Identifying Student Speaking Anxiety at English Language Education

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Abstract
The Speaking skill commonly used as a sole way to interact and communicate with another individual in daily basis or even in more formal basis like academic or even business. But still students still tend to have anxiety when speaking in another language because of several causes and reason. Therefore, this research aims to identify what is the cause and type of the problems of anxiety at English Language Education (ELE) students Universitas Internasional Batam. This study conducted qualitative method for the research. Peneliti menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. The research instruments were questionnaires. To extend the deeper analysis, this study also conducted an in-dept interview adopted from SLSAS Woodrow (2006) and FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986). From the result the researcher can define the types and causes of the ELE students speaking anxiety at Universitas Internasional Batam. Therefore, the learning process at English Language Education needs to be equipped with sufficient linguistic competences, such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Keywords: Speaking, Anxiety, Student, EFL

Introduction

Speaking involves the production and delivery of verbal/aural/verbal messages/meanings through the systematic production of verbal utterances to communicate with others (Bailey, 2008; Aliyu, Korau & Basiru, 2019). Speaking consists of the use of grammatical rules, cohesive devices, lexical items, phonological rules to express one's thoughts and feelings in speaking speech (Hammd & Ghali, 2015). These skills are important to be expressed correctly and effectively to communicate with the environment and continue their life in order to exist and be accepted in society (Elkiran, 2021). Among them are used in the world of entertainment, social media, business, certain communities, and education, being the main reason why this language is learned or studied (Nawir, Alber & Syafitri, 2021). Proficient in this skill is an important requirement for students especially. However, many EFL students face challenges when learning speaking skills due to anxiety (Punar & Uzun, 2019; eref & inpolat, 2021).

Anxiety is closely related to learning foreign languages, because language learners have difficulty communicating, especially related to speaking (Görsev & Mustafa, 2021). Public speaking anxiety is defined as the fear of speaking in front of an audience (Tee, Joanna & Kamarulzaman, 2020). This is a type of weakness that makes students unable to communicate well in English which is characterized by they really know that they know something to tell but they can't show it because of anxiety (Brown, 2001). Anxiety grows when speakers have to deliver a speech in a foreign language because they are

afraid of being judged or humiliated by others (Mede & Karaırmak, 2017). This hinders the productive performance of language learners when learning the target language (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013) and can lead to discouragement of learners, loss of confidence in their abilities, running away from participating in classroom activities, and even neglecting efforts to learn the language well (Na, et al. et al. 2007). Therefore, speaking anxiety can give negative feelings to students who are trying to learn language in class (Hutabarat & Simanjuntak, 2019).

Speech anxiety is seen as a specific social phobia or difficulty speaking in groups or in front of groups of people. This can lead to an educational process (Aliyu, Korau & Basiru, 2019; Samuelson, 2011). In addition, anxiety can reduce students' learning motivation, especially students with high anxiety who have difficulty removing tension and stress from their speaking anxiety (Çağatay, 2015). Language anxiety causes students to become frustrated, lose confidence, do not want to speak English, for fear of being wrong (Chiu, et al, 2016). The physiological, sociological or psychological effects of the speaker are the causes of problems in speaking (Doğan & ifci, 2021). It is said that speaking anxiety can manifest itself emotionally in the form of sadness, anger, fear, or physically in the form of a rapid heartbeat and sweating (Melanlıoğlu & Demir, 2013 in eref & inpolat, 2021).

Anxiety in public speaking is a learned skill and can be subdued by training before delivering speeches. Hence, people who experience public speaking anxiety can perform great since they already understand the feeling of anxiety and they want to improve (Raja, 2017). Two types that can contribute impact in speaking anxiety which are affective-related and linguistic-related. The studies also mentioned that the affective-related factors are when the students fear making mistakes and negative evaluation, leading to an indifferent attitude in speaking. Besides, the linguistic-related causes of speaking anxiety are the lack of grammar and vocabulary (Mahmud, 2018). Anxiety is the most encountered mental disorder to public speakers. Anxiety in speaking tends to make people generally avoid the environment where they must speak to show their opinion; they suffer great distress and fear in any situation (Melton & Kirkwood, 2017). People used to negatively judge those who express their worries towards speaking and fail to make a strong impression through positive gestures. These problems also affect individual confidence as difficulties in achieving their aims to improve in speaking (Kant, 2000).

