



An Analysis of English-Speaking Anxiety Experienced by the Second Year Students of English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang and Its Causal Factors

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the level of speaking anxiety among the second-year students of the English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang, who enrolled in 2017/2018 academic year. Descriptive quantitative approach was applied in this study by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data to be analyzed and presented through a simple statistics formula. Stratified random sampling was employed to determine the sample; meanwhile, the data were collected by using a close-ended and an open-ended online questionnaire that was distributed through the SurveyMonkey platform. The findings revealed that most of the students were experiencing a high level of speaking anxiety (68.85%). This study also discovered that among the six principles of the causal factors of speaking anxiety, the classroom management factor had been the most chosen factor that the students experienced during the learning speaking process. Meanwhile, the least chosen factor was the instructor's beliefs about language teaching.

Keywords:

Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety, Factor of Speaking Anxiety

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INTRODUCTION

As a language learner, a student needs to be able to speak well, to communicate with the lecturer/teacher during the learning process. Through speaking the language, the learner can share their thoughts and the ideas during the classroom discussion that can enhance their learning experience. It is in line with Torcky's finding (2006) that speaking is the most frequently used language skills, also supported by Rivers (1981) who found that speaking is used twice as much as reading and writing in communication. However, some students still found it was challenging to speak comfortably in a foreign language. Young (1990) argues that speaking in a foreign language is often regarded by the students as the most anxious producing experience.

The previous studies have identified many causes of speaking anxiety. For instance, the communication apprehension faced by the students may stem from the past experiences (Price, 1991), the shyness or reticence (Friedman, 1980), the attitudes

of classmates and the cultural stereotypes, and the foreign teacher (Timina, 2015), and the fear of negative evaluation (Iftimie, 2006). Occhipinti's (2009) research also explains that the speaking activities are somewhat stressful because they caused anxiety about being 'over-exposed' in front of others, making mistakes that might threaten the students' self-esteem. As a result, the factors mentioned above lead to the conclusion that they are the cause of students' speaking anxiety to occur.

Therefore, as a preliminary study, the researcher interviewed ten students at the English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) related to their speaking abilities in speaking class. The researcher found some information: 1) despite the English speaking class that they have attended, some of the students still feel the urge to use the target language only when the lecturer asks them; 2) some of the students are still lacking the confidence to speak in the target language, and 3) it is difficult for some of them to give immediate responses in the target language. These indications are somewhat similar to the problems faced by the students in learning to speak that have been found by Scarella and Oxford (1994) and Florez (1998), they are: 1) the conflict between the accuracy and fluency, 2) lack of confidence, and 3) pronunciation. These points could be related to one another, and they lead to the hypothesis of the occurrence of speaking anxiety among some of the second-year students of the English Language and Literature Department at UNP.

According to Samuelsson (as cited in Hadziosmanovic, 2012), speaking anxiety is seen as the difficulty to intervene in the group outside a group of people. Furthermore, he identifies that this difficulty varies in the cases of prepared speeches, oral presentations, answering questions, or simple presentation around among others. The situation above, similar to the condition of the speaking anxiety experienced by the second-year students in the English Language and Literature Department at UNP.

As it is explained by Samuelsson (as cited in Hadziosmanovic, 2012), someone that has speaking anxiety would also likely has a feeling of worry and anticipate about negative evaluation from others, he or she would think over that they are probably going to die of embarrassment or having a failure with their performance. Togatorop (2009) also identifies that students tend to be silent in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom because they are unable to manage their emotions, including nervousness, lack of self-confidence, shyness, lack of motivation and boredom. Thus, it was evident that having speaking anxiety would cause many disadvantages to a language learner. To speak under such pressure and situation was more likely to be the cause of students' lack of participation in speaking class.

Several researchers have studied speaking anxiety, for example, the study conducted by Ohata (2005) about *Potential Sources Speaking Anxiety for Japanese Learners of English: Preliminary Case Interviews With Five Japanese College Students in the U.S*, and by Gkonou (2011) that investigated both speaking and writing anxiety through her work, *Anxiety over EFL speaking and writing: A View from*

language classroom. The previous studies are mostly concerned about the levels and the factors of speaking anxiety faced by second-year students or even higher-level students.

