

## STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY IN EFL CLASSROOM

Asyifa<sup>1</sup>, Ayu Maulidia Handayani<sup>2</sup>, Siska Rizkiani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IKIP Siliwangi

<sup>2</sup> IKIP Siliwangi

<sup>3</sup> IKIP Siliwangi

<sup>1</sup> asy.syifa88@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup> ayumaulidia20@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup> esiska.rizkiani@gmail.com

### Abstract

This study investigated the students' speaking anxiety in the first grade of vocational high school. It emphasized on the level, the causal factors and the strategy to reduce the anxiety. It applied descriptive qualitative to answer the research questions. The data were obtained through questionnaire and interview. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaires and interview were administered to 30 students. It was revealed that the factors that make students feel anxious in speaking in English were lack of preparation, afraid of left behind in understanding the material or what the teacher talks about, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being laughed by his/her friends, unconfident to spell, pronounce and select the words in English. It was also found that there were eight students in level Relaxed, twelve students in level Mildly Anxious, and ten students in level Anxious. Last, the strategies that students should do to reduce their anxiety are do more preparation before speaking, try to be more confident in saying English words, and pronunciation practice.

**Keywords:** Speaking, Speaking anxiety

### INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that there are four skills in English learning. The skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. All these skills are correlated with each other. Ur, (1996:120) says that from all the four skills, speaking seems the most important. It is supported by Parmawati (2018: 21) that speaking has been the most important skill of English language because speaking is the communication tool of daily life. Furthermore, Hornby (1995: 37) in Sartika (2016:274) defines speaking as the skill that the students will be evaluated upon most in their real-life situations. It becomes the skill that mostly used in communication. In developing speaking skill, students not only have to learn and prepare about vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and other English knowledge but also have to build their confidence, public speaking, and their fluency in speaking.

Speaking in English for EFL classroom is not easy because students have to speak in a new language with high self-confidence. Speaking fluently can show that they get good proficiency in learning the foreign language. Commonly students feel nervous, not confident, and anxiety. This phenomenon called foreign language anxiety. According to Gardner & MacIntyre (1993:2) language anxiety may be outlined because the worry or apprehension occurring once a learner is anticipated to perform within the second or foreign language. Anxiety is one of the negative emotions that have the potential to distract students' learning effort in learning English. According to Carlson and Buskist (1997) in Musthachim (2014:4), anxiety is a sense of apprehension or doom that's in the middle of sure psychological reactions, like accelerated vital sign, sweating palms, and tightness within the cannot build their ability supreme. The students, therefore, will not be able to build their ability to the fullest.

Speaking anxiety as something that has a big influence on students' self-confidence because it often makes them experience failure when unable to speak and show what is known. This speaking anxiety makes learners have low-confidence to perform in front of or to other people, and because of that the learner cannot understand teacher explanation well. Brown (1994) in Maulidiyah (2014:22) adds that it is related to the sensation of uneasiness, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry. When language learners become highly anxious, acquisition of a foreign language is not to be successful. Oxford (1999:66) in Maulidiyah (2014:24) indicated that anxiety damages language learners' achievement indirectly through worry and timorousness and directly by reducing participation and making explicit rejection of the language. Likewise, Arnold and Brown (1999) in Maulidiyah (2014:24) contended that anxiety has down-spiraling effects once it happens within the room, what they tacitly may be a vicious circle occurring unceasingly between learners' negative feelings and undesirable performance. Similarly, Kondo and Yong (2004) in Maulidiyah (2014:24) argued that foreign language anxiety might have a negative impact on learners' performance. Further, Gregersen (2005) in Maulidiyah (2014:24) maintained that anxious learners usually realize it troublesome to reply effectively to their own mistakes.

The teacher should have strategies to reduce the students' anxiety. According to Kreshen (2003) in Sulastris & Ratnawati (2018:424) said that learning English as a distant learning involving medication factors like timorousness, worry of being wrong, lack of confidence, anxiety and different emotive factors have an effect on the power of one's language. Crookall & Oxford (1991) in Fujii (2016:10) it is necessary for each teacher and students to contemplate themselves as a partnership and think about themselves as making an attempt along to beat the matter a hysteria, so neither would see the other as a supply or problem, and each might work along to cope with the common problem. Rather than simply giving recommendation on the way to improve English skills, teacher might have to be compelled to have careful discussion with students regarding their existing issues related to their anxious feelings.

