AN ANALYSIS ON THE CAUSE OF STUDENTS’ SPEAKING ANXIETY IN EFL CLASSROOM

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Abstract
Speaking is one of four skills that are deemed to be important. In EFL Classroom, the students often suffer from English speaking anxiety. The purpose of this research was to discover the level of students’ speaking anxiety and the causes behind it. Descriptive qualitative was used to investigate this research. This research was conducted on the twelfth-grade students of XII-IIS 2 of MAS Ushuluddin Singkawang. To obtain the data, observation and two questionnaires were applied. The questionnaires being used were Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and the Factors Causing Students’ Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire. To analyze the obtained data, data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions were applied. The result revealed that 97% of the students experienced high to moderate levels of speaking anxiety. The causes of students’ speaking anxiety were mainly the psychological factors such as: afraid of being laughed at; afraid of not having enough time to prepare; feeling inferior; nervous or shy; anxious when performing alone; afraid of the speaking test; terrified that other students will not understand; afraid of making mistakes; afraid of teacher’s immediate correction; students’ beliefs about speaking English; frightened of teacher’s and peer’s evaluation, and formal class situation. In conclusion, more than two-thirds of the students experienced high to moderate levels of speaking anxiety and 12 factors were found to be the causes behind the speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms.

Keywords: EFL Classroom, English Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety Cause

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INTRODUCTION
Speaking is a core component that establishes communication in the EFL classroom. If the students are unable to communicate with their peers or their teacher about their opinions, and thoughts, deliver information or answer questions, the teaching-learning process cannot run well. In English language classes of MAS Ushuluddin, the twelfth-grade students often appear reluctant to participate in classroom activities, unwilling to respond, seldom ask questions to the teacher, and hold back when there is a conversation or discussion in English. The magnitude of the demands for mastery of English in the syllabus and the reality that occurs in the classroom makes the development of English learning in class XII-IIS 2 hampered; this resulted in the students experiencing speaking anxiety.

Moreover, the twelfth-grade students should be able to master basic speaking conversations and apply simple tenses in their sentences. Yet, this does not apply to class XII-IIS 2 students at MAS Ushuluddin. This is likely because most of the students in class XII-IIS 2 come from villages where the quality of education is very different from those in cities. Research conducted by The World Bank organization (2019) in 270 schools in West Kalimantan and East Nusa Tenggara revealed that: the difficulty of accessibility to schools; the low quality of education services, teacher qualifications, and teacher composition; low teacher income that affects teaching motivation; teacher absence; low-grade levels of students where their current grades are below the basic grade standard; and the low expectations of parents on the quality of education affect the quality of education in rural areas.

Some factors are causing the students’ speaking anxiety to emerge. Horwitz (1986) proposed three variables that can be related to classroom anxiety which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Similar to Horwitz, Krismanti & Siregar (2017, p. 72) proposed that students faced four psychological problems in speaking: they are lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness, and anxiety. Parallel with Horwitz and Krismanti & Siregar, Rajitha (2020) concluded that there are two factors regarding the emergence of students’ speaking anxiety which are; external factors, related to the linguistics factors, grammar factor, pronunciation factor, peer factor; and internal factors related to psychological factors such as stage fear, lack of confidence, and shyness. Based on the explanation, the researcher had great intention to conduct an analysis on the level and cause of students’ speaking anxiety in EFL classroom.

RESEARCH METHOD
In this research, the researcher used descriptive study to gather and analyze the level and cause of students’ speaking anxiety. According to Cohen (2018, p. 334), descriptive research seeks to describe and interpret what exists in an individual, group, or institution.
The participant involved in the research was the 36 students of class XII-IIS 2 in MAS Ushuluddin Singkawang in the academic year 2021/2022. To gather the data, the researcher applied classroom observation and two questionnaires to measure the level of students’ speaking anxiety and the cause of their anxiety. The researcher adopted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale Factor One by Aida (1994, p. 160). The data were analyzed using Miles’s (2014) three steps of data analysis namely data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Based on the observation that has been done, there are visible symptoms shown by the students when they were being asked to speak or perform in the classroom. Students were visibly trembling, playing with things, avoiding eye contact, ducked down, and visibly sweating when they were called by the teacher to answer some questions and perform speaking tasks. When the teacher randomly called the student’s name, all of the students were visibly nervous and uneasy. The first pair to perform their dialogue was speaking too fast even the teacher told them to repeat their performance. This same pair also laughed a lot to cover their mistakes and read notes that they brought. The second and third pair were speaking quietly. They also read through the notes and did not make eye contact with their pairs. Even though the next pair spoke confidently and loudly, they had so many mistakes with their pronunciation and doing unnecessary body movements such as tapping their feet and scratching their heads repeatedly. The following pair was stammered that their friends ridiculed them. This made the remaining pairs nervous and jittery. The students who did not perform yet were practicing their pronunciation and two pairs were seen cowered under the table as not being called. After all of the pairs had performed, the teacher then reviewed the students’ performances and gave feedback. The students who were mentioned by the teacher to get feedback were seen red-faced, jittery, playing with things (such as their pens and hijab), and pretending to write something, and the students who did not get called were seen as relaxed.

