



## **LEVEL OF PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY AND COPING STRATEGY USED BY ENGLISH DEBATERS AT UNIT KEGIATAN BAHASA ASING IN DEALING WITH ENGLISH DEBATE**

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### **Abstract**

An article under the titled “Level of Public Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategy Used by English Debaters at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing in Dealing with English Debate” aims at measuring and identifying level of public speaking anxiety, coping strategy, and correlation between level of PSA and coping strategy. Based on the need of this research, the subject of this research was 24 English department debaters at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, a legal English debating community in Universitas Negeri Padang. The instrument used was questionnaire, Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), and anxiety coping strategy. The PRPSA was a self report to measure level of PSA, and it was adopted from McCroskey (1982). Moreover, anxiety coping strategy was a questionnaire to measure type of coping strategy, and it was adopted from Kondo and Yang (2004). Both of PRPSA and anxiety coping strategy consisted of 34 statements. The result shows that, English department debaters are generally categorised into moderate level of PSA, and peer seeking is a dominant coping strategy used to deal with anxiety. The SPSS was also used to analysed the correlation. It is pointed out that there is no significant correlation found between level of PSA and coping strategy.

**Key words:** Level of PSA, coping strategy, English debate

### **A. INTRODUCTION (CAPITAL Times New Roman 12 pt)**

One of the most major barriers learners have to deal with language anxiety is public speaking anxiety. Learner who feel anxious when speaking in public tend to avoid situations where they have to perform, but when they encounter such situations, they suffer intense stress and anxiety. To respond this issue, McCroskey (1982) developed the Personal Report of Public Speaking (PRPSA) with 34 statements, called as PRPSA-34. This scale aims to measure individual public speaking anxiety in any public speaking platforms.

One of public speaking platforms used by learners in enhancing critical thinking is English debate. Bailey and Molyneaux (2008) stated that debate is

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about persuading audience which is supported with reasonable and logical arguments in particular issue. The current study in public speaking anxiety (PSA) shows that ESL debaters aged sixteen, male and female, still experience public speaking anxiety in debating. Anthony, et al (2017) finds that female debaters experienced higher anxiety than their male counterpart, and learners with low critical thinking level in debate experienced the highest anxiety level compared to with those who were moderate or had high critical thinking level.

Equally as important, strategy to cope public speaking anxiety is also needed for learners since public speaking anxiety become the real problem in foreign language speaking. By knowing a proper strategy to reduce anxiety can help learners to identify their mistake and reduce feeling of fear toward public speaking. Therefore, to help learners to cope with PSA, Kondo and Yang (2004) developed coping strategy related to affective, cognitive and behavioral of learners. The coping strategy consists of 5 major strategies: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation.

English debating community at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, a legal community at Universitas Negeri Padang, actively participated in English debate competition either national and international involvement. Unfortunately, based on preliminary observation, it was found that English debaters obtained stress and tension during debate which affected achievement in English debate competition. This situation leads to lack strategy to deal with anxiety when attending practice or competition.

Broadly speaking, the investigations of foreign language speaking anxiety is generally concerned about level of speaking anxiety, coping strategy, type of anxiety, factor of anxiety, and effect of speaking anxiety, whereas public speaking anxiety mostly concerns in term of speech, oral presentation, debate, and public speaking in general. Moreover, the number of studies in public speaking anxiety (PSA) is abundant, however study related to level and coping strategy of public speaking anxiety, particularly in English debate, is only few. Considering the impact of public speaking, in personal communication, academic and carrier, and anxiety coping strategy in English debate, it is, therefore, necessary to conduct the research to help learners to deal with PSA. In sum, this research will be focused to identify the level of public speaking anxiety, coping strategy, and correlation between PSA and coping strategy in English debate, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was descriptive quantitative method. These methods were used to describe and measure level of PSA, coping strategy, and correlation between level of PSA and coping strategy. Based on the purpose of this research, the subject was specifically chosen from English department debater at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, Universitas Negeri Padang. There were 24 English department debaters, actively involved in English debate, were chosen as the subject of this research.

