



Speaking Anxiety in the Virtual English Classroom

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Abstract

This study explored the anxiety that students in English classes at the Faculty of Economy and Business at Universitas Prof. Dr. Hazairin SH experience when they have to speak in front of their peers. The goal of this research is to investigate both the factors that contribute to students' anxiety about public speaking as well as the ramifications of that fear. Undergraduate students from the Faculty of Economy and Business who were enrolled in an English class during the academic year 2022/2023 were eligible to participate in the study. Participants were selected at random. Out of a total of 210 students, there were 85 students chosen at random to participate in the study. The researchers used both questionnaires and interviews to obtain their data for this study. According to the findings, the vast majority of students experience substantial levels of anxiety when it comes to giving presentations in front of an audience. The interview also revealed that the students' worry was caused by a lack of vocabulary, challenges with confidence, fear of making errors, and shyness. All of these factors contributed to the students' anxiety.

Keywords: *Speaking anxiety, online English class*

Introduction

Many nations, notably Indonesia, have turned to online education as a means of protecting their citizens from the Covid-19 pandemic. The convenience of being able to access course materials and teacher lectures from any location makes online education an attractive option (Yulia, 2020). Unfortunately, numerous aspects of language learning have also been influenced by the shift in context. In particular, the psychological domain is one of the most affected.

Speaking, as a productive skill, necessitates learners to possess confidence in effectively conveying messages. According to Akkason (2016), the acquisition of speaking skills is comparatively challenging in comparison to the other three language skills. The reason for spoken language's reliance on direct interaction is rooted in the necessity for oral communication when engaging with others. Additionally, the remaining four skills can be developed through individual practise, whereas verbal language acquisition necessitates interaction with others. This highlights the importance of students actively seeking out additional individuals to engage in conversation with. Nunan (2000) asserts that the acquisition of a foreign or second language is greatly influenced by the development of speaking skills. Additionally, the author emphasises that the assessment of language learning achievement lies in a student's ability to engage in a conversation in the target language. It can be inferred that the acquisition of speaking fluency is a crucial aspect in the process of language acquisition.

Speaking skills encompass the ability to articulate meaningful words in order to effectively communicate with others. This activity encourages people to satisfy their needs in expressing opinions

and transmitting messages, ideas, and information. The acquisition of proficient oral communication skills holds considerable importance in the process of acquiring a foreign language for certain individuals. In general, people assess the proficiency of students acquiring foreign languages primarily based on their oral communication skills. According to Abdurahman (2020), individuals who engage in the process of learning and studying English should strive to acquire the necessary skills and proficiency to effectively utilise the language as a medium of communication.

There are four key components that should be considered in communication: the purpose and participants of conversations, the context of discussions, and the speaker's knowledge and experience. Given the imperative role of English as a medium of communication, it is imperative that English be incorporated into the curriculum at all educational levels in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the implementation of the government's compulsory language policy encounters significant challenges. Acquiring proficiency in spoken English can pose an enormous obstacle for many students due to the necessity of engaging in interactive communication, a skill that not all students possess.

The phenomenon was also observed by researchers during the preliminary study that was conducted at the Faculty of Economy and Business in Universitas Prof Dr Hazairin SH. The researcher additionally discovered that students exhibited a tendency to refrain from active participation during certain online class activities. The students exhibited a preference for abstaining from activating their cameras. Despite the online nature of the course, students exhibited apprehension towards actively participating in the discussion. A portion of the students showed a reluctance to respond to the teacher's requests. Many students struggle with speaking anxiety, which hinders their ability to effectively communicate their language skills in the classroom, thus restricting their opportunities for language development. In his seminal work, Ellis (1994) provided a comprehensive classification of speaking anxiety, delineating it into three distinct categories: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. According to Daly (1991), there are several prevalent factors that can contribute to the experience of speaking anxiety. These factors include the fear of being humiliated, inadequate preparation, a lack of confidence in one's physical appearance, apprehension regarding audience criticism, and low self-esteem. According to Brown (2000), anxiety levels can be categorized into three distinct types: individual trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situational-specific anxiety.

In the opinion of Daly (1991), some typical causes of speaking anxiety include being humiliated, inadequate preparation, feeling insecure about one's appearance, worry about audience criticism, and low self-esteem. Individual trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situational anxiety were the three categories that Brown (2000) used to categorize anxiety levels. The ultimate objective of studying English is to be able to communicate with native speakers. However, speaking phobia may be a barrier to reaching the objective. According to Horwitz (1986), when students converse with a native speaker, mental barriers become their largest problem. Students become anxious and less self-assured as a result, taking a step back from their learning experience.