To analyze the level of students’ speaking anxiety, FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) was used along with Likert’s Scale. The participants’ responses were scored so that the higher scores signify high anxiety and lower score indicate low anxiety. The possible score ranged from 16 to the lowest score and 80 to the highest score. Table 1 presents the criteria of the score interpretation and Table 2 presents the students’ questionnaires score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Level of speaking anxiety criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>Range</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 – 37</td>
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<td>38 – 59</td>
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<td>60-80</td>
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The result presented in Table 2 reveals that the majority of the students suffered a high level of speaking anxiety. The result suggests that 77.8% or 28 students have high anxiety about speaking English and only 2.8% of students experienced low anxiety. This outcome indicates that two-thirds of the students were experiencing high to moderate anxiety while there is only one student endures low anxiety.

The result of the first statement which is “I never feel quite sure of myself while speaking in my EFL classroom” indicates that 69.4% or 25 students agree with the statement and 13.9% or five students chose Strongly Agree to the statement. In the first item of the FLCAS, no student answered Strongly Disagree and only 5.6% chose to Disagree, the rest of the students chose Neutral with 11.1%.

Based on Table 3, the result of the second statement of the questionnaire shows that 61.1% of the students chose Agree and 22.2% chose Strongly Agree. While there are only 11.1% and 5.6% chose Neutral and Disagree. This finding indicates that the students trembled when they know that their teacher is going to call their name in the class.
The third statement of FLCAS refers to how the students see their friends as better at speaking English than they are. This statement reveals that students feel insecure because other students are more capable of English, especially in speaking comprehension. A total of 21 students or 58.3% answered Strongly Agree while 13 or 36.1% answered Agree. This statement is the statement with the most Strongly Agreed answers compared to the other statements in FLCAS. This may indicate that students strongly feel that they have poor speaking skills.

The next statement in the FLCAS questionnaire is about how the students freak out when they have to speak in English without any preparation. Of 36 students, 22.2% voted for Strongly Agree and 66.7% voted for Agree. This outcome signified that students feel dreadful when they have to speak English in the classroom without preparing their speech first.

The fifth statement in the FLCAS is about students’ nervousness about speaking English. 16.7% of the students picked Strongly Agree while 58.3% of the students chose to Agree to the statement. This means that students feel distressed when they speak English.

Next, 22.2% of the students voted for Strongly Agree about their embarrassment when they try to volunteer some answers in the classroom while 61.1% chose Agree. Only four students or about 11.1% who disagreed with the answer. Based on the result, this may suggest that students feel awkward volunteering answers.

The seventh statement is a positive statement. This statement talks about how the students do not feel nervous when they need to speak English with a native speaker. Because of the positive statement, the scoring was reversed. The Strongly Disagree option was valued at five while the Strongly Agree was valued at one. In this statement, 55.6% of the students chose to disagree with the statement and 16.7% of the students chose Strongly Disagree. While only two or 5.6% of the students chose Agree and 8 students chose Neutral to the statement. This shows that when the students meet with the native speaker they feel uptight and anxious.

The eighth statement talks about students who feel anxious even if they are ready and well-prepared for their English class. Based on the findings, there are 11.1% of the students chose Strongly Agree. Following this, as many as 52.8% of students answered Agree with the statement. This finding means that even if the students have polished up their English skills, they still feel anxious about it.

The next statement discusses students’ self-confidence when speaking in an EFL classroom. Because the statement is a positive statement, the scoring was reversed. Of 36 students, as many as 22.2% chose Strongly Disagree and
55.6% of the students chose Disagree. This finding denotes that speaking English in an EFL classroom is a demanding task and requires a high level of self-confidence. Not all of the students would feel at ease when they are speaking in English in the classroom because of their lack of self-confidence.

The tenth statement of the questionnaire delves into the non-observable part of the anxiety which is the increase in heart rate. The finding for the tenth statement reveals that as many as 21 students or 58.3% of the students agree with the statement while nine students or 25% of them chose Strongly Agree. Only two students chose Disagree and four students chose Neutral. This finding uncovers the truth about how students of XII-IIS 2 feel when they know that they are going to be called on by their teacher in the EFL classroom whether to answer questions or give a presentation.

The eleventh statement divulges how the students of XII-IIS 2 feel about their ability to speak English. From the statement, 52.8% of the students chose Strongly Agree while 41.7% of the students chose to Agree to the statement “I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do”. This outcome suggests that almost all of the students in XII-IIS 2 feel their friends are better than they are at speaking English.

The next statement is about students’ self-consciousness about speaking English in front of their peers. The result of the questionnaire reveals that 13.9% of the students strongly agree with the statement. In line with this, 24 students also chose to Agree with the statement. This finding tells how the students of XII-IIS 2 feel nervous and uncomfortable speaking English.

The result of the thirteenth statement suggests that 29 of 36 students get nervous and confused about speaking English. Of 36 students, 66.7% of the students chose Agree. 13.9% of the students chose Strongly Agree. On the other hand, only one student answered with Disagree and 6 students chose Neutral. This finding may indicate the high level of students’ anxiety in the EFL classroom, especially in the speaking skill.