**Table 3.1.** *Subject of research of the active members of English debaters at Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing*

No	Academic Year	Number of Debater
1	2017	5 debaters
2	2016	5 debaters
3	2015	11 debaters
4	2014	3 debaters
Total		24 debaters

Questionnaire was used to obtain the data about level of PSA and coping strategy. There were two closed ended questionnaires to be filled out by subject of research. First, Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), a self reporting instrument, used to measure level of PSA in English debate adopted from McCroskey (1970). The questionnaire was adjusted to English debate situation. Additionally, it consisted of 34 statements, positive and negative statements, and it was given 5 scales choices based on Likert scale. Furthermore, to determine level of PSA, McCroskey (1970) formulated  $PRPSA = (72 - \text{Total score negative statements}) + \text{Total score positive statements}$ . There were 5 levels of public speaking anxiety.

**Table 3.3.** *Level and Score of Public Speaking Anxiety*

Level of Public Speaking Anxiety	Score
Low	34-84
Moderately Low	85-92
Moderate	93-110
Moderately High	111-119
High	120-170

The second instrument was coping strategy adapted from Kondo and Yang (2004). Kondo and Yang (2004) developed 70 tactics in 5 major strategies. Therefore, only 34 statements were chosen and adjusted to English debate. 34 statements divided into 5 major strategies: preparation, resignation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation. This questionnaire was marked with 2 choices of respond: “Yes” and “No”. Furthermore, content validity was used to validate the two questionnaires. The questionnaires were validated by expert of English debate and translation. Then, it was tested to Literature students 2015 academic year.

**C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Research Finding (tentative)**

24 respondents from Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing were chosen to fulfil the instrument of PRPSA-34 to measure level of public speaking anxiety.

**Table 4.1.** *Statistical result of level of public speaking anxiety*

Level of PSA	Number	Mean	Percentage	Score
Low	4	3.67	17	77
Moderately low	4	4.19	17%	88
Moderate	12	4.78	50%	99
Moderately high	3	5.32	13%	114
High	1	5.08	4%	120
Total	24	17.95	100%	100

With regard to PRPSA score, all respondents were categorized and experienced all level public speaking anxiety. A half from total respondents mostly experienced moderate level of public speaking anxiety in English debate, then continued with low and moderately low, moderately high, and high level of PSA. As the matter of fact, this result was proved by total average score from all respondents. It was found that total average score level of public speaking anxiety was 100. Based on McCroskey (1970), a range for moderate level was 93-110 score. In sum, English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, Universitas Bahasa Asing were generally classified as moderate level of public speaking anxiety with 100 total average score.

Additionally, 24 respondents from Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing were also chosen to participate in coping strategy.

**Table 4.2.** *Statistical result of coping strategy*

Coping Strategy	Percentage of respondent
Preparation	85%
Relaxation	70%
Positive thinking	84%
Peer seeking	88%
Resignation	45%

Based on the result, it inferred that all respondents chose all coping strategy. Among the 5 types, it showed that peer seeking mostly obtained the highest percentage, 88%, to cope PSA in debate. Then, it was followed with preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, and resignation. It indicated that peer seeking were used by English department debaters.

Equally as important, correlation between levels of PSA and coping strategy was also represented below. Not only showed the correlation between levels of PSA and coping strategy in general, but also showed the correlation between level of



PSA and 5 subscales of coping strategy respectively. The correlation is

		PSA	Preparation	Resignation	Positive thinking	Relaxation	Peer Seeking
PSA	Pearson Correlation	1	.397	-.118	.142	-.174	-.436*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.055	.582	.509	.416	.033

specifically used to see the interconnection of two variables. The result was processed by Pearson Product Moment-SPSS.