Public speaking anxiety is one of the determining factors in career development (Cunningham, Lefkoe, & Sechrest, 2006). One such career is teaching (Güvendir, Kocabıyık & Dündar, 2020). This paper will highlight the causes and types of anxiety problems in English Language Education (ELE) students at Batam International University, which will describe their problems internally and externally in the classroom. This study aims to identify speaking anxiety in English education students at Batam International University.

Methods

The study will be conducted using the Qualitative Research method (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the data were classified as primary data (questionnaires distributed via google form) and secondary data (literature review). The data is supported by in-depth interviews about speaking anxiety. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique (Bhardwaj, 2019). The subjects of this study were ELE students class 2017 – 2021, with a total of 28 students. The research location is Batam International University. Questionnaires and Interviews were adopted from SLSAS by Woodrow (2006) and FLCAS by Horwitz et al. (1986). FLCAS uses a 4-Likert scale consisting of 33 questions to determine students' speaking difficulties. While the SLSAS consists of 12 questions and uses a 5 Likert scale that reflects the communicative situation.

Result and Discussion

This study answered two research questions, namely, to find out the type and causes of speaking anxiety. Therefore, this section will present the questionnaire results regarding the types and causes of anxiety in ELE UIB Students speaking skills. Besides, this study will elaborate on the interview results to get a deeper and more elaborative analysis. Therefore, this section is divided into 2 (two), namely types of students' speaking anxiety and causes of students' speaking anxiety. This study Questionnaire and Interview are adopted from The second language speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS) by Woodrow (2006) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986).

This research found out that most EFL learners at Universitas Internasional Batam possess high speaking anxiety. The students feel that their heart is pounding if speaking under a time constraint and uneasy. Their mind also often jumbled or lost focus when they were speaking in the English language. Tremble, freeze and panic were what they also felt when speaking, whether for a presentation or speeches in English Language Skill. This study also discovered that they feel warry when people judge their English Language Speaking or know that the teacher will evaluate their speech or presentation. However, they often want to speak up their thoughts in English much better, and the students also did not want to avoid speaking the English language. Sometimes they maybe have a foul English language than the others, but they are not worried about that. They only worry about being judged by others.

Nevertheless, there is a factor where the students feel afraid when being called a sample because they felt it was too sudden. Therefore, it can be concluded that the type of speaking anxiety that happened to reside in ELE Students at Universitas Internasional Batam students is affected by external factors. Rajitha & Alamelu (2020) stated that there are two factors in his study that impact the public was speaking intensity factor: internal and external factors. Internal factors can be stage fear, lack of confidence and shyness factor. Meanwhile, external factors are grammar, pronunciation, and peer factors. To the EFL students at Universitas Internasional Batam, it can be stated that they most felt pressured by external factors. Especially by the external factors of peer factor. They felt so scared when evaluated and even judged by their friends or even their lecturers.

After analyzing the students' speaking anxiety, this study found several causes that impact the students' speaking anxiety at ELE at Universitas Internasional Batam. These students of ELE Universitas Internasional Batam are afraid to speak (in speech, debate, or other speaking activities) because they feel they lack good speaking skills, which makes them anxious. They also feel afraid that they lack knowledge and blank every time the lecturers ask them to give an impromptu speech. Most of the students also felt that they often encountered some problems, such as inadequate mastery of vocabulary, fluency (stuttering), and pronunciations. The effects of anxiousness they obtained from the high frequency of speaking assignments (such as presentation, video making, etc.) also decreased their confidence because of the worry of negative comments and evaluations from the lecturers and other classmates. The students also mentioned that they feel under pressure to offer excellent work when they speak English, which upset them. Students also admitted that they still encountered linguistic difficulties and inadequate speaking techniques when expressing themselves in higher demand. Hence, related to other previous studies, linguistic difficulties are still displayed as the cause of speaking anxiety.