The fourteenth statement reveals how students feel overwhelmed by many rules to learn and follow before they speak English. 19.4% of the students chose Strongly Agree while 58.3% chose Agree. There are only two students who disagree with the statement and six students chose Neutral.

The next statement is about how the students dread other students’ judgments if they try to speak English. As many as 28 students are agreeing with the statement. This finding indicates that peer assessment is crucial to the self-confidence of the students of XII-IIS 2.

The last statement of the questionnaire reads “I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance” reveals
that from 36 students, 32 students feel nervous about answering questions without preparation first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 The cause of students’ speaking anxiety</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Questionnaire Items</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Afraid of making mistakes</td>
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<td>Worried that their friends will laugh at them</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afraid of did not have ample time to prepare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling nervous or shy when speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxious that their friends will not understand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frightened at teacher’s immediate correction</td>
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<td>Uncomfortable because the class is too formal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxious about performing an individual speech</td>
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<td>Speaking English is difficult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Afraid of teacher’s and peer’s evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nervous for the upcoming speaking test</td>
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<td>Feeling inferior because their friends are better at speaking English</td>
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Based on Table 4, it was found that most students agreed that they fear being laughed at, afraid of not having sufficient time in preparation, and having low self-esteem are the most cause behind the student’s speaking anxiety to arise, followed by feeling nervous or shy and the feel of anxiety about performing an individual speech. These findings are aligned with the research done by Alzamil (2022) where he designed the research to investigate the student’s attitudes toward speaking English and their anxiety experiences. Based on the findings, it was found that 30 students agreed to have the feeling of nervousness when they know that they are going to have a speaking test. This finding is in line with Naser & Isa (2021) who found that students repeatedly feel anxious and nervous when speaking a foreign language. Besides that, 27 students admitted that they are afraid of making any mistakes when they speak English. The fear felt by the students in the current research was also emerged in the study conducted by Setiawan et al (2021, p. 68), where they found that the fifth semester student worried that they would make mistakes if they try to answer and express their opinion in English. 26 students agreed that speaking English is hard and not only are they afraid of the teacher’s judgment, they are also afraid of the judgment from their friends. This finding is parallel with the research conducted by Khusnia (2017, p. 86) where the students felt the teacher’s opinion towards their performances indicated a lack of respect and apathetic. 25 students also professed that they feel uncomfortable if their teacher immediately corrected their mistakes when speaking. This finding is congruent with the findings of the research done by Mufidah (2017, p. 222) where the participant of the research claimed that direct correction made her shy and afraid because she feared that her friends would laugh at her. The last factors that are causing students’ speaking anxiety are that the class situation is too formal and makes
the students uneasy. A study conducted by Antoro et al (2016, p. 5) revealed that a class atmosphere that is too formal makes them feel like they are being monitored by the teacher all the time. Consequently, the students became anxious and tense when they try to speak English. To conclude, the finding of this research is in line with the research conducted by Handayani et al (2020), who discovered that the second-year student of Universitas Negeri Padang suffered from a high level of speaking anxiety. Additionally, the main causes of XII-IIS 2 students’ speaking anxiety are psychological factors. This finding is parallel with the findings found by Shen & Chiu (2019) who discovered that students suffer from speaking anxiety because of psychological problems such as fear of making mistakes, nervousness, peer pressure, lack of confidence, worried, and anxiety.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
The findings revealed that of 36 students, only one student has a low level of speaking anxiety. Seven students have moderate levels and as many as 28 students have a high level of speaking anxiety. This finding indicated that more than two-thirds of the students of XII-IIS 2 in MAS Ushuluddin suffer from speaking anxiety in EFL classroom. Based on the research that has been done, the psychological problems are the main causes behind the students speaking anxiety. These psychological problems are manifested in the form of afraid of being laughed at by friends; afraid of not having enough time to prepare; feeling inferior because their friends speak English better; nervous or shy; anxious when performing alone; afraid of the speaking test; feeling terrified that their friend would not understand what they say; frightened of the teacher’s immediate correction; terrified of making mistakes; the student’s beliefs about the difficulty of speaking English; frightened of the teacher’s and peer’s evaluation, and formal class situation.

It is suggested for the teacher to acknowledge the student’s speaking anxiety as well as find the best strategy to teach them to create an effective learning environment and build their confidence. Finding a suitable method of teaching speaking and creating a comfortable situation is expected to reduce the student’s speaking anxiety and pave a way for them to thrive assuredly in the EFL classroom. As for the students, they need to respect one another to establish a pleasant environment. Helping when someone makes mistakes instead of laughing at them may guide them to feel less stressed. Students should also keep practicing to increase their confidence and acknowledge that making mistakes is a common part of learning. Due to the limitation of the research, further inquiry is required to explore the best strategies to reduce speaking anxiety as well as the appropriate methods and classroom activities to lessen anxiety. Since the number of this research is bounded only to one classroom, it would be better for the succeeding research to conduct a study on a broad scale so that the research will gain more perspective in the field of speaking anxiety. Furthermore; the following researcher is suggested to
interview the respondents to enrich the data and use different research methods such as a case study.

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