

STUDENT ANXIETY IN ENGLISH SPEAKING PERFORMANCE: A CLASSROOM-BASED ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the issue of student anxiety related to English speaking performance within a classroom environment, focusing on a group of 11 English major students. Employing a quantitative methodology, data were gathered using a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which measured students' self-perceived nervousness, apprehension about grammatical errors, embarrassment over pronunciation, and lack of self-assurance. The results indicate that most participants (8 out of 11) experienced elevated anxiety during classroom speaking tasks, with primary concerns centering on making grammatical mistakes, feeling embarrassed about pronunciation, and possessing low self-confidence. Conversely, three students reported lower anxiety levels, highlighting the influence of individual and contextual factors on students' experiences. These findings emphasize the necessity of understanding classroom dynamics and implementing targeted pedagogical strategies to alleviate anxiety and foster a more supportive learning atmosphere. Recommendations include offering constructive feedback, integrating confidence-building activities, and cultivating a positive classroom climate to improve students' English speaking abilities and overall language learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Student Anxiety, English Speaking Performance, Classroom-Based Analysis, Foreign Language Anxiety, Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Mastery of English, particularly speaking skills, is increasingly viewed as a vital competence for students in today's globalized society. English functions as a common language for international communication, academic engagement, and career advancement, making it a crucial skill for university students, especially those specializing in English (Crystal, 2012; Jenkins, 2015). In the context of Indonesian higher education, English is both a mandatory subject and a significant factor influencing students' academic and professional prospects. Despite its recognized importance, many students face persistent obstacles in achieving fluency and confidence in spoken English.

A major impediment to effective English speaking is student anxiety, which manifests as nervousness when addressing the class, fear of grammatical errors, embarrassment about pronunciation, and diminished self-confidence. This issue is especially prominent among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, where authentic language use is limited and the classroom serves as the primary venue for practice (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Zhang & Rahimi, 2021).

Research consistently shows that speaking anxiety adversely affects students' willingness to participate, their fluency, and their academic performance (Yulia, 2021; Salija et al., 2022). While most studies have examined large populations, there is a lack of research focusing on the dynamics of anxiety within smaller, classroom-based groups. This study addresses this gap by providing a detailed analysis of anxiety among 11 English major students during speaking activities, with particular attention to their self-reported

nervousness, fear of grammatical errors, embarrassment about pronunciation, and lack of self-confidence.

Literature Review

Language anxiety has been a central topic in applied linguistics, especially in relation to second language acquisition. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as a unique form of anxiety specific to language learning contexts, encompassing communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. These dimensions often lead to avoidance, reduced participation, and lower language proficiency (Liu, 2018).

Recent research has further examined the origins and effects of speaking anxiety among university students. For example, Salija et al. (2022) found that fear of mistakes and embarrassment were the main contributors to anxiety among Indonesian university students. Similarly, Zhang and Rahimi (2021) identified low self-confidence and limited language skills as factors discouraging classroom participation. Quantitative studies have played a key role in measuring anxiety and revealing significant links between anxiety and speaking performance (Yulia, 2021).

Despite extensive research on speaking anxiety, most studies have utilized large samples, potentially overlooking the unique dynamics present in smaller classroom groups. Classroom-based research is vital for understanding how anxiety manifests in real-time and how it interacts with individual and group learning processes. This study seeks to enrich existing literature by offering a nuanced examination of anxiety among a specific group of English major students.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was employed to systematically examine the anxiety experienced by 11 English major students during classroom speaking activities. The study took place in a natural classroom setting where speaking tasks were a regular part of the curriculum.

Data collection was conducted using a standardized questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The instrument assessed students' self-reported nervousness, fear of grammatical errors, embarrassment about pronunciation, and lack of self-confidence, with responses rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

The questionnaire was administered immediately following several classroom speaking sessions to ensure responses accurately reflected students' recent experiences. Additionally, brief interviews were conducted with selected participants to gain deeper insight into their perspectives.

Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and frequency distributions, were used to analyze the data, focusing on identifying anxiety patterns and exploring correlations between anxiety sources and self-reported confidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of the questionnaire revealed that most students (8 out of 11) reported high anxiety when speaking English in class. The most commonly cited sources were fear of grammatical errors (mean score = 4.2), embarrassment over pronunciation (mean score = 3.9), and low self-confidence (mean score = 4.1). Students expressed concerns about being judged by peers and instructors, and many admitted to avoiding speaking tasks when possible.

In contrast, three students reported lower anxiety levels (mean scores between 2.1 and 2.8), feeling more at ease during speaking activities and less worried about making mistakes. Interview data indicated that these students possessed higher self-confidence, better language proficiency, and more positive attitudes toward learning English.

These findings align with previous studies that have identified fear of negative evaluation and low self-confidence as key sources of speaking anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Salija et al., 2022). The results also highlight the significance of classroom environment and teacher support in reducing anxiety and promoting participation (Yulia, 2021).

Moreover, this study demonstrates the value of classroom-based research in clarifying the complex relationships among individual differences, classroom dynamics, and language learning outcomes. The presence of students with lower anxiety suggests that targeted interventions, such as confidence-building exercises and supportive feedback, can help reduce anxiety and enhance speaking performance.

KESIMPULAN

This study offers a comprehensive classroom-based examination of student anxiety in English speaking performance among 11 English major students. The results confirm that most students experience considerable anxiety when speaking English in class, mainly due to fear of errors, embarrassment about pronunciation, and lack of confidence. However, a minority of students reported lower anxiety, indicating that both individual and contextual factors affect students' experiences.

The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to reduce anxiety and support the development of speaking skills. Educators are encouraged to foster a supportive classroom environment, provide constructive feedback, and implement strategies that build students' confidence and language proficiency. Future research could further investigate the effectiveness of specific pedagogical approaches in alleviating speaking anxiety and improving language learning outcomes.

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