**Table 4.3.** *Correlation between levels of PSA and coping strategy*

		Level of PSA	Coping Strategy
Level of PSA	Pearson Correlation	1	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.893
	N	24	24
Coping Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.029	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.893	
	N	24	24

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Generally, the result showed that there was a positive correlation exist between level of PSA and coping strategy in English debate ( $r = .229$ ). The correlation was significant  $\text{sig} > 0.05$ , while PSA and coping strategy is not statistically significant ( $0.893 > 0.005$  for a two-tailed test). In sum, PSA and coping strategy has the positive correlation, but it is not significant.

Moreover, SPSS was also used to see the interconnection between PSA and 5 subscales of coping strategy (preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation). Table 4.4. showed that direction of PSA and peer seeking were negative, but both of them had a statistically significant linear relationship ( $0.033 < 0.05$  for a two-tailed test). Even tough the direction was negative, it was therefore PSA significant to peer seeking. In other words, It was found that PSA and peer seeking is significant-negative correlation. All in all, high levels of PSA does not determine low score of peer seeking by respondents.

## 2. Discussion

### Level of Public Speaking Anxiety

As reported in finding, English department debaters undergo a moderate level of public speaking anxiety in English debate, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing – Universitas Negeri Padang. It was seen that 50% respondents, which is a half, experienced moderate level of PSA. As stated in chapter III, the respondents came from different levels of academic year. From the result, it was also inferred that

level of PSA did not have any correlation to period in experiencing English debate and level of academic year.

Additionally, Pribly, Keaten, and Sakamoto (2001) found that there was no correlation between public speaking anxiety and English ability. It was proved when he conducted a research about levels of PSA to American and Japanese students. In fact, both of American and Japanese were equally same in the level of low, moderate, and high level anxiety, whereas Japanese students experienced more at moderately low anxiety and American students experienced more at moderately high anxiety. English ability in English debate can be associated with academic year of respondents from English department. It was assumed that respondents from 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 had different English ability in academic purposes. Thus, English ability in term of level academic year did not determine level of PSA in English debate.

This research was in line with Tse (2011) who conducted a comparative research toward level of public speaking anxiety between the beginning of semester and the end of semester to male and female (202) undergraduate students. The result showed that at the beginning of semester students experienced moderate level of anxiety. Unfortunately, it was found a great number of students for moderately high and high. To compare the level, Tse (2011) gave a treatment to respondent by teaching affective strategy to manage the anxious feeling. As the result, at the end of the semester, the students also experienced moderate level anxiety, and the number of moderately high and high become decreased.

In contrast, the study about level of PSA was different as Richmond and McCroskey (1998) showed that 5% of total respondents experienced low anxiety, 5% of total respondents experienced moderately low, 20% of total respondents experienced moderate anxiety, 30% of total respondents experienced moderately high anxiety, and 40% of total respondents experienced high anxiety in context of speech.

The result of different levels of PSA might be accepted since learners have different levels of cognitive sight in dealing with public speaking (Bednar, 1991). In terms of cognitive sight, he added that “self confidence” and knowledge were correlated to levels of PSA. It is noted that, learners with high, moderate, and low level of PSA had different knowledge and confident when they to deal with English debate. Therefore, when respondents gained moderate level of PSA in English debate, it can be understood since they have different knowledge and experiences prior to English debate.

### **Coping Strategy of PSA in Debate**

Strategies to cope public speaking anxiety in English debate were also used to investigate type of coping strategy by English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing-Universitas Negeri Padang. The result revealed that 88% respondents chose peer seeking, and followed 85% preparation, 84% positive thinking, 70% relaxation, and 45% resignation. This result was similar to Marwan (2015) who conducted a research in coping strategy involving university students of lower and upper intermediate level based on TOEFL scores. Students who gained a score of 475 or less were categorized into lower class, and students with a

score of 475 or higher were categorized into upper intermediate class. As the result, peer seeking was dominantly used to both lower and upper intermediate class. Moreover, Marwan (2015) added that resignation was not used by learners in coping anxiety, while in context of debate, resignation is the lowest strategy used by English department debaters.