Students' anxiety in speaking to perform in front of the class or with the teacher or another student may influence in some aspects, such as in language acquisition, or their ability in mastering the foreign language. From this assumption, this study concerns foreign language students' anxiety of vocational high school students in first grade. The aims of this research are to find out what are the factors that make students feel anxious in learning English, what are the levels of students' anxiety in learning English, and what are the strategies that students do to reduce their anxiety.

## METHOD

The method that was used in this study was qualitative descriptive. According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2008) in Apsari, Syathroh, & Rizqiya (2017: 306) that qualitative research as stated that: (1) its natural setting is the source of direct data and the researcher is the key instrument of qualitative research; (2) qualitative data is collected in the form of words or images, rather than numbers; (3) qualitative researchers examine processes as well as outcomes; (4) qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively; (5) the main focus of qualitative research is how people understand their lives.

Questionnaire and interview were the instruments applied for conducting this study. The questionnaire was taken from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986). The questionnaire consisted of 33 items with five-point

scale. The points scales are SA (strongly agree), A (agree), NOR (neither agree nor disagree), D (disagree), and SD (strongly disagree).

In addition, semi structured interview was used in this study. As proposed by Patton (1990) cited in Apsari and Satriani (2016) that semi structured interview is intended to collect in-depth responses from the respondents and to set clear limits of questions in avoiding wider students' responses. The interview guide was adapted from Price (1991:103) in Musthachim (2014:19) focuses on foreign language anxiety. Furthermore, the interview was using the Indonesian language to avoid misunderstanding and ambiguity between the interviewer and interviewee.

There were several steps in analyzing the data. First, writers chose purposively 30 students from 465 students of first-grade students as the respondents of this research. Second, the writers asked students to answer the questionnaire and collected at the same day. Third, the writers interviewed students that have the result of the questionnaire that have relaxed, anxious, and mildly anxious level. Then, after the data collected the writers integrated and related the findings to the background of the study, mainly to the research questions, theories, and the methodology for classifying the data into manageable units as proposed by Emilia (2008) cited in Apsari (2018).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. The Result of Questionnaire

The first data was taken by questionnaire. The questionnaire consist of 33 items. The result shows in the table below :

**Table 1.** The Result of Students' Level of Anxiety

No.	Paricipants	Students' Anxiety Score	Level of Anxiety
1.	Student 1	83	Relaxed
2.	Student 2	90	Mildly Anxious
3.	Student 3	113	Anxious
4.	Student 4	111	Anxious
5.	Student 5	117	Anxious
6.	Student 6	104	Mildly Anxious
7.	Student 7	104	Mildly Anxious
8.	Student 8	93	Mildly Anxious
9.	Student 9	105	Mildly Anxious
10.	Student 10	69	Relaxed
11.	Student 11	113	Anxious
12.	Student 12	92	Mildly Anxious
13.	Student 13	96	Mildly Anxoius
14.	Student 14	81	Relaxed
15.	Student 15	80	Relaxed
16.	Student 16	80	Relaxed
17.	Student 17	101	Mildly Anxious
18.	Student 18	101	Mildly Anxious
19.	Student 19	120	Anxious
20.	Student 20	109	Anxious

21.	Student 21	80	Relaxed
22.	Student 22	106	Mildly Anxoious
23.	Student 23	79	Relaxed
24.	Student 24	82	Relaxed
25.	Student 25	111	Anxious
26.	Student 26	115	Anxious
27.	Student 27	107	Mildly Anxoious
28.	Student 28	90	Mildly Anxoious
29.	Student 29	119	Anxious
30.	Student 30	120	Anxious

Based on the result that shows in table above, there were eight students in level Relaxed, twelve students in level Mildly Anxious, and ten students in level Anxious. It means that the most of the students were in level Midly Anxious.

## 2. The Result of Interview

The second data applied in this research was the interview. The interview was to find out what are the factors that made the students feel anxiety. Six students were choosen with different levels in anxiety to do the interview. There were seven questions in the interview.

