

## FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY AT ONE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN JAMBI: PERSONALITY TRAITS, MOTIVATION, AND FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ASPECTS

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### Abstract

This research aimed to describe factors that influence students' speaking anxiety and to explore the strategies used by the students to overcome their anxiety. The site of this research was at one public university in Jambi. The researcher utilised purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants. There were 12 participants of this research which including 7<sup>th</sup> semester students, 5<sup>th</sup> semester students, and 3<sup>rd</sup> semester students who have passed speaking classes. This research employed qualitative study with case study approach in one English teacher study program. In collecting the data, the researcher used interview and documentation as the data collection. The results of this research indicated that there were still several factors faced by the students which influenced their speaking anxiety. Those factors were afraid, shy, unconfident, overthinking, nervous, mood, low motivation, and family support. The most factors felt by the students were overthinking and unconfident. This research also pointed out that the participants used several strategies to overcome their anxiety in speaking. There were 9 strategies employed by the participants including taking a deep breathe, practicing, being confident, calming down, studying hard, being well-prepared, being alone, discussing with friends, and getting motivation from friends.

**Keywords:** *Speaking, Anxiety, Personality Traits, Motivation, Family Environment.*

### INTRODUCTION

English is an international language which is spoken by many countries in the world. In this modern era, it has been essential for many people to have a proficient ability to speak English if they want to compete with people in international level. Therefore, there are a lot of people have a strong wish for learning English language for many purposes. For instance, university students study English education because they want to be English teachers in the future. Besides, learning English is another huge opportunity for English students who do not want to work as English teachers to get a better job since many companies require employees to be well spoken or written in English.

Speaking is undoubtedly one of the most essential skills among four other skills in English language (Ur, 1996). It is also one of productive skills in English language beside writing skill. This requires students who study English at English education department have to have the mastery of speaking skill to communicate well with other people particularly with their classmates or lecturers at university. However, most of English students feel that speaking skill is difficult to be mastered since English is not their first language. As we know, in Indonesia English is still categorized as a foreign language which means they do not use English in daily communication. When it comes to speaking ability, mostly, developing proficiency in communicating is the main goal of many students who study language particularly English. Thus, it is undeniable that the purpose of learning a new language is to able to speak it fluently. For this reason, having communication skills in

English is difficult task for foreign language learners since it is also influenced by several factors that hinder them to speak such as non-academic factors.

The issue of speaking that makes students cannot interact well is anxiety. Consequently, there are still many students who do not feel confident enough or afraid to speak in front of class even with their classmates. This feeling will hamper them to enhance their speaking ability. Anxiety is the pivotal factor that has a weakening outcome on the oral performance of students. As supported Horwitz and Cope (1986) that foreign language anxiety is the feeling of unease, worry, nervousness and apprehension met when learning or using a foreign language. Tanveer (2007) added that these feelings are commonly expressed by English Foreign Language or EFL learners in terms of speaking a foreign language in public places. In order to be successful in learning language students both need cognitive and affective features. Anxiety known as an affective factor that has become an observable issue which leads to affect students' performance (Chastain, 1975; Scott, 1986). Thus, there has been a number of researches related to this area since the 1970s. The aim is none other than to investigate the causes of language anxiety. Horwitz and Cope (1986) found these three factors which influence speaking anxiety in foreign language namely test anxiety, apprehension of verbal communication, and fear of negative evaluation. Moreover, Young (1991) exposed several potential causes of anxiety such as personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language tests. Of those familiar findings, the studies of language anxiety are still pertinent up to date.

This research is part of a large-scale research entitled "FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY" conducted by a research team of English lecturers at Universitas Jambi. This research employed a mixed method study. The first part of this research is quantitative study by administering a survey to all English students at one public university at Jambi. There were 119 students participated in the survey and the results indicated that students, in general, felt anxious in speaking English. From this reason, the researcher is interested in conducting more research about what are the factors students' speaking anxiety at one public university in Jambi. This research uses qualitative with case study approach for English students in one English teacher program study.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This research was intended to elicit the students' perspective on the speaking anxiety in one English teacher program study. To achieve the aim of the research, the researcher made use of qualitative design with a case study approach. Yin (1994) stated that in a research, research design is a crucial part for the researcher as guidance in the process of analysing, interpreting, and collecting the data.

