

Overcoming Students' Anxiety in English Presentation of EFL Students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong

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Abstract

Speech anxiety is something that is more likely to depend on specific situations and circumstances that can make a person feel uncomfortable or feel nervous when presenting in front of the class. The purpose of this study was to see what factors caused students to feel anxious when presenting English in front of the class and how to overcome this anxiety. The participants in this study were fifth and seventh semester students at Sorong Muhammadiyah University. The method used in this study was a qualitative method using a qualitative description design. The number of participants with 10 students consisting of 5 students in the fifth semester and 5 students in the seventh semester. The instrument for this research was interview. From the results of 10 interviews most of the students were caused when advancing in English presentations in front of the class, lack of preparation before appearing, not mastering the material, not making outlines, and very lack of student confidence in front of the class. The way to overcome anxiety when presenting English in front of the class was carried out by students were, students must be wise, students must still think positively, and students must be very careful when presenting English, take a deep breath, drink water before presentation, be silent or take a moment before start the presentation.

Keywords: *Anxiety, EFL students, Presentation*

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important parts in learning English that is way it is an important indicator for the success of students in learning English. By having speaking skill students will be able to interact and communicate in their daily activities formally and non-formally. According to Richard (2008:19), Learner often evaluated their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English source in the bases of how must they feel have improved in their spoken English proficiency.

Presentation, which can be classified as one part of public speaking, commonly becomes a dreadful situation for some people, even if people who have proficiency in talking face to face. A businessman, who can perceive his or her business colleague, or a smart and supple people, can be broke if they have to talk or do a presentation in front of many people stated by (Wael et al., 2023) Many of them state that they are afraid about speaking in front of the public; they feel more anxious than speaking face to face. Even though a good competence in speaking in front of the public is needed for several professions, in particular conditions, this competence is needed in almost any kind of profession (Saputra et al, 2023). Just the same, presentation skill is needed mostly by students who want to pass their degree in university or college in Indonesia.

Anxiety in public speaking is very common among both college students and the general population. Some estimates are that as many as 85% of people experience more or less anxiety when they

need to speak in public (Katz, 2000). Many people who speak for a living including actors, business people, and politicians, experience public speaking anxiety. Some of these experienced public speakers feel that a little nervousness before a performance or speaking engagement gives them the ability to perform at their best (Safitri et al., 2018).

Anxiety in communication refers to shyness, reluctance to communicate, fear of speaking in public, and a quiet attitude in communication interactions. Elliott & Smith (2010) “argues, anxiety is a feeling of restlessness, worry, fear, and fear. Feelings of anxiety can keep students stuck in the middle of a presentation and make the presentation not go well”. That kind of communication Shyness, don't want to communicate, dread of speaking in public, and a quiet attitude in communication encounters are all symptoms of anxiety (Uluelang, 2017). Anxiety, according to this definition, is a sensation of restlessness, worry, fear, and fear. Anxiety can leave pupils trapped in the middle of a presentation, resulting in a poor performance. This will make students unable to achieve the expected learning objectives (Tahang et al., 2018).

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in studying anxiety face by students' when presenting in the front of class with the topic Overcoming Students' Anxiety and also the other reason why researcher wanted to conduct this research is due to the researcher's own experience which also about anxiety and nervousness on presentation. Furthermore, this research will be conduct on the fifth and seventh semesters of EFL students at Universitas Muhammadiyah of Sorong. The formulation of the problem in this research were; 1) What are the factors that occur during the English presentation in the classroom for EFL Students of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong? And What do the students do to overcome the anxiety during presentations in front of the class for EFL Students of the Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong?