To get beyond a mental block, psychological elements must be early identified before being reduced and controlled. According to Thornbury (2002), failure and speaking anxiety are mostly brought on by a lack of vocabulary and grammar understanding as well as a fear of making mistakes. Pichette (2009) went on to say that the lack of speaking preparedness, the difficulty with linguistics, and the limited vocabulary of pupils were common causes of concern. Thus, speaking anxiety has a substantial negative impact on pupils' speaking abilities and develops into a serious psychological issue. Their ability to learn new things and connect with others, particularly when learning a foreign language like English, can be hampered by this. In light of the aforementioned information, the researcher made an effort to look into students' speaking anxiety and determine its sources and effects in online English lessons.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxiety is often understood to be low self-efficacy brought on by imagined dangers or uncomfortable feelings associated with a threat. Someone who is afraid to speak will experience speaking anxiety. Fear and mental turmoil are both brought on by anxiety. Horwitz discovered that anxiety is a universal emotion that people of all ages experience on a personal level. The dread of communication, the fear of being judged negatively, and emotions of general anxiety may cause learners to feel uneasy when learning a foreign language. According to Huyen (2003), Boonkit (2010), and Liu

(2011) as well as other researchers, speaking anxiety is frequently caused by a lack of language, a lack of confidence, a fear of making mistakes and being laughed at, a lack of preparation, and feelings of guilt. Furthermore, Gregersen claimed that learners' concern about learning foreign languages, which may be brought on by their learning, makes the experience less pleasurable.

Another study on language anxiety has revealed that the biggest contributor to language anxiety is a lack of confidence, which makes learners frustrated. There are three types of anxiety in language learning, according to Dixon (2012): trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. These comments indicate that there are a variety of potential causes for student worry. varied causes of stress will have varied impacts, and dealing with different types of anxiety may call for different solutions. There are a few indicators that anxiousness is present. Johnston (2006) lists a few indicators of anxiety, including bodily symptoms like sweating, headaches, and shortness of breath, emotional symptoms like fear of dying, and cognitive symptoms such trouble concentrating. That is, they experience anxiety. Teachers should assist students who exhibit indicators of worry by reducing their tension and offering strategies to deal with it. The symptoms of mental fear can be one of the markers of anxiety. Feeling frightened, possibly convincing ourselves that we are physically unwell, having a heart attack, or going insane, believing that others are staring at us, worried that we will lose control and humiliate ourselves in front of others, and believing that we must do it are examples of these symptoms. Get away and go somewhere secure. Stress has a good side, despite the fact that anxiety is typically focused on bad things.

Researchers have come to the conclusion that "anxiety is a feeling and is related to the psychological system of a person who feels uneasy caused by nervousness or worry about something might happen in the future." Furthermore, anxiety is a risk in a circumstance and can be lessened if a person has succeeded in getting what he wants. The nervousness associated with public speaking was also the subject of various investigations by researchers.

In the opinion of Pichette (2009), there were a number of preferred common reasons for students to choose online learning. These reasons include "online learning," which is the most common thing in their places, time flexibility, the cost, life roles, difficulty in commuting, disability, and personal reasons. Later on, he added that students who suffer from anxiety are hesitant to engage with their peers in offline classrooms. As a result, students who suffer from anxiety frequently opt for online learning since it gives anonymity and allows them to avoid interacting with their classmates. He was specifically referring to students who experience anxiety when studying a foreign language. It is possible to draw the conclusion that the high-level anxiety student found the online environment to be less stressful as a result of his statement.

In contrast, a study conducted by Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) utilized in-depth interviews to ascertain the perspectives of twelve students. The findings revealed that a majority of nine students acknowledged that the online learning environment elicited feelings of anxiety. It is conceivable that individuals may have been motivated by their fear of not attaining optimal language learning outcomes. In contrast to Pichette's (2009) findings that highlighted the advantages of anonymity for anxious students in online learning, Kaisar and Chowdhury's (2020) participant consistently expressed concerns regarding the dominance of the teacher in online learning. The absence of students' presence in the virtual classroom was perceived as limiting their opportunities for interaction, resulting in a perceived lack of engagement, diminished benefits, and discomfort. Consequently, the participant harbored apprehensions regarding potential declines in their language learning achievements. Regrettably, the aforementioned contradiction fails to provide clarity regarding the specific level of anxiety experienced by students as asserted by Kaisar and Chowdhury (2020) in the context of online learning.

The research conducted by Grant, Huang, and Pasfield-Neofitou (2013) investigated whether or not students at Monash University experience a lower level of FLA while participating in an online multiuser 3D virtual world simulation as opposed to the traditional face-to-face learning setting. It was stated that there were a number of aspects of FLA that were present in both face-to-face and virtual learning, and that these aspects were comparable in both face-to-face and virtual learning contexts. In addition, students reported that the virtual environment was less stressful than the traditional classroom setting when it came to the usage of language.