Since the subjects of the current research have attended several sessions of English speaking class, it is assumed that they would be less anxious in speaking English. However, some researchers, such as Tomomi and Tsuyoshi (2015) still found that speaking anxiety occurred among Japanese second-year female students in an English program. Abrar, Failasofah, Fajaryani, and Masbirotni (2016) also pointed out that there was high-level speaking anxiety among 72 second-year EFL student-teachers at the English Teacher Education Program.

Several related studies on speaking anxiety have examined the level and the factors of speaking anxiety among students from various majors. Some of the researchers such as Ohata (2005), Rahayu (2016), and Ahmed, Khan, and Pathan (2017), and Mahmud (2018), Ningsih (2020) chose their samples from various majors other than English that were enrolling to an English course at that time. Meanwhile, the present study undertakes in the context of Indonesian second-year students in the English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Padang that had passed all three speaking courses which were: speaking for informal, speaking for formal, and public speaking. The current study is designed in part to redress this lack of research into Speaking Anxiety in the context of Indonesia and more broadly seeks to contribute in Teaching Speaking Field, to develop the awareness of the speaking anxiety among English Language Learners in context of English for communicating in general.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher will attempt to answer these two questions:

1. What are English speaking anxiety levels of the second-year students of English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Padang?
2. What factors cause the speaking anxiety of the second-year students of English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Padang?

METHOD

The researcher utilized a descriptive and quantitative method to carry out the research. By using descriptive analysis, the researcher could describe the current condition about the level of speaking anxiety and its causal factors experienced by the second-year students in the English Department at UNP. Meanwhile, the quantitative method was applied to measure the numerical data that were collected by the researcher. Further, the collected data were described and presented through a simple statistical formula in a descriptive explanation.

The population of this study was the second-year students of the English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang that have taken and

passed *Speaking for Informal Interaction* and *Speaking for Formal Interaction* courses. Due to the gap in the number of students in each class, the researcher decided to use a proportionate stratified random sampling technique in choosing the sample for this research, to determine the example. The researcher choose randomly 20% of all the total samples or 41 students among 203 second-year students of the English Department at UNP. There were six students from K1 class, six students from K2 class, five students from K3 class, five students from K4 class, five students from NK1 class, seven students from NK2 class and seven students from NK3 class. The data were collected by using FLCAS (Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale) for the level of speaking anxiety adapted and translated into Indonesian and an open-ended questionnaire based on Young (1990) principle of the causal factors of speaking Anxiety that also translated into Indonesian to help students respond efficiently.

The data were analyzed by following these two steps. The first step was by using a Likert scale for scoring the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) as displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1. FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)

	Statements	Positive	Negative
Level	Strongly Agree (S.A.)	1	5
	Agree (A)	2	4
	Neutral (N)	3	3
	Disagree (D)	4	2
	Strongly Disagree (SD)	5	1

For categorizing its level, speaking anxiety was divided into five levels according to Oetting's scale (1983) from very relaxed up to very anxious as presented in the Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. Oetting's Scale of Speaking Anxiety Levels

Level	Score
Very Low	5 – 15
Low	16 – 30
Moderate	31 – 45
High	46 – 60
Very High	61 – 75

The second step was using an open-ended questionnaire based on Young (1990) principle to find out the factors of speaking anxiety that its data were interpreted from the students' answers to each question.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

Level of Speaking Anxiety

After analyzing the data, the result showed that the students were categorized into five different levels of speaking anxiety: very low, low, moderate, high and very high level.

Table 3. The Statistical Result of Speaking Anxiety Level

No	Level of Speaking Anxiety	Number of Participants	Percentage
1	Very Low	0	0%
2	Low	0	0%
3	Moderate	12	29,27%
4	High	27	65,85%
5	Very High	2	4,88%
Total		41	100%

The statistical result in the Table 3 indicated that there was a variety of level regarding the speaking anxiety that occurs among the participants. From the 41 participants that have been chosen, 65.85% of them were having a *high level of speaking anxiety*. 29.27% of participants were having a *moderate level of speaking anxiety*, 4,88% of participants were having a *very high level of speaking anxiety*. Interestingly, there was no participant in having a *low and very low level of speaking anxiety*. It can be concluded that most of the participants were having speaking anxiety at the level of anxious.

