



Language Production in Relation to Students' Anxiety to Speak English in Public

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate and comprehend the relationships between students' anxiety levels and students' language production. This study used descriptive quantitative approach. The participants of this study were 20 students of classes NK – 3 as first-year English department at Universitas Negeri Padang. Data were collected using the FLCAS questionnaire to measure the level of speaking anxiety and speaking performance to assess students' speaking ability. The results showed that students' speaking anxiety level was in the average mildly range. The most dominant anxiety in students is related to two main aspects, namely Communication Apprehension and Test Anxiety. Furthermore, students' speaking ability has generally reached the level of "good enough" in aspects such as fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Then, the relationship between the level of speaking anxiety and students' language production is a very negative strong relationship. It can be conclude that speaking anxiety has a significant negative impact on language production skills among first-year English Language and Literature students at Padang State University. This is evidenced by the fact that although most students have good enough speaking ability skills, they still experience speaking anxiety, especially in the context of speaking in public.

Key words: Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Ability, Language Production

A. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a common activity in many environments, including education, business and government. However, many students experience anxiety when speaking in public. APA (2013) defines anxiety as a sensation characterized by extreme feelings of fear and worry. It is a common phenomenon experienced by language learners, especially in contexts where English is not the native language of the students. Language anxiety can have a significant impact on students' confidence and willingness to engage in English speaking activities.

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Psycholinguistics plays a role in understanding the psychological and cognitive processes underlying speaking anxiety. It can be used to understand how anxiety affects the language production process in speaking. According to Ferreira (2014), high anxiety can interfere with one's ability to choose the right words, organize information well, maintain fluency, and control intonation or voice. This can cause difficulties in expressing oneself effectively and affect the listener's understanding of the message conveyed.

The researcher is interested in conducting this study because the findings of this study can contribute to the researcher's understanding and knowledge to the public about how anxiety affects language production in English language students. This study is also important because it provides new and updated information about the relationship between anxiety levels and language production in English language students. The research will also use a variety of theoretical perspectives to inform the analysis of the data. The findings of this study will benefit educators, policy makers, and students who are interested in developing strategies to improve public speaking skills.

Speaking Anxiety

Sari (2017) claims that speaking anxiety is a common experience, and it impacts individuals from the moment of birth. It tends to emerge when people find themselves in stressful or threatening situations, and it can manifest as feelings of apprehension, nervousness, confusion, and even panic. Notably, speaking anxiety can have a profound impact on self-confidence. When individuals struggle to express themselves effectively due to anxiety, it often leads to feelings of failure and self-doubt. This anxiety can also trigger self-focused and unfavorable thoughts, making interactions challenging, especially in a foreign language learning context. Students with severe speaking anxiety may undervalue their communication skills in comparison to others, further diminishing their self-assurance. Consequently, speaking anxiety is a factor that adds a psychological burden to foreign language learning, affecting aspects like input, processing, and output in language acquisition (Macintyre & Gardner, 1989). Understanding the types of anxiety, its symptoms, and indicators are crucial for identifying and addressing these challenges. Additionally, according to Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) there are three main factors contributing to speaking anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Speaking Ability

Speaking ability is a multifaceted skill encompassing the capacity to articulate thoughts, ideas, and emotions verbally. It is underpinned by various linguistic components, including phonetics, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics, making it more intricate than it may initially appear. As articulated in Brown's (2001) theory, there are four fundamental pillars to master when acquiring speaking ability in a new language: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and vocabulary. These components are intertwined, with fluency hinging on accuracy, which, in turn, relies on a rich vocabulary. Additionally, the Speaking

Abilities Scale by Swender, Conrad & Vicars (2012) provides a valuable tool for assessing English-speaking proficiency, categorizing it into three levels: Needs Improvement, Good Enough, and Very Good. Students at the Needs Improvement level may encounter difficulties to communicate, while those at the Good Enough level can communicate in everyday English, albeit with some minor deficiencies. Finally, students at the Very Good level demonstrate the ability to communicate proficiently in various contexts.