### **Research Participants**

To find out the answers of the research, the researcher utilised purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants. The researcher was part of a research team in the large-scale study conducted by English lecturers at Universitas Jambi. Therefore, this research was conducted at one public university in Jambi. There are some criteria in selecting the participants (1) the participants feel anxious in speaking English, (2) the participants are willing to be participated in this research, (3) the researcher has an access to the participants. In this research, the researcher selected 12 participants from students at English teacher study program. These 12 selected participants were the students which have participated in the survey carried out by the research team in the large-scale study. In general, the results of the research indicated that students felt anxious in speaking English.

From that reason, these 12 students were chosen purposively by the researcher as the participants of the research. The participants came from different semester, namely, there were 5 students from seventh semester, 5 students from fifth semester, and 2 students from third semester.

### **Data Collection Technique**

In doing research, collecting data is essential part. This process involved of selecting data by using some research instruments or applying some methods of collecting data. Data collection method can be divided into four techniques which are commonly used in qualitative research such as interview, observation, questionnaire, and documentation. In this research, the researcher utilised interview and documentation.

### **Interview**

The researcher employed interview as a method to obtain data from the respondents. In line with McMillan and Schumacher (2010) interview is commonly employed in qualitative research as research instruments to assist the researcher to get data. In most cases, based on McMillan and Schumacher (2010) there are three kinds of interview, namely, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. From those three kinds of interview, the researcher employed semi-structured interview as a research instrument. . In total, 12 participants were interviewed by the researcher. This interview has complied to the health protocol due to pandemic.

### **Documentation**

Documentation was another technique used by the researcher. The selection of this technique was none other than to assist the researcher to collect more data from the participants. The recent speaking anxiety research conducted by Asparanita (2020) also used documentation to help her collecting the data. Thus, in this research, the researcher collected some notes and provided the researcher some pictures while interviewing the participants to assist the researcher to get more data.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is also another crucial step in doing a research. The purpose of conducting this data analysis was to answer the research questions so it would be purposeful. In this case, the researcher analysed the data after all the data have been collected. According to Bogdan and Bicklen (1982:248) in their research, data analysis is the way of researchers to search and arrange interview transcript, field notes, and other materials that have been accumulated so they can improve their understanding and allow the researchers to present what have been found to others. In this research, the researcher utilised thematic analysis as data analysis technique. Thematic analysis is well-known data analysis in qualitative research ( cf, Braun & Clarke, 2006; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This method of analysis can be used as acceptable and better to explore society and the differences in experience and perspective among the respondents related to the current phenomenon.

### **Trustworthiness**

According to Thomas (2006), in qualitative study, trustworthiness is essential part to be considered Lincoln and Guba (1985), defined trustworthiness as a way for researchers to be able to convince readers that their findings are worth to be mindful by considering four criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To do this, in

its implementation, the researcher employed member checking by returning the transcription of interview to the participants to be checked or revised before going to the process of data analysis.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

#### Challenges

According to the participants who have taken a part in this research, they encounter some issues which influence them feel anxious in speaking. There are two emerging themes found in the interviews such as personality traits and motivation or family environment. Each theme also has more than one sub theme which can be seen in the table below:

	Theme	Sub-theme
Participants' Issues	Personality Traits	Feeling afraid Shyness Being unconfident Overthinking Being Nervous Mood
	Motivation/family environment	Low motivation Family support

#### Personality traits Theme

##### 1. Feeling afraid

The researcher comes across two participants explicitly stated about their issues when it comes to speaking English which is feeling afraid. One of the participants, for example, S8 said:

*“ I don't think that I am a shy person because in my environment I like hanging out with my friends. I often talk to them. But when I have to talk in front of class I feel like I am afraid to perform. So, I think afraid is a problem which leads me to anxiety”.*

Besides that, another student S2 mentioned that:

*“I feel afraid because first of all I see my friends who are smarter than me. From that, I overthink and feel afraid that my classmate will say why did she enter English education if she even can't speak English? So yeah I am afraid they will have thoughts like that”.*

##### 2. Shyness

There are 4 participants which mentioned that one of the factors that make them anxious is feeling shy. One of them, S2 mentioned:

*“I feel shy because at first, I did not like English, so I feel like I do not have enough basic English even more when I have to give a presentation in front the class. Most of my classmates who took*

*English education as their first choice or because they like English just like I mentioned before that I did not like English, and I do not have basic English and I have to stand and speak in front the class which basically most of them are good at English. This makes me shy”*

### 3. Feeling Unconfident

There were five students who explained that unconfident as their main problem or challenge in speaking. One of the participants, for example, S9 acknowledged that:

*“I feel like I am lack confident because I am still nervous when I am speaking, when I am so nervous, I sometimes forget how to say some words in English, in fact, they are not really difficult words to say. So, every time that happens when I speak, I mix English and Indonesian”*

### 4. Overthinking

There were five students claimed overthinking as their challenge when they had to speak in front of many people. *“I think one of the factors that makes me anxious is overthinking because it is one of my personalities”* this statement comes from S7 who stated that overthinking as one of his personalities which means he is an overthinker.

### 5. Nervous

Of 12 participants only 2 participants who mentioned that being nervous as their problem when speaking English. S5 openly shared that he:

*“Sometimes I feel a little bit nervous. Even until right now I am still trying to say correctly which of my sentences are wrong and I am still trying to fix that.”*

### 6. Mood

According to the data that the research found mood is also one of the participants’ problem. This means, surprisingly, only one participant who said that mood can lead to anxiety. The participant who said mood was S1. She shared her answer about mood:

*“I think I feel anxious when I am not in good mood. This because I am a moody person. So, when I face a situation where I need to be forced to talk I need to have double concentrations. when I am happy which means I am in good mood I can speak well. Just like now I am in good mood so I can speak well. And when I am not in good mood I need double concentrations”*

## **Motivation/Family Environment Theme**

### 1. Low Motivation

Of 12 participants who have been interviewed, only two participants mentioned low motivation becomes their challenges during their study. For instance, S1, responded in the interview that:

*“I feel like I have mediocre motivation. So, I feel like I lack motivation. if I want to practice my speaking it depends on my mood”*

### 2. Family Support

Another identified subtheme observed by the researcher is family. Family seems to be another concern for the participants. After analyzing the data, the researcher found one

participant, S10, who mentioned that his family just let him to choose major in the university. Moreover, S10 further added that he never spoke English to his family. S10 expressed:

*“Actually, in the beginning my parents did not really care about the major I took, they only said that it was up to you what major you chose, that’s all. And I never study, speak or communicate using English with them as well. But I often speak English with my cousin or people who are at the same age as me”*

### Students’ Strategies

The findings indicated that there were 9 identified strategies used by the participants to overcome their anxiety including taking a deep breathe, calming down, just being confident, being alone, practicing, discussing with friends, well-prepared, studying hard, and getting motivation from friends. The following table points out two identified themes including self-management and helping from others. Each theme will be discussed further in the following subsections:

	Theme	Sub-theme
<b>Participants’ strategies</b>	Self-Management	Taking a deep breathe Practicing Being confident Calming down Well-prepared Studying hard Being alone
	Helping from others	Discussing with friends  Getting motivation from friends

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 rom the table above, the researcher found that there was one strategy most used by the participants which

is calming down. In total, 5 students mentioned calming down, 3 students mentioned taking a deep breath, 3 students mentioned practicing, 3 students mentioned just being confident, 3 students mentioned being well-prepared, 1 student mentioned studying hard, 2 students mentioned being alone, 3 students mentioned discussing with friends, 1 student mentioned getting motivation from friends.

### Discussion

The discussion of the research is drawn up based on the research questions given (1) what are the factors influencing students’ speaking anxiety? (2) in what ways do the students overcome their anxiety?. The researcher, in the presentation of the research discussion will discuss the findings and corelate them with the related theories or previous studies. The first section of the discussion examined about what factors that can cause students feel anxious



when speaking English. The second section of the discussion traversed the strategies or ways used by students to overcome their challenges in speaking English.

