

Empowering Voices: Breaking the Silence

Hilma Adzkia, Juniar Frida Andini, Ahmad Syafi'i

Empowering Voices: Breaking the Silence of Speaking Anxiety Among Pesantren Students

1st Hilma Adzkia, 2nd Juniar Frida Andini, 3rd Ahmad Syafi'i

English Language Teaching Department

STKIP Al Hikmah Surabaya

Surabaya, Indonesia

1st adzkiabilma@gmail.com,

3rd ahmadsyafi20@gmail.com

Abstract: *Self-esteem and confidence may be the most common causes of speaking anxiety in the English classroom. Most students never feel completely confident when speaking in a foreign language class. They also believe that their classmates are better at languages than they are. Furthermore, they would not respond voluntarily in foreign language class because it would be embarrassing for them. The students were also concerned about falling behind in language class because it moved so quickly. As a result, they were more tense and nervous in language class than in any of my other classes. They also became nervous and confused while speaking in language class. They also became anxious when they did not understand everything the language teacher said. Similarly, they were overwhelmed by the number of rules they needed to learn in order to speak a foreign language.*

Key words: *Speaking anxiety, VOICE, Pesantren Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a necessary ability to master when studying a foreign language, especially English. When someone is studying English, one of the ways to determine whether or not they are successful is to apply what they have learned. That is why learners are expected to produce the outcome of what they learn, either verbally or in writing. According to (Brown, 2000), the standard of successfully acquiring a language is primarily the evidence of an aptitude to attain practical goals through interactive communication with other speakers of the language. Speaking is a crucial component of learning English, especially as a foreign language, so that learners can attain their objective of communicating effectively in the target language.

Learning to talk in general has its own set of difficulties. However, when speaking English as a foreign language, the students face additional challenges. According to Nunan (Indrianty, 2016), the ability to hold a conversation in the target language is utilized to measure the success of language learning. In other words, learners are regarded as successful when they can utilize the target language to communicate with others, either within or outside of the classroom.

English is taught to students in Indonesia from an early age. Despite the fact that Indonesia is a non-English speaking country, English is part of the official curriculum for high schools including in pesantren, so students are required to acquire English in school. Despite the fact that English is a required subject in high schools, many students are unable to communicate in English with their peers or teachers (Mukminin & Arif, 2015). It leads to genuine distress in performing in English for foreign

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language classes that can deter students' performance and achievement is known as language anxiety.

Language anxiety is distress experienced in English for foreign language classes, causing fear, unease, and worry while speaking a foreign language. This anxiety can be related to learning or speaking, with speaking anxiety being more problematic. Fear, discomfort, and worry while speaking a foreign language are all emotions connected with foreign language speaking anxiety, according to Pakpahan and Gultom (2020). According to Punar and Kurtuldu (2020), the type of language anxiety might be associated with language learning or related to speaking. So, two disorders can be included under language anxiety, and speaking anxiety is more serious in the current situation.

English language learners often face frustration due to strict rules like spelling, pronunciation, word recognition, meaning, and grammar. High standards often lead to anxiety and avoidance in classrooms, as they fear making mistakes and receiving correction from teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The proposed research, "Empowering Voices: Breaking the Silence of Speaking Anxiety Among Pesantren Students," delves into a crucial yet under-researched area within the context of Islamic boarding schools. Speaking anxiety, a common human experience, can be particularly debilitating in pesantren settings, where public speaking holds significant value. This review aims to shed light on existing literature related to speaking anxiety and its impact on students in academic and highlighting the specific context of pesantren education.

Research on speaking anxiety in educational settings underscores its detrimental effects on academic performance and social interaction. Studies have shown that students experiencing anxiety exhibit avoidance behaviors, hindering their participation in class discussions and presentations. This can lead to lower grades, reduced self-confidence, and a disconnect from peers. Furthermore, the pressure to perform well in public speaking situations, often amplified in religious contexts, can exacerbate anxiety and negatively impact students' spiritual development. This research has the potential to make valuable contributions to education. Understanding the specific challenges faced by pesantren students can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies to empower their voices and foster a more inclusive learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

This research used interview and questionnaire techniques in collecting research data because these two techniques have their own advantages that can help researchers to obtain accurate and in-depth data. Interview is a data collection technique by means of direct question and answer between researchers and respondents. Interviews can be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or online.

Questionnaire is a data collection technique by providing a series of written questions to respondents. Questionnaires can be distributed in person, by post, or online. Interviews can be used for qualitative research, such as research that aims to understand respondents' experiences or perceptions. Questionnaires can be used for quantitative research, such as research that aims to test hypotheses or

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measure certain variables. Ultimately, the use of interview and questionnaire techniques in research can be used to. The level of anxiety in this research are divided into four categories, there are very high-level anxiety, high level anxiety, low level anxiety, and very low-level anxiety, So we used this research method

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was used to find out students' speaking anxiety levels. The result shows that the students were having different levels of speaking anxiety. The level of anxiety in this research are divided into four categories, there are very high-level anxiety, high level anxiety, low level anxiety, and very low-level anxiety. Below are the students' profiles based on the questionnaire results. The profiles' score is measured as follows:

Table 4.1 The Scale Length

No	Scales	Speaking anxiety levels
1	1,00 – 1,75	Very low-level anxiety
2	1,76 – 2,50	Low level anxiety
3	2,51 – 3,25	High level anxiety
4	3,26 – 4,00	Very high-level anxiety

After knowing the scale length is 0,75. Here is the categorization of the students speaking anxiety levels.

