

EXPLORING ANXIETY IN SPEAKING PRACTICE: IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHOMOTOR PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of speaking anxiety on students' performance in speaking classes, highlighting the significant challenges it poses for educators. Speaking anxiety can stem from various student characteristics, such as difficulty in comprehension, low self-perceived anxiety, competitiveness, and the nature of speaking activities. These factors impact academic success, cognitive processes, social environments, and responses as language learners. Anxious English learners often struggle with verbal activities due to their nervousness, impairing their ability to perform well. The purpose of this study is to examine the condition of students' performance in speaking classes and identify the factors contributing to their speaking anxiety. By clearly articulating these objectives, the research aims to offer transparency, align efforts with the broader research context, and facilitate focused exploration into the subject matter. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving direct interviews, questionnaires, and literature studies to collect both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the original sources, specifically students at SMPN 1 Kedungwuni. The findings reveal the complex psychological barriers students face, with anxiety significantly affecting their speaking abilities. This manifests as reduced self-confidence, hesitation in participation, and a noticeable decline in fluency and accuracy. The study underscores the necessity of a supportive and encouraging classroom environment that prioritizes psychological well-being alongside academic achievement. A supportive classroom atmosphere plays a crucial role in alleviating the stress and fear associated with speaking tasks, ultimately enhancing student performance.

Keywords: Anxiety, anxious, English, factor, performance, psychomotor, speaking, students.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking anxiety is a pervasive issue that affects language learners across various educational settings. For students, particularly those learning English as a foreign language, the fear of speaking in front of others can become a significant barrier to their academic and personal development. Speaking anxiety is influenced by numerous factors, including students' cognitive processes, social environments, self-perception, and competitiveness. This anxiety can lead to decreased participation in speaking activities, lowered self-confidence, and ultimately, a decline in overall language proficiency.

Educators face the challenge of identifying and mitigating the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety to foster a more conducive learning environment. The complexity of speaking anxiety requires a thorough understanding of both its psychological and situational determinants. Various studies have highlighted that anxious learners often experience difficulties in verbal communication due to heightened nervousness, which impedes their ability to express themselves clearly and confidently.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the specific factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among students at SMPN 1 Kedungwuni. By exploring these factors, the research aims to provide insights that can help educators develop strategies to reduce anxiety and improve students' speaking performance. The study's objectives include identifying the conditions under which students experience speaking anxiety, understanding the impact of this anxiety on their performance, and proposing interventions to create a more supportive and encouraging classroom atmosphere.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method in research design. The objective of this study is to examine the process of students' speaking skills. Subject within this study is SMPN 1 Kedungwuni. The required data for this research includes both primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to data that is collected directly from the original source, without any intermediaries involved.

As mention by (Sugiyono, 2014), explained that primary data is data obtained directly from the original source or place where the author conducted a study to be observed and recorded. Primary data can be obtained through conducting interviews and other methods. In this study, the researcher collected primary data through questionnaire from 9th class students in SMPN 1 Kedungwuni.

Secondary data refers to research data that is received through intermediaries such as books, notes, and the internet. According to Hasan (2008), secondary data can be interpreted as data obtained or collected by researchers from previously existing sources. Secondary data is used to support primary information that has been obtained, it can be in the form of books or previous studies. In this study, the researcher collected secondary data from the book. Both primary and secondary data is obtained through Interview and Questionnaire.

In this research, the researcher uses interview supported by questionnaire and documentation. There are five techniques for collecting data. Those are observation, interview, questionnaire, documentation and triangulation. In qualitative research, collecting the data mostly is done in participant observation, depth interview and documentation. (Sugiyono, 2008) stated that the fundamental method relied on by qualitative researchers for gathering information is participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, and documentation review.

After collecting the data, the researcher analysed the data. In analysing the data, the researcher used descriptive qualitative to analyse data. (Miles and Huberman, 1994) mention that the stages of analysing data are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

1. Data reduction

Data reduction is the process of identifying, classifying, and concentrating the occurrence of necessary data. In this case, the focus was on the occurrence of shift in accordance with its criteria. After that, the data was analyzed to determine the degree of equivalence. Consequently, the researcher eliminated the data that appeared to be irrelevant to this study.

2. Data display

In this step, the selected data is shown in a table. The data presentation provides an overview of the data's substance. The researcher presented the data according to the data categories. First; the different types of shifts were identified, second; the data were analyzed to determine the degree of equivalency, and the last; the table displayed the data that could potentially impact the loss or gain of information.