**Table 2.** The Result of Interview

No.	Questions	Results
1.	How do you feel when studying English in the classroom?	All of the samples answered that they feel happy when they study English.
2.	What the thing that bothers you when studying English in the classroom?	Three of the samples answered there is nothing that bothers them when studying English in the classroom. Two of the samples answered the noisy class is the thing that bothers them when studying English. One of the samples answered the thing that bothers her when study English is when she does not understand the material.
3.	Do you have any idea why you feel so anxious in your English class?	Five of the samples answered they feel anxious when they do not understand the material that the teacher taught them in English class. One of the students answered mindset is the thing that makes him feel anxious in English class.
4.	How do you think your classmates will react if you make a mistake in English class?	All the samples answered that some of their classmates will laugh or try to fix their mistake or do not care about the mistake that they made.
5.	Do you think English is a difficult language to learn?	All of the samples answered English is a difficult language to learn

		because they have a problem with how to pronounce words in English and understand the materials.
6.	Do teacher influence your mood in learning English?	All of the samples answered yes because if the teacher is bored they do not have any motivation to learn.
7.	Do you have any idea to make learning English more relax?	All of the samples answered that they want teaching and learning process is not too focus which is to relax and use educational games to make learning more fun.
8.	What is your strategy to reduce your speaking anxiety?	All of the samples answered that they have to do more practice such as pronunciation practice, try to speak in front of the mirror or speak with friends, improve their vocabulary knowledge, motivate themselves to speak in front of their friends.

From the table above, it can be concluded that the students’ anxiety affected by the understanding of the material, noisy class, afraid if their classmates will laugh or try to fix their mistake or do not care about the mistake that they made, felt bored during the learning process because the teacher taught them with uninteresting way, did not know how to pronounce the words correctly, and the teacher taught them too focus so make students not relax and have no motivation in learning English. The students’ strategies in reducing the speaking anxiety are do practice in pronouncing the words correctly, try to speak in front of the mirror or speak with friends, improve their vocabulary knowledge, motivate themselves to speak in front of their friends.

**Discussion**

Based on the questionnaire already taken, the writers calculated the score from the participants that consist of 30 students. There was three levels of speaking anxiety, those are Relaxed, Mildly Anxious, and Anxious. 26,7% (eight students) students are in Relaxed level in learning English, 40% (twelve students) students are in Mildy Anxious level in learning English, and 33,3% (ten students) students are in Anxious level in learning English. It means that most of the students experienced Mildly anxious when they speak in English because little bit not feel confident, anxious, nervous, and worry about left behind in understanding the learning material in speaking English in the classroom. A little bit less than that, the students feel anxious in speaking English due to their less-confidence, anxiety, nervousness and worry. The result was supported by the theory from Arnold and Brown (1999) in Maulidiyah (2014:24) that anxiety has down-spiraling effects once it happens within the room, what they tacit may be a vicious circle occurring unceasingly between learners’ negative feelings and undesirable performance. It is also supported by the theory from Gardner & MacIntyre (1993:2) that said language anxiety may be outlined because the worry or apprehension occurring once a learner is anticipated to perform within the second or foreign language. Fortunately, it was also found that the rest of the students feel confident and relax in their English speaking.

Moreover, based on the interview data, it was obtained the finding about the factors that made students feel anxiety. The first is less prepared in English class. Less prepared in English class is the main factor that make students feel anxious because they are afraid if the teacher asks them about the material. The second is when the students do not understand the material that gave by the teacher. The third is if the students have a negative mindset when they are speaking, such as afraid of mispronouncing, misspelling the words, inappropriate words to the content, also they afraid if their friend will laugh to them if they make mistakes. So it makes the students anxious and feels unconfident to speak in English in front of their friends and their teacher. That factors supported by theory from Karshen (2003) in Sulastrri & Ratnawati (2018:424) that learning English as a distant learning involving medicament factors like timorousness, worry of being wrong, lack of confidence, anxiety and different emotive factors have an effect on the power of one's language.

Furthermore, based on the interview data, all of the samples of the students mentioned four strategies that they used to reduce their anxiety in speaking, the strategies are: (1) practice to pronounce the words in English, (2) try to speak in front of the mirror or with their friends to build self confidence, (3) improve their vocabulary knowledge to make them know which is the words that appropriate to use in speaking, (4) increase their motivation by build positive mindset when they are asked to speak in English by their teacher. It is supported by Sulastrri & Ratnawati (2018: 427) that students speaking anxiety can be reduce by self motivation and concentration in learning English.

