

“WHY I CAN’T SPEAK UP?”: STUDENTS’ ANXIETY IN PUBLIC SPEAKING

Ayuning Tiyas, Yayah Nurhidayah, Rama Dwika Herdiawan

*Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher and Education, Universitas
Majalengka*

aytiyas33@gmail.com, Yayah_Nurhidayah@gmail.com, ramadwika@gmail.com

Abstract

Public speaking is a way to talk with individual or group listener with sharing ideas and influencing them either direct or via electronic communication to achieve a specific goal. The aims of this research are to explain what the factors influencing students’ anxiety in public speaking and explain how the students anticipate their anxiety in public speaking. This research used qualitative method. The instruments of this research are observation and interview. The results of this research are the students feel fear of making mistakes, fear of embarrassed, fear of being laughed, always thinking and self-conscious. In addition, assuming all audiences are friends, try to be confident, pray so that they are calm, change the mind set of “I can” continue to try and not become a burden are the way to anticipate their anxiety when public speaking.

Keywords: *Anxiety, Speaking, Public Speaking*

Introduction

Public speaking is a way to talk with individual or group listener with sharing ideas and influencing them either direct or via electronic communication to achieve a specific goal. For students vocational high school, public speaking is something that undesirable. Davidson (2009) states that public speaking traditionally makes up top 10 lists of things people would prefer to avoid. The students attempt to avoid public speaking as much as possible, because of they feel that many factors forced them to avoid public speaking. Public speaking is not something convenient for some students, where with public speaking requires mental strength and strength of information possessed. Nervous is one of the reasons which is often found in some students who will speak in public, furthermore the lack of vocabulary is the factor that strengthens some students to not speak in public. Moreover, there are other things that make them reluctant to speak in public, namely anxiety. According to Theophillia (2018) Anxiety is a reaction that can be felt by someone who feels afraid of something or some activities. Anxiety makes students feel apprehensive and disorder in human’s mind, such as anxious

about the bad possibilities that will occur when the students speak in public. In addition, anxious making mistakes, anxious about not being able to convey information well and other anxieties that really make them mentally down before.

Literature Review

a. Public Speaking in Indonesian Vocational High School

Based on the observation during the teaching and learning process it was found out that a class of eleven grade students had problems in public speaking practices (Wediyantoro, 2016). Most of the problems that arise are due to the lack of interest of students in English lessons. Thus, they tend to be passive in learning especially in the practice of public speaking. Based on researcher experience, vocational school students tend to be active, they have good grasp, but the teacher's lack of ability to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere that makes students bored with foreign English lessons for students. Active students cannot be involved in the lecture learning model, active students must learn with learning models that are in accordance with their active character. The researcher once applied an active learning learning model to vocational school students, and changed the classroom atmosphere into fun. The result is 9 out of 10 students feel that English is not difficult anymore even they are more enthusiastic in learning English.

b. The Nature of Anxiety

Anxiety feeling can arise when someone will speak in public because of their habits. Anxious feelings can be seen with signs such as trembling, pallor, producing excessive sweating and nervousness when speaking. As explained by Johnston (2006) some signs to detect anxiety; physical signs like sweating, having headache and breathing shortly, emotional signs like fear of death and cognitive signs like having difficulties concentrating. If the student refers to the sign above when doing public speaking, it means that they feel anxious. Students who show more signs mentioned above, the lecturer must help students reduce the sense of anxiety that exists in him before anxiety becomes a problem for students.

There are two kinds of anxiety (Santriza, 2018). The clarified as the follows:

- 1) Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is a kind of anxiety in many ways that a person experiences. Brown (1994) revealed that trait anxiety is more permanent predisposition to be anxious. In this case, someone feels anxious at all times in everything even in non-threatening circumstances. Moreover, this anxiety can be a person's character. As mentioned by Ormod (2011) clarified trait anxiety may appeared even in non-threatening situation.

2) State Anxiety

State anxiety is defined as a kind of anxiety which is appeared when a person accepted a condition as dangerous, harmful and threatening him/her (Spielberg, 1992). It means that, state anxiety only temporary, this anxiety only occurs when someone feels a harmful or risky thing and this anxiety will disappear when a dangerous event is over.

c. The Anxiety in Public Speaking

Commonly, the emergence of anxiety in students due to their lack of ability in English class such as vocabulary, grammar and word choice. It will certainly reduce their confidence in speaking English in front of the public, which will reduce their ability in public speaking. The anxiety experienced by students is include in the type of state anxiety, which they only feel anxious when facing English lessons, especially public speaking

Students who have experienced failure when speaking will choose silent rather than taking the risk of failing again. They are afraid of being laughed at by classmates and ultimately reducing their confidence. As mentioned by oleh Lanefeldt (2011) speaking anxiety is something that has a great impact one's self-confidence when the speakers speak out and shows what one knows.