METHOD

This research used qualitative methods, this research can use descriptive data that uses written or oral from people and information that can be observed and supported by the data obtained and documents related to the problem under study. Creswell & Creswell (2017) "qualitative research is interpretative research the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants". The researcher used descriptive qualitative design as the design of the research because the researcher wanted to determine and understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects such as actions, attitudes, and perceptions of students, for EFL students of the English department at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sorong According to Mukhtar (2013: 10) qualitative descriptive research method is a method used by researchers to find knowledge or theory of research at a certain time. The participant taken from this study were only consist of 10 students taken from two different semesters. The data was taken just as the primary research to find out the students as interviewee and observation to get student data in class to see how many students experience anxiety during presentations. Furthermore, the interview question was adopted by Ardianti (2021) which consisted by 10 questions. The results of this study were analyzed using descriptive qualitative. The researcher will interview the students. The researcher will use recording to strengthen the data that will be generated. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the use of qualitative data analysis activities is carried out interactively and continuously until it is finished

RESULT

This result of interview data is divided into two parts, these two parts was answered the statement that were implanted on the problem statement. Moreover, the interview data can be seen below:

1. Factor Cause Anxiety

The presentation anxiety factor is a feeling that occurs in students which causes anxiety when students feel it. The anxiety that students experience also varies, such as nervousness, cold sweat, trembling and fear of being stared at by friends or lecturers.

Internal Factors

The internal factor of anxiety is what results in students feeling during presentations, namely conflicting emotions, fear of failure, fear of losing the thread of material. Furthermore, the following indicators below are list based on the interviewee answers during the interview section:

a. Conflicting Emotions

Conflicting emotions are like when a student is about to make a presentation but the student is unsure of what the student wants to convey in front of the class and also the turbulence between two emotions that oppose each other cause the students to commit a wrong step which lead to fizzled.

“... Nervous and pressured because public speaking not good material that not understand the material. . .” (Answer by AD, FL, EVL, YLN, WND, and HFD)

“... Nervous about the lecturer keeps asking lots of questions and then does not master the material. . .” (Answer by HBB)

“... A little bit nervous, cannot speak English in front of the class. . .” (Answer by HD)

“... Felt nervous and scared, afraid of answering a question that I couldn't answer. . .” (Answer by AN)

b. Fear of Failure

When students give presentations, students are afraid to convey material that is not understood and other students are afraid to ask questions that cannot be answered due to the high amount of expectations that the presenter have towards the audiences and the supervisor or lecturer.

“... Uncomfortable is when the explanation is not understandable which causes awkward questions cannot be answered clearly. . .” (Answer by AD)

“... Anxious when the audience and the lecturer sees me during the presentation in front of the classroom. . .” (Answer by HBB, FL, EVL, HFD and AN)

“... Felt uncomfortable when no one else asked questions, until the lecturer started asking questions. . .” (Answer by HD)

“... The awkwardness due to the reaction audience shows such as laugh. . .” (Answer by WND)

From the indicator above the researcher concluded that there are several factors that can be used as measurement to see the students' anxiety during the presentation of English language and it is awkwardness. From the answers above, there are several answers that match with indicator itself such as, doesn't find the material to be understandable by the audience because during the presentation, cant answers the given question properly, the feeling of being stared by the audiences and the lecturer during the presentation and lastly being thrown a question by the lecturer and getting laugh by the audiences.

c. Fear of Losing the Thread of Material

Afraid of losing material threads such as students neglecting to practice discourse and not being prepared, they will be at a loss for words and at a loss for words.

“... The response was irritated and there was a sense of annoyed. . .” (Answer by HBB, FL, EVL, and WND)

“First, if the given questions are difficult beyond students' ability. Hand them over to the lecturer. . .” (Answer by ARF)

“... There is also a bit of annoyance because they already nervous and afraid of being wrong due to not understanding the material. . .” (Answer by YLN)

“... Trying to answer even though it's not in accordance with what they want, but at least tried to answer their questions” (Answer by HD)

“... Do not need time first and collect related answers so that they can be answered. . .” (Answer by HFD and AN)

The results of the internal indicator above can be concluded that some students felt irritated, neglected the question, forced to answer the question even though it was difficult, and collected the

questions and then answered them at the end of the presentation. And finally, when you get a difficult question, ask for help from the lecturer.