The result was contradictory to the previous research as Kondo and Ling (2004) conducted the research about coping strategy. From 209 Japanese students, it was found that preparation was frequently used to cope anxiety, and continuously followed resignation, positive thinking, relaxation, and peer seeking.

Additionally, this result was also different with Nuranifar (2014) who conducted a research related to coping strategy in FLCAS. It was found that respondents used all the 5 coping strategies, as followed: Preparation (68.4%), Positive thinking (59.8%), Resignation (54.7%), Relaxation (46.2%), and Peer seeking (21.4%).

Kondo and Yang (2004) (in Mahmud, 2015) explained that peer seeking is an appropriate learning partner to solve the problem. Involving a friend to cope anxiety in peer seeking gave a chance to talk the problem, to build emotion, and share experience and strategy. English debate in varsity level, Buckyard and Iyer (2012) explained that BP debate consists of 4 teams of two speaker respectively. It was believed teammate in English debate enrolled important position to determine a team. This could possibly happen to English department debaters when they used peer seeking strategy to cope anxiety.

In contrast, the result was different from Bailed et al and Pappamihiel (2002) (in Marwan 2015) who explained that resignation is the common strategy used to cope anxiety by foreign learners. Marwan further added that learners should know the cause and factor of anxiety. Therefore, they can use appropriate strategy to deal with any foreign language speaking situation.

In English debate, Buckard and Iyer (2013) stated that debaters was given 15 minutes for case building, allowing to discuss toward motion given. It can be inferred that, peer seeking, as the most strategy used, was make sense in context of English debate. Peer seeking can be seen as a platform to discuss between debaters. It took an important position, since English debate, speaker cannot stand alone with her/his arguments. Arguments proposed by debater should be correlated and connected each other to make the arguments strong. Therefore, peer seeking, as the most strategy used by English debaters, might be happened since it was important in English debate.

### **Correlation between Level of PSA and Coping Strategy**

Broadly speaking, the result inferred that there was no correlation between level of public speaking and coping strategy used by English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, Universitas Negeri Padang. From the analysis, total number of coping strategy did not determine level of public speaking of respondents respectively. It can be speculated that low level of public speaking anxiety, might use the best strategy successfully to handle anxiety, or vise versa. In fact, total score chosen by respondents did not give significant impact toward level of PSA. However, if it was compared to 5 types of coping strategy, it was

found that only peer seeking correlated to level of PSA, even though it was a negative direction.

This result was similar to Kondo and Yang (2004) who conducted a research about language anxiety. It was found that there was no significant correlation between ELCAS and 5 types of coping strategy. Kondo and Yang (2004) further explained that cognitive, affective and behavioural aspect in anxiety coping strategy might be changed toward demand, need, and situation.

Yasuda and Nabei (2018) who conducting a research about correlation between language anxiety and coping strategy of Japanese learners. Also, the result did not show significant correlations between language anxiety and coping strategy.

All in all, this result can be accepted since strategy in English debate did not necessarily about preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation, but the knowledge and information about issues in a motion also determined the successful strategy and level of anxiety of English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing. It was believed that English debate was about delivering and persuading reasonable and logical arguments (Bailey and Molyneaux, 2008).

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

##### **Conclusion**

This study investigated level of public speaking anxiety, coping strategy, and correlation between level of PSA and coping strategy which is adjusted to respondents' background in English debate. The result revealed that English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, Universitas Negeri Padang experienced moderate level of public speaking anxiety. Also, it was found that peer seeking as most used, and followed with preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, and resignation. Lastly, it showed that the only coping strategy correlated was peer seeking. If it was compared to the whole coping strategy, there was no correlation between level of PSA and coping strategy used by English department debaters, Unit Kegiatan Bahasa Asing, Universitas Negeri Padang.

##### **Suggestions**

Based on the conclusions above, some suggestions are proposed for the future research. It is suggested to conduct the interview to know the exact factors and causes that influence level of public speaking in English debate. The interview is used to identify problems of English debaters respectively in public speaking. Additionally, coach and trainer can provide appropriate coping strategy based on the result from interview.



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