In conclusion, anxiety is a serious problem that can threaten the skills of students in discussing English, especially public speaking, as we know that public speaking is the important element to communication with other people. In this case, the teacher must be able to help students by creating an effective and pleasant classroom atmosphere, so that students feel comfort and not feeling depressed.

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) revealed that there are three kinds of anxiety in language learning. They are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

1. Communicative Apprehension

Communicative apprehension is defined as a feeling shy as the impact of fear to communicate with other people. In this case, the students who have problem in speaking in group usually have difficulty in speaking in FL class. The students have less of control in communicative situation. Thus, it influences their public speaking

2. Test Anxiety

Commonly, the test anxiety is appeared when the students worry to fail in a test. The students who feel anxious in test of foreign language class may get difficulty test and quizzes since the test. Even, the students who most prepared often make errors in the test.

3. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as the students who are not only get anxiety in taking test. They can feel anxious in very social evaluative situation, for instance interviewing for a job or speaking in foreign language class.

In conclusion, the factors of students' anxiety are categorized into three major problems. Firstly, communicative apprehension happens because students feel embarrassed when speaking in public. Secondly, test anxiety occurs because students are worried in the face of English test. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation happens when they are anxiously facing social evaluate situation such as interview job.

Method

This research use qualitative method, and narrative inquiry as design

Findings and Discussion

After interviewing students, the researcher found a variety of problems that were anxiety factors in students. Researcher interviewed 5 students as samples. In this interview the researcher gave 10 questions to each student.

- a) In student (A) researchers find the answer that student (A) have spoken English in public when junior high school in explaining about procedure text.

R: *"Hmm, have you ever spoken in public?"*

A: *"ever"*

R: *"When?"*

A: *"when class X explains the procedure text."*

The student (A) said that he felt trembling and nervous when first time spoke English in public.

R: *"Oh ... how did you feel when you first speak in public?"*

A: *"... tremble ma'am, nervous too"*

Researcher also asked about whether the same feeling when first time speaking in public and when next speaking in front of the public. Student (A) answered, *"It is different when I speak in front of the next public, I am more confident."*

Then the researcher asked about how student (A) felt while waiting for his turn to enter the podium. Student (A)replied he was nervous when waiting for his turn, the reason being he felt always thinking, besides self-consciousness also affected.

R: *"Oh, it's more like that, then ... when you're waiting for your turn to enter the podium, how do you feel?"*

A: *"Yes, I'm nervous"*

R: *"Hmm, why do you feel that way?"*

A: *"Yes, because I always thinking about it"*

R: *"Oh ... self-conscious?"*

A: *"Yes ma'am."*

Student (A) claimed that he felt nervous when speaking English in public.

R: *"Then, how do you feel when you feel in front and start talking?"*

A: *"I'm nervous, mom"*

The factors that influence student's nervousness, fear and anxiety are that they feel that their vocabulary is lacking and even though they prepare everything to be displayed but when they are in front to start talking, everything is gone or blank.

R: *"What factors make you afraid and not confident when speaking in public?"*

A: *"Yes ... my vocabulary is not enough, lack of preparing too. Even though at home I have memorized but when I start to speak it's become blank suddenly "*

And it turns out, not all the public speaking practices that student (A) does are done well, there are practices that he thinks are not optimal due to anxiety. Then what steps do students (A) take in controlling themselves, in order to student (A) can complete their public speaking? He replied that thinking calm and not a burden.

R: *"Oh really, then how do you control yourself so you can finish public speaking?"*

A: *"think more calmly, then don't become a burden."*

b) In student (B) the researcher found the answer that student (B) had spoken English in public when he was in the high school while attending the English Speaking Club extracurricular.

R: *"What's that? Story telling or what? "*

B: *"yes, story telling"*

R: *"When was the first time?"*

B: *"extracurricular "*

R: *"The first Extracurricular?"*

B: *"yes"*

R: *"In high school?"*

B: *"yes"*

Student (B) said that he was nervous and afraid of saying the wrong thing when first time spoke English in public.

R: *"What do u feel when the first spoke to the public?"*

B: *"nervous, fear of making mistakes, fear of mispronounced"*

Researchers also asked about whether the same feeling when first speaking in public and when speaking in front of the next public? Student (B) answers, *"I'm not nervous"*.

Then researcher asked about how he felt while waiting for his turn to enter the podium, how did the student (B) feel? Student (B) answered that he was nervous when waiting for his turn, the reason being he was fear of making mistake.

