

## AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY IN ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL)

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### *Abstract*

*This research aimed at determining students' speaking anxiety levels and how they anticipate or the strategies to reduce it. Researchers used a descriptive mixed approach to explore and explain data about student anxiety. This research involved 122 grade 8 students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya. In collecting data, researchers use the instrument FLSA questionnaire and interviews. From the results of the questionnaire, the categories of students' anxiety were determined to be 3 categories of mild, moderate, and severe anxiety levels. The results showed that 15 students were at low anxiety level, 88 students were included in moderate anxiety, and 19 students were at severe anxiety level. Furthermore, the results of the interview, the way they anticipate speaking anxiety is by controlling their breathing, be brave, encourage themselves, and practice regularly*

**Keywords:** *Speaking Anxiety, EFL, Descriptive Study*

### INTRODUCTION

The ability to speak or speaking skills is an important ability to communicate in English. Learning how to develop English speaking skills is so important for junior high school students. For students, speaking can be a medium where a new language structure, expressions, and vocabulary are encountered, understood, as well as practiced (Samira Al Hosni, 2014). As for material about speaking at junior high school especially in grade 8 as follows; group presentations, dramatic monologues, chants, pair work where students must talk with partners, small group discussion, and storytelling. Communication is effective when the speaker and the listener have a common understanding of how ideas are exchanged and this leads to the accomplishment of each party's objectives (Lacan et al., 2020).

Anxiety has a negative impact on student behavior. One of them is a lack of speaking courage, which will undoubtedly prevent students from succeeding in foreign language classes. Anxiety reduces student performance by making them worry, hesitate, and participate less. Furthermore, speaking anxiety is an individual's fear and nervousness that include real or avoiding any communication that occurs when communicating with other people using a foreign language (He, 2018). Anxiety can be overcome through student motivation and the teacher's role in creating situation lessons that are not too tense so that students can express themselves in English. In addition, Layne Goodman et al., (2021) stated that some people may have had a negative experience in public at an early age, they forgot a line in a play, they lost a spelling bee, they did poorly when called on in front of their class, something that resulted in a bit of public embarrassment.

Based on the researcher's observation when doing the internship at SMPN 3 Sungai Raya, the researcher assume that some 8<sup>th</sup> students feel anxious when they speak English. Some students who asked by the teacher but still appeared confused, uninterested, and hesitant to answer the question. M. Dimiyati Mahmud (2018) stated that anxiety is one of the most common neurotic symptoms is a constant fear. When the teacher assigns students to speak in front of the class or presentation during explaining the Power Point they appear nervous, go blank, remain silent when asked to speak in English, are unable to say what they know, and are afraid of making a mistake.

The researcher was interested in conducting research to determine the level of students' speaking anxiety. The researcher was analyzing which causes make the 8th-grade students of SMPN 3 Sungai Raya most anxious. This researcher used a mixed approach. In collecting data, researchers also used a questionnaire and interview. Before carrying out the research, the instrument questionnaire was piloted by testing the validity of each item in the FLSA questionnaire using content validity with experts and another lecturer. The researcher has carried out three main stages in data analysis: collecting, calculating, and categorizing data. The researcher found that most of the dominant level students' speaking anxiety, and know how the strategy and how 8-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya anticipate their speaking anxiety. Another researcher has conducted analyze student anxiety in speaking English entitled An Analysis of Students' Anxiety in Speaking English of Second Grade Students at SMP Negeri 8 Lebong 9 by (Henny Septia, 2019). This research was designed as descriptive research with quantitative approach, which focused on the types of anxiety in speaking English, the cause of the students' anxiety, and how the students overcome the anxiety in speaking English. The subject of this research was the 2nd-grade students at SMP Negeri 08 Lebong. The purposes of this research were to find out the types of anxiety in speaking English, the cause of the students' anxiety, and how the students overcome the anxiety in speaking English. The technique of collecting the data was a questionnaire. The result of this research; (1) The types of anxiety the students of SMP Negeri 08 Lebong have are state anxiety and trait anxiety. (2) the factors that cause the anxiety of the students in speaking English are personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, Classroom procedures, and Language testing; (3) The students have some ways to overcome their anxiety in speaking English. There were five strategies used by the students. From the previous research above, it shows that there are still many students in schools who feel anxiety when speaking English.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, the researcher has collected the data using a descriptive mixed approach. Descriptive research refers to a scientific methodology in which observations of the sample population are carried out in their natural surroundings. Descriptive research methodology also intends to find out 'what' is associated with a phenomenon. According to George (2021) Mixed approach research combines elements of quantitative research and qualitative research in order to answer your research question.

The researcher conducted a pilot study to ensure the validity of the scale measurements to be used. A pilot study is a small version of a study or an experiment (trial run), to be carried out in preparation for a larger study. However, Leon et al., (2011) mentioned that the main purpose of conducting a pilot study is examining the feasibility of the intended approach the researchers will use in the main study. The validity of the research instrument is referring to the capabilities of the questionnaire to measure a construct or variable to be measured Cresswell (2014). Researchers used content validity which refers to expert recommendations in assessing all instruments at a glance based on previous expertise and experience.