Psycholinguistics

Harras and Andika (2009) says psycholinguistics is a field of study that investigates the relationship between language and human cognitive processes. This field combines linguistics (the science of language) and psychology (the science of cognitive processes). Suhartono (2014) says that anxiety when speaking is an important aspect of psycholinguistics. Psycholinguists investigate the cognitive processes and psychological factors involved in anxiety when speaking and communicating. The psycholinguistics approach to language production in speaking anxiety has been developed through the theory of correlation coefficient interpretation. This theory was developed by Pearson (1895). Pearson's correlation coefficient interpretation theory is based on the assumption that the relationship between two variables can be modelled as a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient interpretation theory can be used to interpret the results of the correlation analysis between speaking anxiety level and language production. If the correlation coefficient is negative and significant, it can be concluded that the higher the level of speaking anxiety, the lower the language production.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive quantitative research because this research aims to investigate the relationship between anxiety level and language production in English Language and Literature Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang. According to Sugiyono (2017), quantitative descriptive research is research that aims to illustrate or describe a situation, phenomenon, or certain groups systematically, factually, and accurately using quantitative data. This study examines data from 20 first-semester English department students at Universitas Negeri Padang. The data was randomly selected from classes NK-3, focusing on students with high and low anxiety levels. The study chose NK-3 students for the 2023 entry year due to their different curriculum and new acquaintances, addressing the problem of anxiety among students. The research instrument used questionnaires to measure anxiety levels and speaking performance to assess students' speaking ability skills. And the data will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify a significant correlation between the two variables, namely the variables of level of speaking anxiety and speaking ability.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Data Description and Analysis

Data description is the process of summarizing and presenting data in a form that is easy to understand. The aim is to provide an overview of the data, including its size, distribution, and patterns. Data analysis is the process of using analytical and logical thinking when reviewing data to analyze each component present in the data. This form of analysis is one of the stages of research. Data is collected, retrieved, and examined from sources to arrive at findings and conclusions.

1. Level of Speaking Anxiety

There are five levels of speaking anxiety. The five levels of speaking anxiety include very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, relaxed, and very relaxed. The table below summarizes the findings of this research.

Table 1 Level of Speaking Anxiety

No	Item	Total Score	Mean Score	Category
1	Communication Apprehension	612	2.78	Mildly Anxiety
2	Test Anxiety	825	2.75	Mildly Anxiety
3	Fear of negative Evaluation	382	2.73	Mildly Anxiety
Total		1819	2.73	Mildly Anxiety

Based on the data results in the table, it can be concluded that the general level of anxiety related to communication apprehension among the students in this survey is mild. With a total score of 612 and an average value of around 2.78, the students showed a relatively low level of anxiety. The most anxiety-provoking statement was statement number 3, which talks about confidence in public speaking without prior preparation. On the other hand, statement number 9 showed a lower level of anxiety, with students not feeling too anxious when not understanding all the words spoken by foreign language speakers. Overall, the results of this survey suggest that most students feel anxious in certain situations, but their anxiety levels are at a level that they can cope well with. This suggests that there is potential to improve confidence in public speaking and speaking a foreign language more confidently through better practice and preparation.

Second, based on the survey results, students' overall anxiety level related to test anxiety was mild. The most anxiety-provoking statements were statements number 1 and 4, namely "I feel comfortable when I know that I will be called upon to speak in public" and "I usually feel calm during public speaking exams." Statement number 11, "The more I study for language exams, the more confident and knowledgeable I become," had the lowest anxiety score. Overall, the survey results indicate well-managed anxiety levels, reflecting the potential to increase confidence in public speaking or face speaking exams with more

confidence through more thorough preparation and more intensive practice.

Third, based on the survey results, students' overall anxiety level was mild. The statement that caused the most anxiety was statement number 1, "I am not worried about making mistakes in public speaking." On the other hand, statement number 2 was the least anxiety-provoking, i.e.

"I remind myself that everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses, and I focus on improving my own language skills rather than comparing myself to others." This indicates that students have a mild level of anxiety in public speaking. This shows that students have a mild level of anxiety in public speaking, but they have a good awareness that comparing oneself with others is not beneficial.

It can be concluded that the level of speaking anxiety among first-year students majoring in English Language and Literature at Universitas Negeri Padang varied greatly, ranging from very relaxed to very anxiety. The average level of speaking anxiety among these students was moderate. The two most common types of anxiety experienced by these students were communication apprehension (anxiety when speaking and interacting in public) and test anxiety (anxiety when facing exams).

2. Speaking Ability

There are three scales of speaking ability. The three scales of speaking ability include scores 1 to 3. Scores 1 to 1.55 (Needs Improvement), scores 1.56 to 2.55 (Good Enough but Needs Improvement), and scores 2.56 to 3 (Very Good). The assessment encompasses four primary aspects: Fluency, Grammar, Pronunciation, and Vocabulary. The table below summarizes the findings of this research.

Table 2 Speaking Ability

No	Item	Score						Total Score	Mean Score	Category
		1 - Needs Improvement		2 - Good Enough		3 - Very Good				
		F	S	F	S	F	S			
1	Fluency	1	1	16	32	3	9	42	2.1	Good Enough
2	Grammar	0	0	17	34	3	9	43	2.15	Good Enough
3	Pronunciations	1	1	18	36	1	3	40	2	Good Enough
4	Vocabulary	0	0	20	40	0	0	40	2	Good Enough

From the data presented in the table, it can be concluded that the students' English speaking skills have generally reached a fairly good level in the aspects of fluency, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Although there are still some weaknesses and needs for improvement in each aspect, most students have demonstrated adequate ability to communicate in English. However, there are significant challenges in each of these aspects.