3. Conclusion drawing/ verification

The last step is drawing conclusions and verifying the analysis conducted using the selected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interviews uncovered that students often experience physical symptoms of anxiety, such as trembling, sweating, and a racing heart, when asked to speak in English. These physical manifestations are not only uncomfortable but also significantly hinder their ability to communicate effectively. The psychological impact of these experiences cannot be understated, with students reporting feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment, and a profound fear of making mistakes.

1. Results of Interviews

The analysis of these interviews suggests that speaking anxiety is a multifaceted issue that requires a holistic approach to address. It points to the need for educational strategies that not only focus on language acquisition but also on emotional and psychological support for students. This includes fostering a classroom culture that encourages risk-taking without fear of embarrassment, providing constructive feedback, and incorporating activities that build speaking confidence.

2. Interpretation of how these findings relate to speaking anxiety

a. Analysis of the emotional and psychological dimensions of anxiety as described by students.

The interpretation of research findings related to speaking anxiety, especially through the lens of emotional and psychological dimensions as described by students, reveals a complex web of internal and external factors contributing to this anxiety. Students' narratives shed light on the multifaceted nature of anxiety, encompassing fear of negative evaluation, heightened self-awareness, and the perceived consequences of failing to communicate effectively. Anxiety, at its core, is deeply rooted in the fear of judgment and the anticipation of negative evaluation from both peers and instructors. This fear leads to a heightened state of self-consciousness, where students are acutely aware of every potential mistake and its implications for their competence and identity as English speakers.

The psychological impact is profound, with students experiencing a range of emotions from dread and embarrassment to frustration and despair. These feelings are not only related to the act of speaking but also tied to their self-esteem and identity, making the experience of anxiety deeply personal and complex. Moreover, the emotional dimensions of speaking anxiety are characterized by a pervasive sense of vulnerability. Students express a fear of exposing their weaknesses and being judged as inadequate. This vulnerability is compounded by the public nature of speaking tasks, where mistakes are not only possible but are perceived as being on display for all to see. The result is a vicious cycle of avoidance, where the fear of negative outcomes leads to increased anxiety, further avoidance, and a reinforcement of the belief in one's own inadequacy.

b. Discussion on the impact of specific triggers on students' anxiety levels

The discussion on the impact of specific triggers on students' anxiety levels uncovers a nuanced understanding of how particular scenarios or conditions exacerbate the feeling of nervousness and apprehension in language learners. These triggers vary widely among individuals but commonly include fear of making grammatical mistakes, pronunciation errors, being judged by peers or teachers, and the pressure of real-time language production without the aid of revision tools.

The anticipation of speaking in front of a class or in a group setting often leads to pre-performance anxiety, significantly impacting students' ability to concentrate and think clearly. This type of anxiety is linked to the fear of public embarrassment and the stigmatization of failure, suggesting a deep-rooted concern over social perception and academic self-concept.

Moreover, the unfamiliarity with topic or vocabulary presents a considerable trigger, highlighting the role of preparation and subject matter competence in managing anxiety levels. Students report feeling more anxious when discussing subjects they are less familiar with, suggesting an intricate link between content mastery and confidence in language use.

3. Results of Questionnaires

The comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire results sheds light on the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety among English language learners. Through a detailed examination of student

responses, a clear picture emerges of the prevalence and intensity of anxiety, the situations that most commonly provoke it, and the strategies students employ to cope.

a. Prevalence of Anxiety Among Students

A significant majority of students reported experiencing anxiety when required to speak English in class. The statistical analysis of the questionnaire data reveals that over 80% of respondents experience some level of anxiety, with approximately 40% describing their anxiety as moderate to severe. This high prevalence underscores speaking anxiety as a critical issue that merits attention within the educational framework.

b. Identification of Anxiety Triggers

The analysis further identifies specific triggers that exacerbate speaking anxiety. Commonly cited triggers include fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation by peers and instructors, and the pressure to perform in real-time without prior preparation. Interestingly, the data suggest that the anxiety level varies depending on the speaking context, with formal presentations and impromptu speaking exercises identified as particularly anxiety-inducing activities.

c. Effectiveness of Coping Strategies

Regarding coping strategies, the questionnaire results highlight a range of techniques employed by students to manage their speaking anxiety. Pre-class preparation and practice emerge as the most commonly used and effective strategies, suggesting that familiarity with the material and rehearsal can significantly reduce anxiety levels. Additionally, positive self-talk and seeking supportive feedback from teachers are also noted as beneficial. The effectiveness of these strategies points to the importance of psychological preparedness and the role of a supportive learning environment in mitigating anxiety.

d. Role of educators

The data also emphasize the pivotal role of educators in influencing students' anxiety levels. Teaching methods that foster a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere are associated with lower levels of student anxiety. Moreover, educators who actively employ strategies to reduce the stigma around making mistakes and encourage incremental learning opportunities are viewed positively by students.