External Factors

External factors of anxiety are those that lead to students who feel when they are unexpectedly puzzled by presentations, namely failing to practice, condition of the presentation, physical factor. The external factors below are also listed match with the interviewee answers during the interview sections.

a. Failing to Practice

Failed to practice such as lack of preparation and less practice on the material which cause anxiousness.

“ . . . When feel anxious was during the question-asking session because I did not learn much about the material was presenting. . .” (Answer by, HBB, YLN, ARF, HD, and WND)

“ . . . If there is anxiety, and maybe the factor of overthinking the material is something that is lacking or something that is not disabled or is not sufficiently remembered and causes things that can not be done in the future. . .” (Answer by AD)

“ . . . The first this afraid of being wrong, and afraid that English is not correct, or that my classmates will not understand it. . .” (Answer by FL)

“ . . . Fear of forgetting material even though it has been studied. . .” (Answer by EVL)

“ . . . When the students’ was stared at by all my classmates, they would definitely feel anxious. . .” (Answer by AN)

“ . . . When you stand alone in front, you are constantly seen by your lecturer and find difficult questions. . .” (Answer by HFD and AN)

Judging from results one of the external factors above can be categorized as follows, namely, fear of not preparing the material properly, fear of my English not being good enough that it cannot be understood properly by classmates, fear of forgetting material even though students have studied it, fear of when seen by classmates, and finally seen by the lecturer and asked by the lecturer.

b. Conditions of the Presentation

The condition of the presentation room is mostly about the atmosphere of the classroom, the audience and the lecturer. These aspects are one of the main reason why the students tend to feel anxiety, the causes are being stared by both audience and lecturer or slightly the atmosphere on the room feels a little bit tension.

“ . . . Yes of course, everyone must have felt that. . .” (Answer by HBB, HBB, WND, and HFD)

“ . . . Well prepared they don't feel nervous, if they not ready then the feel less automatic when feel nervous and feel anxious which causes they heart to beat fast. . .” (Answer by ARF)

“ . . . Hands wet. . .” (Answer by FL, EVL and AN)

“ . . . Yes, when the students’ want to go forward, they heart beats fast, but when students go forward, the beat decreases but I'm still nervous. . .” (Answer by YLN)

The results of one of the indicator above can be concluded that the cause of fast heart beats is often caused by the categories of anxiety that have been mentioned by students, namely, lack of preparation which causes nervousness that ends with rapid hearts beats, heart palpitations when going to presentation after that with the presentation students have been able to adapt to the presentation environment in which the student has been able to overcome a racing heart, and the last reason for a fast heart can cause sweaty hands, cold sweat, and tremors.

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2. Overcoming the Students' Anxiety

In this anxiety section, there are four indicators that the researcher uses and equates in interview to serve as benchmarks to find out what solutions can be used to overcome students' anxiety about presenting English in front of the class.

From the interview there are three questions got from the interview data, there are view solutions in the anxiety presentations, especially in terms of being agitated in front of the class. Furthermore, the solution that the researcher provides to fix these problems is shown below based on the questions:

a. Be Judicious

Being wise is like staying focused on the material, maintaining the positive thinking to distract from classmates who are looking or lecturers who are looking.

“ . . . Speak silently to distract from the presentation. . .” (Answer by EVL)

“ . . . By controlling negative thoughts and reducing negative thoughts. . .” (Answer by AD)

From the answers of the students after being interviewed, students' provided solution for eliminating unreal (irrational) anxiety namely, speaking silently to distract from the presentation, and finally controlling to calm himself down.

b. Be Positive

Being positive must be applied to students so that students can build and maintain an uplifting perspective on the crowd, the discourse, and yourself as a speaker.