Antoro (2015) did a survey named "Factors Influencing the Students' Anxiety in Speaking English Of The Eight Grade Students Of MTs N " that was focused on the causes of speaking anxiety. The goal of this study is to learn more about the variables that influence anxiety-related speaking patterns and the effects of the major variables on these patterns in first-year English Department Faculty

students at Latter Jember University. In other studies, Rumini Yuliana (2017) and Nur Lina Amalia Huda (2018) investigated the factors that contribute to students' anxiety in speaking performances, including the types of stress that students experience, the factors and techniques that can be used to lessen that anxiety, and the levels of that anxiety. Both studies investigate for elements related to speaking English with anxiety, which is where the similarities between earlier research and this study lie. On the other hand, this study is unique in that it explores speaking anxiety in online learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher who designed this study opts to conduct descriptive research. The sample consists of students who are currently enrolled in the second year of the Faculty of Economy and Business during the academic year 2022/2023. There are 210 people in total within the student body. However, Gayet al. (2000) state that a sample size of at least 10% is required in order to conduct descriptive research. This is regarded the bare minimum. The researchers decided to conduct their study with 85 different students. There was no pattern to the selection of examples. A questionnaire will be used as the instrument for the investigation. According to McIntyre and colleagues' findings, the items on the questionnaire were developed based on the anxiety indicators of the students. The components in the questionnaire were taken directly from Horwitz (1986) and renamed using the acronym FLAC, which is an abbreviation for the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The goal of the survey was to gain an understanding of the extent to which students suffer from public speaking anxiety. The experience of anxiety can be broken down into three distinct stages: low, medium, and high. SD stands for "Strongly Disagree." Disagree (D) Neither agree nor disagree; a neutral response On the basis of A: Agree SA: Strongly Agree

No	Questions	Answer				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I never feel pretty sure of myself when speaking English, even in an online class.					
2	I tremble when I know that I will be called to perform in an online class.					
3	I enjoy following the speaking test.					
4	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in class.					
5	I worry about the consequences of failing my speaking performance.					
6	When I perform my speaking, I tend to forget all the things.					
7	When I'm performing in an online class, I often feel ashamed.					
8	I don't have to worry about making a mistake in my speaking					

	performance.					
9	I don't mind taking the speaking test.					
10	I often forget everything I am supposed to say and feel nervous when speaking.					
11	I feel anxious when speaking, even if I'm well prepared.					
12	when I need to perform speaking, I often feel like I'm not present					
13	I feel confident speaking in class.					
14	when I was going to be called to speak, my heart pounding.					
15	I became more confused the more I learned and practised speaking.					
16	I felt being forced to perform in an online class.					
17	When I speak, I can feel confident.					
18	When I speak, I feel confused and nervous.					
19	When I speak, I feel relaxed.					
20	Whenever I speak in class, I fear that the other students will laugh at me.					

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Once the data has been compiled, the researcher proceeds to analyze the questionnaires and subsequently organizes all participant responses into tables using the Likert Scale. The FLCAS does not provide specific instructions or guidelines for the interpretation of responses. Kriangkrai (2012) proposes a straightforward approach for analyzing the questionnaire. The utilization of the Likert scale in this study is justified by its widespread adoption for questionnaire analysis. One advantage of utilizing the Likert scale is its ability to capture the respondent's degree of opinion, rather than solely relying on a binary yes/no response. The Likert scale employs a five-point rating system to facilitate individuals in expressing their level of agreement or disagreement with specific statements. The present study employed questionnaires consisting of 20 items, with a maximum possible score of 100. Anxiety levels can be classified into three categories based on numerical ranges. Scores falling between 70 and 100 are considered indicative of high anxiety, while scores ranging from 40 to 69 are classified as moderate anxiety. Scores below 40 are categorized as low anxiety. The researcher subsequently assessed the participants' anxiety levels and categorized them into a high anxiety group, consisting of 66 participants, based on the collected data. Simultaneously, 17 individuals are classified within the category of moderate performance accompanied by moderate levels of anxiety, while the remaining three participants are categorized as high performers exhibiting low levels of anxiety.