Factors of Speaking Anxiety

Concerning the previous finding on this research, the researcher also found the causal factors that contributed to the speaking anxiety that occurred among the second-year students of the English department students at UNP. According to Young's principal (1990), six factors provoked students' speaking anxiety. Those factors included *personal-interpersonal issue, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedures and language testing*.

Table 4. Statistical Result of Factors Contributing to Students' Speaking Anxiety

Factors	Frequencies	Percentage
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Classroom Procedures	38	92, 68%
Language Testing	29	70, 73%
Personal and Interpersonal issues	29	70,73%
Instructor – Learner Interaction	24	58, 54%
Learner Beliefs About Language Learning	19	46,34%
Instructor Beliefs About Language Teaching	14	34,15%

Table 4 presents an overview of factors of speaking anxiety where each participant could choose more than one factor. The data above was obtained by comparing each factor that had been selected by the participants. Meanwhile, we could see the statistical results presented in Table 4.6 that shows 92.68% of participants choosing *classroom procedure factor* as the most anxiety-triggering factor for them. Then it followed by *the language testing factor*, and *personal – interpersonal beliefs factor* as those were selected by 70.73% of the participants. After that, there was a *learner – instructor interaction factor* that was determined by 58.54% of the participants and *learner beliefs about language learning factor* that was chosen by 46.34% of the participants. The last was *instructor beliefs about language teaching factor* that was chosen by 34.15% of the participants.

Classroom Procedures

The factor that highly contributed to speaking anxiety was *classroom procedures*. Most of the participants (92.68%) commented that *classroom procedures* really affected their study. They described that it was terrifying for them to have the classroom with full of negativities, such as the negative judgements from the classmates, the harsh correction from the teacher that could embarrass them and monotonic classroom dynamics. Meanwhile, if the classroom situation was full of positiveness, such as the supportive classmates, a teacher that would encourage more rather than criticize the students and a lively classroom's atmosphere, the students would feel comfortable to speak up more in the class. One of their comments is quoted below:

“I feel really affected by the class situation and environment. I think a supportive environment could embrace the students to speak up more in the class. If the class environment was full of discrimination, it might be terrifying for the students with a lack of speaking skill to actively

participate in the class. Therefore, I think it is important to build a supportive class situation and environment.”

Language Testing

29 of 41 participants (70.73%) agreed that they felt anxious when they were taking a speaking test. Some of them mentioned that they were nervous because they were worried about getting a bad result for the test. They also showed signs of psychological stresses, such as being less confident about their ability and constantly comparing themselves to the other students. Furthermore, they also explained that it was frustrated for them to speak spontaneously about the given topic with so little time to prepare before the test began. The following quotation represents the participants' thought on *the Language Testing* as the factor of speaking anxiety:

“I’m still worried when the speaking exam is coming. Because I acknowledge my lack of speaking skill. I’m afraid of making mistakes, so I tend to write my script first. But, when I think it’d be helping me to go through the exam, it turns out that it’s not that helping though. Memorizing the script, makes me become sort of stiff and not be able to develop the talk that I’ve written in the script.”

Personal-Interpersonal Issues

The low self-esteem might be the most common *personal-interpersonal issue* faced by the participants of this study as Krashen (as cited in Ohata, 2005) argued that anxiety could arise according to one's degree of self-esteem. Throughout the answers, it was found that many of the participants responded that they were concerned about how people perceived their abilities in speaking English. One of the participants even confirmed that he or she felt irritated when someone was expecting them to speak English like how native does as he/she elaborated in the quotation below:

“Yes, I feel worried about how people think on my speaking English skill since I am an English Department student. People who are not English Department students expect me to be able to speak like a native, so it is kind of irritates me if I couldn't answer their question in the way that they expect me to.”