Table 4.2 Students' Profiles			
No	Student	Anxiety Scores	Anxiety Level
1	Student 1	2,60	Low level anxiety
2	Student 2	2,51	High level anxiety
3	Student 3	2,72	High level anxiety
4	Student 4	2,60	High level anxiety
5	Student 5	2,51	High level anxiety
6	Student 6	2,60	High level anxiety

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7	Student 7	2	Low level anxiety
8	Student 8	2,48	Low level anxiety
9	Student 9	2,69	High level anxiety
10	Student 10	2,72	High level anxiety
11	Student 11	2,81	High level anxiety
12	Student 12	2,48	Low level anxiety
13	Student 13	2,36	Low level anxiety
14	Student 14	2,45	Low level anxiety
15	Student 15	2,54	High level anxiety

16	Student 16	2,63	High level anxiety
17	Student 17	2,60	High level anxiety
18	Student 18	2,66	High level anxiety
19	Student 19	2,48	Low level anxiety
20	Student 20	2,48	Low level anxiety
21	Student 21	2,51	High level anxiety

According to the data above, the speaking anxiety levels of pesantren students in Madura vary. There are 62% of students had high-level anxiety, whereas 38% had low-level anxiety. However, there are no students with very low-level anxiety and very high-level anxiety.

High-level Students Anxiety

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The findings show that high-level anxiety has the highest percentage. In this class, 62% of students have a high level of anxiety. Students with high levels of anxiety were apprehensive in English class. They trembled and worried when they realized they would be asked to speak or answer questions without any preparation, and some of them were still nervous even after they had prepared. It is in line with the interview results reported as follows:

(1) "When I study English, I don't like crowds because I think it disturbs my focus while studying." (S1)

(2) Learning English is very difficult. I'm often nervous about saying things that I'm afraid are wrong and of course it makes me very nervous about speaking." (S2)

(3) They were also daunted by the quantity of regulations involved with speaking English. As a result, they believed that other pupils were better at speaking than they were.

Low-level Students Anxiety

A study of 21 students revealed that 38% of them exhibited low anxiety when speaking English. While students with high and very high anxiety levels expressed apprehension about nervousness, panic, and the intricacies of speaking rules, those with low anxiety levels reported feeling fearful when their mistakes were corrected or when they struggled to comprehend the teacher's instructions. Additionally, they voiced concerns about being ridiculed by their peers. Despite these anxieties, most low-anxiety students demonstrated confidence in speaking English in class, actively participating in discussions and adhering to the rules without feeling overwhelmed. Some even reported feeling comfortable interacting with native English speakers.

(4) "I was scared, but I had to be brave enough to be ashamed of being laughed at and ridiculed." (S1)

(5) “It was my lack of confidence that made me nervous about reading texts in English.”(S2)

(1) “Because I'm really stupid in English, and I'm embarrassed because I'm afraid I'll read it wrong and I'm embarrassed by my friends or I'm not confident.”(S1)

In summary, the questionnaire is used to assess students' degrees of public speaking fear. There are four levels that were projected to occur, however only two levels were discovered in Madura's pesantren students. There are two levels of speaking anxiety: high and low. The majority of students, 62% of all students, exhibit high-levels of speaking anxiety. The remaining 38% of students report low-levels of speaking anxiety.

When students with high levels of anxiety had to speak without preparation, they were usually scared and trembled. Furthermore, when dealing with the norms and language employed in speech. Students with low levels of speaking anxiety, on the other hand, were more concerned with matters concerning their teacher. When kids do not understand what the teacher says or corrects, they may become agitated, frightened, or even afraid.

Table 1. Factors Affecting Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom

Sources of EFL Speaking Anxiety	Number of Items	Agreement (%) (SA+A)
fear of interaction	3, 9, 11, 16, 18	35%
fear of peer perception	5, 17, 23, 31	36%
low self esteem	1, 7, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30	31%

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language proficiency	2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 20, 21	32%
fear of negative correction	15, 19, 33	42%

According to Table 2, speaking anxiety is primarily caused by fear of negative correction, fear of peer perception, fear of interaction, language proficiency and low self-esteem among pesantren students in Madura. Fear of negative correction caused the most speaking anxiety. The majority of pesantren students were terrified that the language instructor would be quick to point out any errors that their peers or teachers could have made. In addition, the majority of them were irate when they failed to comprehend the corrections made by the speaker. They also were anxious when the language instructor asked them questions that they hadn't studied for beforehand.

Additionally, the top two and third-place sources of speaking anxiety in English classrooms are language proficiency and fear of interaction, respectively. When it came to language proficiency, the majority of pesantren students were terrified when they could not comprehend the foreign-language teacher. They were also thinking about non-course-related topics during the language lesson. They were concerned about the repercussions if I failed my foreign language course, though. They could forget things they had learned so readily in English

class, which made them quite anxious. Additionally, they asserted that as they prepared for a language exam, their confusion would only grow.

Fear of peer perception has become a significant factor affecting speaking anxiety. The majority of pesantren students reported that other students were more proficient in the foreign language than they were. When they spoke the foreign language, they were worried that the other students would make fun of them. They developed speech anxiety as a result.

One of the main variables influencing the speaking anxiety that pesantren students have in English classes is interaction. When the majority of pesantren students realised they would be called on in language class, they shook. They consequently began to become anxious when they had to speak in front of the class without having prepared. Yet, despite their high level of preparation for language class, a number of students continued to experience anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Self-esteem and confidence may be the most common causes of speaking anxiety in the English classroom. Most students never feel completely confident when speaking in a foreign language class. They also believe that their classmates are better at languages than they are. Furthermore, they would not respond voluntarily in foreign language class because it would be embarrassing for them. The students were also

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concerned about falling behind in language class because it moved so quickly. As a result, they were more tense and nervous in language class than in any of my other classes. They also became nervous and confused while speaking in language class. They also became anxious when they did not understand everything the language teacher said. Similarly, they were overwhelmed by the number of rules they needed to learn in order to speak a foreign language.

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