labelled as incompetent (Aldred, 2013). Furthermore, according to Bailey et al. (1999), one of the most common strategies for dealing with the anxiety of adult students is silence. Because of their anxiety, students frequently choose not to participate in speaking class. When lecturers notice that their students are anxious, they should take action to reduce their anxiety.

Taking a deep breath, Suleimenova (2013) demonstrated that debilitating anxiety can lead to poor response when students speak English in the classroom and can also cause students to avoid the learning process in order to suppress their anxiety. When lecturers notice that their students are becoming anxious, they should give them enough time to relax or take a deep breath (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000). Standing in front of a crowd because you are afraid of making a mistake is one of the causes of anxiety. However, avoiding eye contact is a strategy for overcoming anxiety.

Repeating the lesson, repeating lessons is very important for students to do (Warren & Cooper, 2007). According to Smith & Neale, (1989) this is done to recall the material that has been taught at school, increase students' understanding of the lesson, and connect the subject matter that has been taught with the material that will be taught. This can certainly reduce the level of anxiety when talking about or conveying important points has been taught at school, increase students' understanding of the lesson, and connect the subject matter that has been taught with the material that will be taught. This can certainly reduce the level of anxiety when talking about or conveying important points. This is in line with Hardi, E.'s (2019) findings that repeating the lesson is good for reducing the anxiety of the students.

Avoiding eye contact, According to Gregersen (2003), students who avoid eye contact with participants or teachers are exhibiting a typical nonverbal reaction of anxious students. The lecturer should be aware of this situation, and the lecturer should occasionally say "be relaxed" or tell stories that may motivate students (Brophy, 1983). Beatty (1988) states one of the most common ways to reduce students' anxiety is to avoid making eye contact while speaking in public. Furthermore, the lecturer provided excellent motivation for the students to unwind. consuming water, The natural calming effects of water have also been demonstrated, most likely as a result of treating the negative effects of dehydration on the body and brain (Goss et al., 2003). According to Hobfoll et al (2007) a crucial component of anxiety control is drinking enough of water. Getting adequate water might make someone feel relaxed even if they are not nervous (Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000; Maude & Foureur, 2007).

These were extremely beneficial in helping the students cope with their anxiety. These strategies may help students feel less anxious (Mahmoud et al., 2012; Shortt et al., 2001). Every student has different anxiety-coping strategies, such as remaining silent, avoiding eye contact, faking a smile, taking a deep breath, and drinking water. Furthermore, pupils with low levels of anxiety use train and preparation to overcome it. Practice and preparation can be effective strategies for students who have high levels of anxiety in speaking class. These are strategies that will be very useful and beneficial, especially for students who experience anxiety, at least to reduce their anxiety in speaking class or another class. Because the findings above have shown that everyone has their own way of dealing with or decreasing their anxiety, the most essential thing for students to do to deal with their anxiety is to first identify which strategy is actually appropriate to cope with their anxiety.

Conclusion

The majority of English Education students at Unismuh Makassar had excessive anxiety; approximately 74,26 percent had enormous anxiety, 21,73 percent had middle anxiety, and no one had low anxiety. The lecture did not pay more attention to worried students in class; rather, it just enabled them to be anxious without giving any incentives to help them enjoy the class. The majority of students were anxious in the statement, "I worry when the lecturer asks me a question that I have never felt before." The influence of high levels of anxiety on motivation to talk in the classroom and on performance in the classroom meant that students were unable to articulate their opinions when the lecture pushed them to speak without preparation. Six strategies help students overcome their fear of speaking in class: remaining silent, taking a deep breath, relaxing with the situation, reiterating the lesson, avoiding eye contact, and drinking water.

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