In terms of speaking fluency, students who experience anxiety levels tend to face difficulties in achieving speaking fluency. Anxiety can cause psycholinguistic symptoms that affect their speaking process, such as pauses in

conversation, repetition of words or phrases, and stammering. In addition, variations in speaking speed, either too fast or too slow, may also appear in response to the anxiety they experience.

On the grammar side, students who experience anxiety tend to face difficulties in applying grammar correctly. Anxiety can affect their ability to think clearly and construct sentences appropriately. Some of the psycholinguistic symptoms that students with grammar anxiety experience involve using words out of context, using the wrong tense, and other grammatical issues such as the use of prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.

For students with pronunciation anxiety, they face a number of psycholinguistic symptoms that can affect their ability to speak. Difficulty in pronouncing certain words, use of filler words such as "e," "uh," and "um," inappropriate intonation, and speech tempo that is too fast or too slow are some of the symptoms that may appear. These symptoms are caused by the inability to control mouth and tongue muscles due to anxiety.

Meanwhile, students with vocabulary anxiety exhibit a number of psycholinguistic symptoms that can affect their language skills. Difficulty understanding complex words, tendency to use simple words, difficulty expressing complex ideas, difficulty remembering words, and difficulty using words in the right context are some of the symptoms that may appear. Difficulty in understanding complex words can be reflected in students' difficulty in decrypting difficult vocabulary that uses more complicated phrases or terms.

3. Relationship between Level of Speaking Anxiety and Language Production

Table 3. Coefficient Correlation of Language Production in Level of Speaking

Item	Total Score
$\sum x$	1819
$\sum x^2$	173869
$\sum y$	44.57
$\sum y^2$	100.39
$\sum xy$	4008.33
r - Score	- 0.98

This study delves into the relationship between speaking anxiety and language production among first-year students majoring in English Language and Literature at Universitas Negeri Padang. The research reveals a robust negative correlation of -0.98, indicating a substantial impact of anxiety on language output.

a. Very Anxiety:

Students with very high anxiety levels demonstrated notable language patterns. In terms of grammar, errors were prevalent, especially with articles, verbs, and phrases, showcasing the disruptive effect of speaking anxiety on clear thinking and grammatical accuracy. Low fluency, characterized by frequent

pauses and word repetition, was evident. Pronunciation inaccuracies further reflected the difficulty in concentrating on articulation. Vocabulary use was limited, often relying on simple and repetitive words.

b. Anxiety:

Students categorized with high anxiety exhibited language patterns akin to those with very high anxiety. Grammatical mistakes, low fluency, pronunciation inaccuracies, and limited vocabulary use were consistent themes, further emphasizing the impact of heightened anxiety on language production.

c. Mild Anxiety:

Analysis of students with mild anxiety levels revealed distinct language patterns. Grammatical errors persisted, particularly concerning articles, verbs, and phrases, affecting message clarity. Fluency challenges included pauses, varied speaking speeds, and word repetition. Despite good pronunciation ratings, moderate anxiety still influenced confidence. Vocabulary use leaned towards simplicity, potentially as a coping mechanism to reduce anxiety.

d. Relaxed:

Students classified as "relaxed" demonstrated generally positive language patterns. Their language production showcased good fluency and mastery of grammar with minimal errors. While pronunciation skills were generally good, some improvement was noted. Vocabulary use tended towards simplicity, and psycholinguistic symptoms, such as communication apprehension and test anxiety, were at lower levels.

e. Very Relaxed:

Among students with a "very relaxed" anxiety level, language patterns exhibited a mix of positive and challenging characteristics. Challenges included a lack of fluency influenced by grammar errors and anxiety. Ongoing difficulties in grammar and pronunciation were noted, possibly due to a lack of understanding and fear. While vocabulary tended towards simplicity, reflecting efforts to remain comfortable, challenges in language production were still evident.

This comprehensive examination highlights the nuanced impact of speaking anxiety on language production among first-year English Language and Literature students. The findings provide valuable insights into specific linguistic aspects affected at varying anxiety levels, offering potential areas for targeted interventions and improvements within language learning environments.

2. Discussion

1. Level of Speaking Anxiety

The study found that the level of speaking anxiety among university students varied, ranging from very anxious to very relaxed, with most falling into the category of "Moderate Anxiety." This indicates that although university students experience anxiety, it is typically at a manageable level.

While there are a number of similarities between my results and the previous studies, the main differences lie in the population focus and methodological approach. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Al-Ghaith, Al-Khatib, and Al-Anzi, may be more general in nature, exploring the

impact of speaking anxiety on second language speakers in general. On the other hand, my research is more specific, focusing on first-year students at Universitas Negeri Padang majoring in English Language and Literature. This difference reflects an attempt to understand in depth how speaking anxiety affects language production patterns at a local and specialized level.