Students A and B admitted that they feel afraid when speaking because they still care about other people's opinions, so they still feel judged even by their classmates or lecturers.

"Being judged, that is why I am nervous."
"I still care about how people see or think about me; that is why I am afraid to speak."

Students A and B also answered that they feel scared when they want to volunteer in speaking with different reasoning. Student A stated that they felt afraid when they stuttered that everyone would look at them as fragile. At the same time, Student B mentioned that every gaze fell upon her when they spoke, which made her panic, and her mind went blank. So Student B felt like a fool in front of their classmates, which she felt afraid of.

"I am afraid when I stuttered, then the others just speak because of that one mistake."
"When I speak, usually every gaze will fall upon me, and it made me feel uneasy. After that, my mind went blank, and I felt like a fool."

Student C also adds the following.

"When the lecturer called my name and lecturer. Then asked me to answer a random question; I could answer them, but sometimes. When I talk too much, my mind goes blank, and I lose focus. Suddenly all the vocabulary in my mind goes jumbled, and I wrongly pronounce anything."

Students A, B, and C also stated that they would also love to use English if they could use them for any activities. However, it would be difficult for them to speak up since the upcoming factors include internal factors like the lack of vocabulary and peer factors. Nevertheless, students also feel afraid externally because of the shyness factor.

"Every time, I tried to speak up. I felt my face flush red, and this uneasy feeling made me unfocused. But I still want to try."
"Of course, speaking up is a good way in convincing the freedom of opinion from someone. But still, I am too afraid that I might stutter, and they don't get what I mean."
"If it is possible, I want to speak. But I am still afraid when people look at me while I am speaking and judge me. But if the situation forced me to. I will do it."

The Interview stated that several students have different factors of types and causes that made them uneasy about speaking that triggered the switch of their anxieties. Nevertheless, the students' factor in common is the peer factor which they feel afraid of being evaluated or judged. In addition, the linguistics factors of being afraid to make a mistake in pronouncing and lack of vocabulary are also one of the reasons that ELE students are afraid to use their English Language Speaking Ability.

Several previous researchers also conducted an analysis of students' speaking anxiety. The causes of students' oral performance anxiety include low language proficiency (Meloah, 2013); negative self-evaluation, fear of negative evaluation, negative attitude towards English class, and failing to contribute to speaking in class (Mak, 2012; Nazir, Bashir & Bashir, 2014); lack of vocabulary, poor English skills and memory disassociation cause anxiety (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Mede & Karaırmak, 2017); cultural emphasis on the need for a positive and face-saving outlook (Chin, Hie Ling & Jiin Yih, 2016); required to speak without preparation (Ay, 2010). In addition, lack of knowledge of FL is not one of the causes of EFL speaking anxiety (Mahmoodzadeh, 2013).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that speaking anxiety in English Language Education (ELE) students at Batam International University is a high level of speaking anxiety. In other words, students with low anxiety reached the lowest level, and high anxiety reached the highest level in each grade. When studying the causes of speech anxiety, this study found that peer factors and linguistic difficulties were the most dominant causes of speech anxiety. On the other hand, students still feel anxious when speaking and feel insecure about their linguistic competence. In addition, it was also found that students may have various causes, such as low self-confidence when speaking and also do not have sufficient linguistic competence. Therefore, by identifying the causes of speaking anxiety experienced by ELE students at Batam International University, it is expected to develop appropriate teaching strategies to minimize students' speaking anxiety. In addition, this research can also improve the structure of the English Language Education curriculum to be prepared for its students, especially with adequate linguistic competence which helps them to have better speaking techniques in the future.

Acknowledgments

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