R: *"When you are waiting for your turn, you must be called, how do you feel?"*

B: *"nervous"*

R: *"Why nervous?"*

B: *"Yeah, yeah, fear of making mistakes"*

Student (B) claimed that he felt nervous when speaking English in public but over time the nervousness disappeared.

R: *"How do you feel the same or not, when the first one goes forward, and the second one do not?"*

B: *"For the second one, I'm not nervous."*

The factors that influence the nervousness, fear and anxiety of student (B) is that they feel that their vocabulary is lacking and their pronunciation is still lacking.

R: *"What factors make you fear of making mistakes?"*

B: *"The lack of vocabulary, then my pronunciation is lacking too "*

And it turns out, not all the public speaking practices that he does are done well, there are practices that he thinks are not optimal due to anxiety. Then how are the steps that student (B) take in controlling themselves, in order to the student (B) can complete their public speaking? He replied that he keep praying first and continued to be tried.

R: *"How do you control yourself so that you can finish the public speaking?"*

B: *"keep on trying, keep pray first then try"*

c) In student (C) researchers find the answer that student (C) have spoken English in public when junior high school in following the story telling competition.

R: *"Have you ever spoke in front of the public using English?"*

C: *"If for example this is included or not, hmm.. story telling"*

R: *"Yes, when was that?"*

C: *"When I was in middle school"*

The student (C) said that he felt nervous, embarrassed, and fear of making mistakes when first time spoke English in public.

R: *"What was the first time you felt when talking to the public?"*

C: *"nervous"*

R: *"Hmm what else?"*

C: "nervous, embarrassed, fear of making mistakes, the most important is nervous"

Researcher also asked about whether the same feeling when first time speaking in public and when next speaking in front of the public. Student (C) answered, "yes, same".

Then the researcher asked about how student (C) felt while waiting for his turn to enter the podium. Student (C) replied that he felt anxious and uneasy while waiting for his turn, the reason being he was fear of making mistakes and fear of being laughed.

R: "Then when you wait for your turn to enter the podium, how do you feel?"

C: "Fear, anxious, fear what is not calm"

R: "Why do you feel like that?"

C: "I fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed"

Student (C) claimed that he felt nervous when he started speaking English in public but after the nervousness disappeared.

R: "How do you feel when you are called ahead and then start talking?"

C: "nervous, but if it has run over time it's normal to be able to stabilize"

The factors that influence student's nervousness, fear and anxiety are that they feel that they are fear of mispronunciation and fear of being laughed by his classmate.

R: "What factors make you afraid?"

C: "fear of mispronunciation, fear of being laughed"

And it turns out, students (C) complete their public speaking practice well. Then what steps do students (C) take in controlling themselves, in order to student (C) can complete their public speaking? He replied that he tried to be confident and pray, thus he would be calm when spoke English in public.

R: "How do you control yourself so that you can complete public speaking?"

C: "just believe yourself, be confident, just pray so calm bismillah 3x"

4. Conclusion and Suggestion

All students have practiced English public speaking, some have started since middle school and high school, each student has conducted English public speaking, such as speech practice, story telling, etc. The first time students practice public speaking, they feel nervous, shy, fear of mispronounced and trembling. Almost all students feel more confident when speaking in front of the public for the umpteenth time. While waiting for their turn to do public speaking, students feel uneasy, nervous, anxious. This happens because students feel fear of making mistakes, fear of embarrassed, fear of being laughed, always thinking and self-conscious. At first, students feel nervous, uneasy and anxious but when they start talking, they feel more calm, and not as nervous as at the beginning.

Not all practices done by students are completed properly. Factors that make students fear and not confident when speaking in public are fear of being laughed, fear of mispronounced, fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, memorizing but when practice becomes forgotten. The way students do self-control so that they can complete public speaking is to assume all audiences are friends, try to be confident, pray so that they are calm, change the mind set of "I can" continue to try and not become a burden.

The researcher provide suggestions regarding to the students' anxiety in public speaking. They are as follows:

For the teachers, it would be better if the teacher gives more space and time for students in the practice of speaking English in class, letting them be active and explore. It would be better if the teacher taught English not to use the lecture method. The teacher must be able to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom. Being a fun teacher will make students like the subjects being taught and initiate anxiety on students. In addition, holding an English full day at school will improve student's ability to speak English.

For the students, speaking English in public is not as easy as turning the palm of your hand, but if you get used to it and keep trying it will become normal. Anxiety comes from the mind, then it can be eliminated by the mind too. Frequently practicing and remembering vocabulary and daring to speak in public will eliminate the anxiety that occurs when public speaking.

For the further researcher, it would be better if the researcher adds the instrument in this study, it can be a questionnaire or a test. In addition, by adding samples of the study can also enrich the source of this research.

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