Instructor-Learner Interaction

According to Young (1991), any oral performances in front of the class were listed as one of the factors that provoke students' anxiety. In addition to the pressure that they got from the class activities, it seemed that the students also concerned about the error correction that happened during the lesson. However, instead of what was being corrected, the students were more worried about how the teacher corrected their mistakes in the class. To support, one participant confirmed that he was sweating and

feeling nervous when he was corrected by the teacher. At first, he thought that he was good enough in speaking English. However, due to the teacher's correction in front of the class, he became less confident to speak more. Further, another participant also described:

“I feel nervous and sweaty when the lecturer is correcting my mistakes in front of the class. It makes me feel a lot more stressful.”

Learner's Beliefs about Language Learning

As it had been discussed in some of the previous studies (Ohata, 2005; Young, 1991; Horwitz, 1986), *the learner belief about language learning* was affecting their performances during the learning process. It was reported that some students had their beliefs that they had to be able to speak like *a native* or able to use certain accents to be considered as a good English-speaker. One participant commented:

“Yes, I think we have to be able to speak using either American or British accent. Because, when we watch English movies, the actors will speak in either one of those accents. So, if we want to be like them (fluent in English), we should at least try to copy their accent, right?”

Instructor's Belief about Language Teaching

Instructor belief about language teaching could also be considered as one of the speaking anxiety's factors faced by the students. When a teacher considered themselves as the controller in the class and always corrected the students' errors, some of the students might feel uncomfortable to speak up in the class afterwards. However, in this research, this was the least chosen factor among all those speaking anxiety factors as most of the participants felt alright when they were corrected by the teachers or when they received many corrections from the teachers, while some others did not. One participant responded as follows:

“My lecturer often corrects me when I tend to make a silly mistake such as forgetting the S in plural or the verb for third-person singular, and most of the time because my sentence's structure still sounds like Mingsh or Minang-English.”

The students' responses in this open-ended section of the questionnaire suggested that even though there was a various number of students who experienced each factor, generally, the participants encountered all the causal factors of speaking anxiety.

Discussion

Level of Speaking Anxiety

Foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) was used to determine the level of foreign language anxiety that occurred among the second-year students of the

English Department at UNP. It contained 33 statements that should be chosen by the participants in 5 options of Likert Scale. Therefore, the researcher only used 15 questions due to the nature of this research, which examined the level of speaking anxiety experienced by the second-year students of the English Department at UNP.

The results of this research showed that 65.85% of second-year English Language and Literature Department students encountered a high level of speaking anxiety. As explained by Howritz (1986), teachers and students felt strongly that anxiety is a significant obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language. Thus, he also stated that anxious students were common in the foreign language classroom (at least in the beginning classes on the university level).

The present findings aligned with those from a study conducted by Santriza (2018). She was examining speaking anxiety among second-grade students in SMA 5 Banda Aceh. Another study conducted by Hamad and Ghali (2015) showed a similar result with the current study. By examining 279 Gaza EFL pre-service teacher, they found out that majority of the participants were anxious when they have to speak English, and the level increased when the participant did not prepare what they were going to speak. Also, Luo (2014), in her study, also found that the college students that were learning Chinese as a foreign language encountered a high level of anxiety when they were speaking Chinese.

However, the current finding of this research did not support the previous result in Debreli and Demirkan's work (2015). In a study that they conducted towards 196 students of total 350 students that enrolled in the English Preparatory School of a university in Cyprus, it was reported that the students on the program generally experienced a low level of speaking anxiety. The descriptive result showed that more than half of the participants were categorized in a low level of speaking anxiety. Furthermore, in a study performed by Toth (2009) also showed that most of the participants who were in the first year English-major in one university fell into the slightly anxious category in speaking anxiety.

By comparing the result of this study with the previous ones, it might help to raise awareness regarding this issue. According to Horwitz (as cited in Tsiplakides, 2009) language learning, particularly oral production, is potentially stressful for some students. So, it was acceptable when the participants felt anxious when they had to speak English since the speaking activity itself might be stressful for some of them.