## CONCLUSION

This study was aimed to find out the factors that make students feel anxious in speaking English, the levels of students' anxiety in speaking English, and the strategies that students do to reduce their anxiety. It was a ualitative descriptive study with questionnaire and interview as the instrument. The questionnaire was taken fom Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The questionnaire consisted of 33 items with five points scale and has three levels of anxiety. The questionnaire and instrumen given to 30 students of first grade. Based on the questionnaire data, it can be concluded that eight students in level relaxed, twelve students in level Mildly anxious, and ten students in level anxious. The students had different level with different difficulties or factors in speaking English. Based on the interview data, students might face some difficulties in speaking English. The first was less prepared in English or material, less preparation makes students worry, nervous, and not sure if the teacher asks the students about the material. Second, sometimes the students felt left behind in understanding the material, so it became an obstacle for the students. The third, students had problems in delivering or speaking in English, such as misspelling, mispronunciation, and selecting the words. Based on the result, that the students felt anxiety in speaking because of lack of preparation, afraid of left behind in understanding the material or what the teacher talks about, afraid of making mistakes, afraid of being laughed by his/her friends, unconfident to spell, pronounce and select the words in English. To reduce their anxiety in speaking, students do four strategies, those are: (1) practice to pronounce the words in English, (2) try to speak in front of the mirror or with their friends to build self confidence, (3) improve their vocabulary knowledge to make them know which is the words that appropriate to use in speaking, (4) increase their motivation by build positive mindset when they are asked to speak in English by their teacher.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writers would like to praise and express her high gratitude to Allah SWT, who has been giving the blessing, health, opportunity and inspiration to complete this journal. The writers realizes that this writing would not finish without helping and the guidance from the other people, so the writers would like to express hers deepest thanks to Dr. H. Heris Hendriana, M.Pd as the rector of IKIP Siliwangi Bandung, Yana, S.Pd., M.Pd as the head of English Education Study Program, Siska Rizkiani M.Pd our journal supervisor who gave us support to this research.

## REFERENCES

- Apsari, Y., & Satriani, I. (2016). Students' Perception Toward The Implementation Of Digital Storytelling In Teaching Writing. *P2M STKIP Siliwangi*, 3(2), 97-102.
- Apsari, Y., Syathroh, I. L., & Rizqiya, R. S. (2017). Promoting English Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) Through The Practice of Lesson Study. *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 11(2), 303-318.
- Apsari, Y. (2018). REFLECTIVE READING JOURNAL IN TEACHING WRITING. *Indonesian EFL Journal*, 4(2), 39-47.
- Fujii, S. (2016). A Conceptualization of Strategies for Reducing Students' Language Anxiety. *HELES JOURNAL*, 15, 3-19. Retrieved from [https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/helesje/15/0/15\\_1/\\_article](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/helesje/15/0/15_1/_article)
- Gardner, R. C., & MacIntyre, P. D. (1993). A Student's Contribution to Second Language Learning. Part II: Affective Variables. *Language Teaching*, 26(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800000045>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/327317>
- Mauludiyah, Y. (2014). The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and Their Ability in Speaking Class. *Stated English department at IAIN Tulungagung*.
- Musthachim, A. (2014). Students' anxiety in learning english: a case study at the 8th grade of SMPN 9 South Tangerang. *The State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah*.
- Parmawati, A. (2018). Using Analytic Teams Technique to Improve Students' Speaking Skill. *Edulitics (Education, Literature, and Linguistics) Journal*, 3(2), 21-25.
- Sartika, D. (2016). Teaching Speaking Using The Information GAP Technique. *English Education Journal*, 7(3), 273-285. Retrieved from <http://www.jurnal.unsyiah.ac.id/EEJ/article/view/4583>.
- Sulastri, & Ratnawati. (2018). Students' Strategies in Reducing Anxiety in Learning English. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies on Humanities*, 1(4), 423-428. Retrieved from <http://journal.unhas.ac.id/index.php/jish>
- Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching*. UK: Cambridge University.