### **What Are the Factors Influencing Students' Speaking Anxiety?**

From the data obtained, speaking English can be challenging for the students particularly in dealing with their anxiety. The researcher found there were 2 main themes or challenges experienced by the students. Those themes were personality traits and motivation/family environment. The finding of this research revealed that factors that can hinder them from speaking come from their personality. Phares (1991) personality can be defined as an inborn temperament and characteristic which coming up in different situations and a combination of the characteristics of a person which separate him/her from other people. Of twelve participants who have participated in this research, many of them, precisely 5 participants, mentioned that overthinking as the factor of anxiety when they had to perform such as giving a presentation in front the class. Petric (2018) asserted that overthinking as a loop of unproductive thought which can also be considered as an excessive amount of thoughts that are unnecessary. The finding of this research turned out supports Huda' research results (2018). In her research, the participants asserted overthinking as one of the factors of feeling anxious every time they had to give a presentation. Based on the result of research finding, motivation/family environment were also another challenge for students when speaking English. Motivation is one of the examples of psychological factors that can hamper students from speaking English. Brown (2007) claimed motivation as the extent to which someone makes choices about his/her goals to pursue or the effort she/he will give to that pursuit. From the data finding, two participants mentioned that they had a lack of motivation when speaking English. For instance, S7 mentioned that he had mediocre motivation. This participant also explained that he sometimes did not have motivation for studying or practicing his English. This result of the finding have the similarity with the results finding of Abrar, Mukminin, Habibi, Asyraf, Makmur and Marzulina (2018) which revealed that low motivation was still another critical issue for students from being active English speakers.

Moreover, family support seemed to be another issue which was identified in the research finding. This research revealed that one participant did not really get fully support from his family in the learning process. This could hamper students from successfully learning English language particularly speaking skill.

### **In what ways do students overcome their anxiety?**

The results of this research revealed that self-management was used by the students to reduce or overcome their problem, in this case, their speaking anxiety. There were seven tactics or ways employed by the students including take a deep breathe, practice, just being confident, calm down, well-prepared, study hard, being alone. Of seven strategies mentioned above, calming down was the most strategy employed by the students. The reason why students selected calming down as their most strategy they used was because it would relax their feelings so that they could reduce their anxiety. It was supported by the results finding of Widhayanti (2018) which mentioned that by calming down it would help the students to reduce the feeling of anxiety.

Asking for help from others, in this case, friends, turned out to be another strategy found by the researcher. The first strategy found was discussing with friends. As mentioned in the finding section, the participants stated that by discussing with friends it would help them to reduce their problems. Three participants explicitly answered discussing with friends. One participant, for example, mentioned that he would discuss with his friends when he had to give a presentation in front the class to minimise his anxiety. This strategy was also revealed in another research by Kadir and Saliya (2018) that learning with friends can be useful for students so they could learn and help each other together.

Getting motivation from friends was also another strategy used by the participants. One participant asserted that he used to have friends who motivated and support him in learning English. As stated in Ur (1996) that the more motivated the students the better their learning process will be. Thus, if students have high motivation it will be helpful for them improve their learning process especially enhancing their speaking skill.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

### Conclusion

The results of the research pointed out that students still had several factors which lead them to speaking anxiety. According to the data obtained, after finding out the factors which can influence students' speaking anxiety, the researcher drawn conclusion that there were eight factors or challenges encountered by the students such as feeling afraid, shy, unconfident, overthinking, nervous, mood, low motivation and family support. The most factors felt by the students were overthinking and unconfident.

Other than that, the researcher concluded that students have some strategies to reduce or overcome their problems which were their speaking anxiety. There were nine strategies applied by the students including take a deep breathe, practice, be confident, calm down, study hard, well-prepared, being alone, discuss with friends, and getting motivation from friends. Of nine strategies, calming down was the most strategy used by the students.

### SUGGESTION

From the conclusion mentioned above, the researcher finally proposed some suggestions. It is essential to suggest that English students should be able to familiarize themselves with speaking English or practice their speaking skill because it is believed that practice makes perfect. Moreover, students should be able to manage themselves while speaking in order to successfully speak English without feeling anxious.

Another suggestion can be given to lecturers, since they are facilitators while teaching in the classroom. It is suggested that lecturers can provide some comfortable atmosphere and fun learning environment in learning process. This can be done so that students feel comfortable while learning English especially when speaking English in the classroom.

Lastly, for the researcher, since this research only utilises interview and documentation as the data collection, it is suggested that the next researchers who are interested in conducting the same research topic about students' speaking anxiety to use photovoice as another way to collect the data.

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