Factors of Speaking Anxiety

Based on the table above, classroom management factor had been chosen the most by the participants as the anxiety triggering factor compared to the other five as 38 participants chose it out of 41 participants. On the contrary, the least chosen factor was instructor beliefs about language teaching as 14 participants selected it out of 41 participants.

However, in general, the participants encountered all the causal factors of speaking anxiety. This current results observed in this study supported the previous findings of Ohata (2005) and Mayangta's work (2013) that linked to Young (1990) study that revealed the six factors of speaking anxiety among the respondents: personal – interpersonal issue, learner beliefs about language learning, teacher beliefs about language teaching, instructor – learner interaction, classroom procedure and language testing. Despite the similarity that also found in Ardi et al. study (2013), an interesting contrary occurred in their study. The result of their study found that among those six factors of speaking anxiety that were experienced by the students of SMAN 7 Padang, the most triggering factor was personal – interpersonal issue, meanwhile the least triggering factor was language testing. By comparing the result of Ardi et al.'s study and this current study, we could infer that lower-level language learners might experience the personal-interpersonal issues the most, due to the lack of self-esteem, as they thought that they did not have much prior knowledge regarding the foreign language compared to the higher-level language learner.

Another study conducted by Rahayu (2016) indicated that personal – interpersonal issue played a significant role in speaking anxiety – triggering factor. She explained that several reasons caused fear in speaking English. The first reason was the students often felt nervous and confused when they were asked to speak in English, the second was they did not have much confidence to speak in English, and the last was they were afraid to make a mistake while speaking English in front of others. These reasons indeed indicated that the respondents in her study were having personal – interpersonal issues regarding speaking anxiety. On the contrary of the present finding in this research, Antoro, Wisasongko and Khazanah (2015) proposed that the most anxiety-provoking source that was encountered by first-year students in English department of Jember University was self-perception and self-esteem, in which the part of the personal-interpersonal issue. To put it differently, most of the participants of this study agreed that they were anxious to speak in English because of the lack of self-esteem and self-perception about themselves.

The main goals of this study were to determine the level of speaking anxiety and find out its causal factor among the second-year students of the English department student at Universitas Negeri Padang. The finding has indicated that second-year students of the English department at Universitas Negeri Padang encountered a high level of speaking anxiety. Another significant result also had shown that the participants experienced all the six speaking anxiety factors proposed by Young (1990) which were: classroom procedure, language testing, personal – interpersonal issue, instructor – learner interaction, learner beliefs about language learning and instructor beliefs about language learning. Overall, the diversity among those results could be accepted, since there are enormous sources of speaking anxiety that can be discovered in further investigations in other studies.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study was designed to investigate speaking anxiety among the second-year students of the English Department in UNP with the main goals to determine the levels and the potential sources of speaking anxiety itself. After collecting and analyzing the data through Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and an open-ended questionnaire adapted from Young's (1991) principle of the causes of speaking anxiety, the finding revealed that the second-year students of the English Department in UNP generally encountered *a high level of speaking anxiety*.

Another important finding also showed that they experienced all six factors that had listed according to Young's (1991) principle which were: *personal-interpersonal issues, learner beliefs about language learning, teacher beliefs about language teaching, learner-instructor interaction, classroom procedures and language testing*, in which among all of those potential sources, *classroom procedures* was the prominent one. Through this study, it was suggested that, even though there are many studies about speaking anxiety that has been done from time to time, the anxiety itself still occurs among the language learners until the time this research was completed.

According to the conclusion above, further research is needed to account for the varying phenomenon of foreign language anxiety, especially speaking anxiety. It would be better to conduct more research about speaking anxiety among language learners that crossover language and psychological field since anxiety is also a part of common mental illness that people are dealing with. By adding some psychological view, it would give a more precise understanding of speaking anxiety. It is also crucial for the teacher to acknowledge that speaking anxiety could cause the students difficulties in the language learning process. Therefore, the teacher could provide less anxiety-triggering activities to be used in the classroom. Offering a consultation regarding speaking anxiety or anything that triggers the students' anxiety also can be considered is one of the ways in helping them to cope with their anxiety.

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