2. Speaking Ability

The research findings show that students' English speaking ability has reached the "good enough" level, based on the results of the overall data analysis. Swender, Conrad, and Vicars (2012) assert that the "good enough" level achieved by the students corresponds to the assessment of important aspects of speaking ability, such as fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. While there are some weaknesses and needs for improvement in each aspect, most students have demonstrated adequate ability to communicate in English. This study continues a series of previous studies that have investigated speaking anxiety in the context of English language learning.

In the context of previous research, such as that conducted by Al-Ghaith, Al-Khatib, and Al-Anzi (2019), their findings highlight that the level of speaking anxiety can negatively affect the speed and accuracy of lexical access, especially in the comprehension of newly learned words. Van Loon, Van den Broek (2017), and Aini (2019) showed that speaking anxiety can significantly affect speaking fluency. Meanwhile, Nurul Aini and Nur Aini's research emphasizes the impact of speaking anxiety on production language use patterns, with the finding that college students exposed to speaking anxiety suggestions tend to use simpler and less fluent production language.

The main difference lies in the research focus and context. This study focuses more on first-year students at Universitas Negeri Padang majoring in English Language and Literature, while the previous study could involve second language speaker groups in general or students of English language study programs at other universities. Thus, the results of this study provide a more detailed and contextualized insight into the impact of speaking anxiety on students' language production specific to the context of higher education in Indonesia.

3. Relationship between Level of Speaking Anxiety and Language Production

The results of your study, which showed a very strong negative correlation between the level of speaking anxiety and the language production of university students at Universitas Negeri Padang, have similarities with previous studies that highlighted the negative impact of speaking anxiety on second language speaking. The findings are also in line with research by Al-Ghaith, Al-Khatib, and Al-Anzi (2019), which discussed the impact of speaking anxiety on lexical access in a second language.

However, there are major differences in the research methods and focus of analysis. This study uses a quantitative method by dividing students into categories based on the level of speaking anxiety, while previous studies, such as those conducted by Van Loon, Van den Broek (2017), Aini (2019), and Hakim

(2019), focus more on analyzing the impact of speaking anxiety on specific aspects, such as lexical access, speaking fluency, and production language usage patterns.

Thus, while there are similarities in the findings showing the negative impact of speaking anxiety on second language speaking, the differences in research methods and focus of analysis make a unique contribution to the understanding of this relationship. The results of this study focus more on variations in the language production patterns of university students with different levels of speaking anxiety at the tertiary level.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In conclusion, this study reveals that speaking anxiety among first-year English Language and Literature students at Universitas Negeri Padang varies and can be categorized into five levels. The data results obtained from 20 students illustrate a varied spectrum of anxiety, which can be grouped into five different categories. The average level of speaking anxiety among these students was in the "somewhat anxious" range with an average of 2.73. The dominant sources of anxiety related to communication apprehension and test anxiety. This anxiety can have a significant impact on students' academic, social and emotional well-being.

Findings from the second study of students' English speaking ability indicates an overall attainment of a "good enough" level in fluency, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. While most students demonstrated satisfactory communication skills, areas for improvement were identified. Students with elevated speaking anxiety faced challenges in achieving fluency, evident through pauses, word repetition, and stammering. Grammatical issues, such as the use of words out of context and tense errors, were observed. Pronunciation anxiety was associated with difficulties in articulation and the use of filler words. Vocabulary anxiety manifested as struggles in understanding complex words, employing simple vocabulary, and encountering difficulties in remembering and using words appropriately in context.

The third research finding revealed a robust negative correlation of -0.98 was established between the level of speaking anxiety and language production among first-year students majoring in English Language and Literature at Universitas Negeri Padang. The hypothesis testing, categorizing students into very anxiety, anxiety, mildly anxiety, relaxed, and very relaxed anxiety levels, revealed distinct language patterns. Students with very high anxiety faced challenges across grammar, fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary. High anxiety levels were primarily associated with difficulties in grammar and fluency. Moderate anxiety levels still resulted in some errors in grammar and word repetition. Conversely, relaxed anxiety levels correlated with good fluency, grammar, and pronunciation, albeit with simple vocabulary use. Highly relaxed anxiety levels demonstrated commendable fluency and grammar, with minor errors in pronunciation. These findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how speaking anxiety impacts various facets of language production, offering insights for the development of targeted learning strategies tailored to students' specific anxiety levels.

For future researchers can continue the study of the relationship between speaking anxiety, speaking ability, and language production to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that affect speaking quality. The future researchers can also develop more effective methods and interventions to address speaking anxiety and improve speaking ability students. With growing research in this area, we can provide better support to college students and other individuals to thrive in public speaking.

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