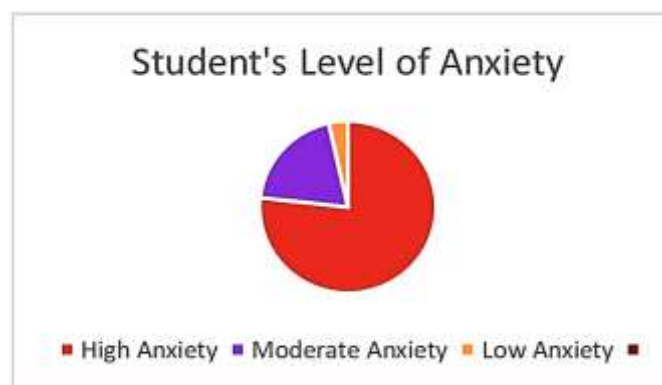


Chart 1. Levels of Student's Anxiety Student's

Based on the interview, it was found that out of the total of 85 students, 31 students identified the lack of vocabulary as a contributing factor to their anxiety. Additionally, 23 students expressed a lack of confidence when speaking English, while 35 students indicated fear of making mistakes. They exhibit a singular fear of making errors, devoid of any additional amalgamation of anxiety. Individuals experience a sense of potential embarrassment when they commit errors, perceiving that such mistakes may lead to social humiliation in the presence of their peers.

Additionally, they harbor negative emotions when they inadvertently provide incorrect information or items to others. The fear of being subjected to ridicule by friends further exacerbates their apprehension. Furthermore, their anxiety is particularly pronounced in relation to unclear enunciation. Shyness is an additional contributing factor to the occurrence of anxiety experienced by students when engaging in speaking activities. Within this particular factor, it is noteworthy to mention that out of a total of 85 students, a mere 22 students express feelings of shame when it comes to engaging in conversations in the English language.

According to the theoretical perspectives put forth by Huyen (2003), Boonkit (2010), and Liu (2011), it has been suggested that various factors contribute to student anxiety. These factors encompass a range of issues such as inadequate vocabulary, low self-assurance, apprehension of making errors and facing ridicule, insufficient preparation, and feelings of shame. Based on the conducted interview, the researcher observed that a significant number of students experienced feelings of anxiety when engaging in English communication, particularly during performance-based activities. There are multiple factors that contribute to students experiencing anxiety when delivering presentations in front of their peers. The factors contributing to this phenomenon include a deficiency in vocabulary, a lack of self-assurance, a fear of making mistakes, and a sense of shame.

The researcher discovered that the primary determinant among the students was their apprehension towards committing errors. Individuals may experience fear of being ridiculed by their peers if they commit an error, or they may be apprehensive about making mistakes due to the potential dissemination of inaccurate information among their social circle. The individuals in question exhibit a desire to avoid experiencing embarrassment in the presence of their acquaintances. One additional factor that contributes to anxiety when speaking English is the insufficient acquisition of vocabulary. A significant number of individuals came to the realization that they were deficient in linguistic abilities. This phenomenon induces a state of anxiety, thereby exacerbating the existing anxiety levels. One contributing factor to the experience of anxiety is a deficiency in self-assurance. A significant proportion of students commonly encounter a deficiency in their self-assurance. This reason is grounded in their limited self-assurance, particularly when engaging in English conversation. In reality, individuals appear at ease when expressing their personality traits. Individuals who seek to be the focal point of attention among their peers in a classroom setting often lack self-belief.

The last factor contributing to anxiety is the experience of shame. Shame is identified as a contributing factor to the development of anxiety among students. Based on a series of comprehensive interviews, a significant number of students reported experiencing emotions of embarrassment during verbal communication. Due to his shyness, he exhibits limited verbal communication during routine activities. On the other hand, one of the students experienced feelings of embarrassment when communicating in English due to the influence of various factors, specifically the limited range of

vocabulary at their disposal.

This theory pertains to trait anxiety and is attributed to Elli. Trait anxiety is a fundamental aspect of an individual's personality characterized by enduring patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that are typically associated with a heightened state of anxiety. This trait is considered to be relatively stable and resistant to change over time. The inclusion of students in this category arises from their incapacity to effectively articulate their feelings, emotions, ideas, and thoughts, which stems from their inability to regulate their nervousness. Therefore, the extent to which their participation in classroom activities contributed to the enhancement of their oral communication skills was subject to scrutiny. Individuals often exhibit a preference for silence rather than actively engaging in verbal discourse or contributing ideas during classroom discussions. This phenomenon is also observed in various situations or subjects within an educational setting.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the research and the preceding debate have led to the following conclusion: the majority of students in the Economy and Business Faculty at Universitas Prof Dr Hazairin SH experience high levels of anxiety when it comes to public speaking. The researcher discovered another important finding, which was that the most important aspect for the pupils was the fear of making mistakes. Due to the fact that the scope of this investigation is restricted to the causes and effects of public speaking fear, additional research could focus on an examination of the methods teacher use to address this issue.

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