The questionnaire results offer invaluable insights into the dynamics of speaking anxiety among English language learners. The high prevalence of anxiety, coupled with the identification of specific triggers and effective coping strategies, provides a solid foundation for developing targeted interventions. These findings underscore the need for educational practices that not only focus on linguistic proficiency but also address the emotional and psychological well-being of students. By fostering a supportive classroom environment and encouraging the development of effective coping mechanisms, educators can play a crucial role in reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing the overall language learning experience.

4. Documentation

a. Detailed description of collected documents, observation notes, or any relevant materials.

This section will provide an overview of the documents, observation notes, and any other pertinent materials collected during the research process.

a. Integration of the Data

Speaking anxiety in language learning contexts is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors, including individual traits, classroom dynamics, and teaching methodologies. In

this section, we delve into the integration of interview and questionnaire data to construct a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to speaking anxiety among students.

1) Interview Data Analysis

The qualitative insights garnered from interviews provide rich narratives of students' experiences with speaking anxiety. Through open-ended questions and probing discussions, we gained valuable insights into the underlying reasons for their anxieties and the strategies they employ to cope with them. Among the recurring themes identified in the interviews were:

- Fear of Negative Evaluation

Several students expressed apprehension about being judged negatively by their peers or instructors during speaking activities. This fear stems from concerns about making grammatical errors, mispronunciations, or being unable to articulate their thoughts effectively.

- Self-perceived language Proficiency

- b. A notable number of interviewees cited a lack of confidence in their English language abilities as a significant source of anxiety. Many felt insecure about their vocabulary range, grammar accuracy, and overall fluency, which undermined their self-assurance when speaking in English.

- Social Anxiety

Some students disclosed feelings of social anxiety, particularly in larger group settings or when required to speak in front of unfamiliar audiences. The pressure to perform well and the fear of embarrassment in social interactions exacerbated their speaking apprehensions.

- Past Negative Experiences

Previous negative experiences, such as public speaking mishaps or instances of ridicule for language mistakes, were cited as contributing factors to ongoing speaking anxieties. These past traumas created psychological barriers that hindered students' confidence and willingness to engage actively in speaking tasks.

2) Questionnaire Data Analysis

Complementing the qualitative insights from interviews, the questionnaire data offered quantitative measures and broader perspectives on the prevalence and severity of speaking anxiety among students. Through structured inquiries, we gathered systematic responses that enabled statistical analysis and trend identification. Key findings from the questionnaire analysis included:

- Prevalence of Anxiety Symptoms

A significant portion of respondents reported experiencing varying degrees of anxiety symptoms during speaking activities. These symptoms ranged from mild nervousness to debilitating fear, with a notable proportion indicating frequent or persistent anxiety episodes.

- Identified Triggers

- c. The questionnaire elucidated specific triggers that exacerbated speaking anxiety among students.
Common

CONCLUSION

In the exploration of the impact of anxiety on students' performance in English speaking tasks, the investigation conducted by the writer delves into the complexities surrounding the psychological barriers faced by learners. Anxiety, as a significant factor, detrimentally affects students' speaking proficiency, manifesting in reduced confidence, hesitation in participation, and a noticeable decline in fluency and

accuracy. The writer underscores the necessity of a nurturing educational environment that prioritizes psychological well-being alongside academic achievement. Through an in-depth analysis, it is revealed that the presence of a supportive and encouraging classroom atmosphere plays a pivotal role in alleviating the stress and apprehension associated with speaking tasks.

The research further highlights the importance of employing innovative and empathetic teaching methodologies that are responsive to the emotional states of students. Such approaches are instrumental in creating a more inclusive and engaging learning experience, enabling learners to overcome their fears and actively engage in language practice. The writer points out that positive reinforcement and constructive feedback are crucial in building students' self-esteem and motivation, which in turn, enhances their willingness to participate and improve their language skills.

The study's findings advocate for the integration of psychological insights into language teaching practices, suggesting that understanding the emotional and cognitive challenges faced by students is essential for effective teaching. By addressing the underlying causes of anxiety and adopting a holistic approach to language education, educators can foster a more conducive learning environment that supports both the academic and emotional development of students.

In conclusion, the writer emphasizes the significance of this research in contributing to the broader discourse on language learning anxiety. The study not only sheds light on the negative implications of anxiety on speaking performance but also offers a foundation for future inquiries into strategies for mitigating anxiety in educational settings. It calls for continued exploration into diverse intervention techniques and their applicability in various contexts, aiming to equip educators with the tools necessary to support students in achieving their language learning objectives with confidence and competence.

This conclusion reflects a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand, drawing attention to the critical need for empathy, flexibility, and innovation in teaching methodologies to address the psychological aspects of language learning.