“ . . . Learn more from friends who are more professional and continue to learn a lot. . .” (Answer by AD)

“ . . . Study harder, add skills such as speaking and be more diligent in learning about vocabulary. . .” (Answer by HBB)

“ . . . As before, calm the mind back to focus. If the student usually close their eyes while inhaling immediately exhale. . .” (Answer by YLN)

“ . . . The students did not look the face of my class mate. . .” (Answer by HD and WND)

“ . . . Maybe like before, make perfect preparations and not look classmates in the face. . .” (Answer by HFD)

“ . . . The students improve they public speaking, so that in presentations the students do not worry and get used to speaking English. . .” (Answer by AN)

From the answer above the researcher concluded that to change to and resolve the anxiety where presentation hold is by preparing understanding the material, practicing before the presentation, mastering

vocabulary to help the students being easier to answer question by using English. Lastly take a breath and maintaining the focus to remain calm.

c. Be Ready

Be prepared, namely students must really prepare the material carefully. So that every step of the readiness of the message to be conveyed to ensure the safeties during the presentation.

“ . . . The students do is try to control myself, and try to be calm in delivering presentations in front of the class. . . ” (Answer by AD, EVL, and YLN)

“ . . . They try not to look at them and focus on looking above their heads, the point is to look elsewhere. . . ” (Answer by HFD, HD, and AN)

The results of these questions the researcher concluded that there are several ways on overcoming anxiety during the presentation of English language such as, control yourself, try to be calm, focus on looking at above the students' head to prevent nervousness.

DISCUSSION

The discussion part, the researcher explains and discuss the gathered data that was taken from the fifth and seventh semester during the presentation of English language. Moreover, the discussion data were divided into two parts which is how to overcome anxiety and what that factors that student encountered during the presentation of English language.

Looking at these anxious problems the researcher decided to create a few solutions that could help the students in a way where they can cooperate with their anxiety during the presentation e.g. being stared at by classmates or lecturers, and fear of not being able to answer the questions that have been given such as, stay calm, stay focus, which supported by Asnur (2010) where they stated that be positive. It is critical to construct and keep an uplifting perspective toward the crowd, the discourse, and yourself as a speaker.

From the data that were shown mostly on the interview answers were afraid of being laugh, stare lack of preparations and the classroom environment which resulted on the loss of focus during the presentation this indicator and the result also supported by two of the previous studies that the researcher used on the related to Fadlan's research (2020) and Siagian & Adam's research (2017) where they stated that the factors that usually caused anxiety are fear of making mistakes, fear of facing the questions, fear of failing the examination, inability to find the proper words to express, lack of self-confidence, lack of proficiency, insufficient preparation and practice, poor pronunciation, the students' perception about examiners or feeling inferior to others, insufficient experience in presentation is a parts of factor which cause anxiety and social environment.

From the results of the data the way to overcoming anxiety when presenting in front of the class such as, students must prepare material well, understand the material well, master vocabulary, get used to speaking in English and for presentation anxiety factors the researchers saw that many experienced this because almost all students experience the anxiety that students experience the most often students experience, namely when they don't understand the material, they don't really master vocabulary, and students lack self-confidence

Looking at the data above, it can be concluded that overcoming presentation anxiety in front of the class is by mastering the material that will be presented later and being more confident about what you want to convey. And the presentation anxiety factors that usually happen are caused by the lack of material preparation properly, lacked confidence in speaking English which have been supported by two theoretical bases above.

CONCLUSION

From the results of these conclusions, many factors that make students feel anxious when presenting English in front of the class. The factors that mostly cause the students to have anxiety are, there

were no preparation, lack of understanding of the material, not practicing beforehand. Those mentioned indicators above were parts of one of the external factors which is failing to practice. Moreover, these indicators usually lead to one of the external factors which cause the students to experience anxious in a way where their bodies start to trembling, cold sweat and lastly, they experience a short moment of stammer. Since most of the problems that cause anxiety are lack of preparation, not practicing and not understanding the material, the researcher suggested that the solution to solve these problems is to preparing the presentation material, understanding the material thoroughly, practicing before presentation, preparing the mental and lastly taking small notes before executing the presentation. This research can be a reference for research on English presentation anxiety in front of the class. The researcher hopes that future researchers will conduct research that is broader in scope and more in-depth than the current research. Therefore, students need to practice speaking English students and prepare when there is an English presentation task in front of the class. Because the results of the training and preparation are also a provision when you want to continue in higher education or have entered the world of work.

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