**Questionnaire**

In this study, the researcher used questionnaires. The researcher wants to investigate the EFL students’ level of 8th-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya, which be measured by adapting the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) constructed by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) who created their questionnaire by selecting 18 items from (Horwitz et al., 1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The Likert scale will be used in this study. A Likert scale was used to assess a person's or group's attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of social phenomena. Likert scale graduation from very positive to very negative (Sugiono, 2013). The Likert scale was used in the instrument research and is made in the form of a checklist (√). The checklist is provided in the available column, and the statement is in accordance with the alternative subject state:

- SA (5) = strongly agree with 5 points
- A (4) = agree with 4 points
- U (3) = undecided with 3 points
- D (2) = disagree with 2 points
- SD (1) = strongly disagree with 1 point

The descriptive statistical operation was used to explain the data from the FLSAS questionnaire in terms of percentages. The researcher in this instance was calculated all the student Speaking Anxiety level scores obtained from the distributing FLSAS questionnaire. Then, the researcher ss identified each score of students’ Speaking Anxiety into Mild, Moderate, or Severe anxiety categories. The following table shows the classification of scores for measuring anxiety levels adapted from Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014)

Range	Level
Less than 54	Mild Anxiety
Between 54 – 72	Moderate Anxiety
More than 72	Severe Anxiety

Adapt by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014, p. 5)

Based on the table above, the researcher has identified each score of students’ by following Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) a total score of more than 72 reflects a severe level of speaking anxiety, whereas a total score ranging from 54-72 reflects a moderate level of speaking anxiety, and a total score of less than

54 indicated a mild level of students' speaking anxiety. The data also was analyzed by frequency score. The results have been presented in the form of a chart.

### **Interview**

The researcher also conducted interviews with students who have speaking anxiety. An interview is a question-and-answer session where one person asks questions, and the other person answers those questions. Bhat (2018) stated that A researcher has to conduct interviews with a group of participants at a juncture in the research where information can only be obtained by meeting and personally connecting with a section of their target audience. There were six participants in this interview and all of the participants come from classes VIII A, VIII B, VIII C, and VIII D. The researcher also chooses by asking for approval who wants to be interviewed from the respondents who filled out the FLSA questionnaire. What the researcher discussed in this interview was about students feeling anxious when starting English class, the causes of students' anxiety in speaking during English lessons, and how they can anticipate or reduce their anxiety.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The results of the questionnaire 8-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya, there were students speaking anxiety level and frequency 15 respondents (12.3%) were at the level of mild anxiety, and students who had anxiety at a moderate level 88 respondents (72.1%), and 19 respondents (15.6%) had a severe level in speaking anxiety. So, most of the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya have moderate speaking anxiety. The interview results found that there were students who experienced speaking anxiety because indeed he was not interested in English, and thought it was a difficult language. There are also students who are quite smart in the English class, but she also feels anxious. Most of the causes that make them anxious are when they are suddenly called upon by the teacher. Then, their various strategies for anticipating their speaking anxiety are that there are students who are not shy and reluctant to consult and ask questions directly to their teachers, there are also students who ask friends who they think are smarter than them, for example when the teacher explains the material using English then he doesn't understand, so he did not hesitate to ask a friend for a translation into Indonesian. there are also most students who calm themselves by controlling their breath and encourage themselves by thinking "I can do it" even though most students are insecure about their classmates who are smarter and more confident in English class.

### **Discussion**

This research found that most of the 8th-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya had moderate anxiety. Then, only a few students have a low level of anxiety. This research found that most of the 8th-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya had moderate anxiety. Then, only a few students have a low level of anxiety. This finding reaffirms the results that are different from previous research by Nadiatul Ikhsaniyah (2022) who found that most of the students she studied had high levels of anxiety. It can be concluded that there are still many EFL students who feel anxious when speaking English. The interview results that most

of the causes that make them anxious are when they are suddenly called upon by the teacher. It is similar to another research by Hidayati (2018) states that language learners often report that students are frustrated because they keep forgetting new words, can't understand the teacher, and are very nervous to speak in front of other people in a target language they don't know. Students also felt afraid of making mistakes, embarrassed by their friends laughing, afraid of wrong grammar, and even pounding and trembling when presenting in front of the class, as Ansari (2015) said that nervousness, worry, fear, and beating heart are symptoms felt by anxious students. In addition, the various strategies to anticipate their speaking anxiety are there are students who are not shy and are reluctant to consult and ask directly to their teachers, there are also students who ask their friends. Then students also have courage, and believe in the teacher who will guide them instead of scolding them. It is similar to the researcher named Atas (2015) he suggests that students should make assumptions and believe that they are not alone. They also need to instill the perception that teachers are there to help them correct their mistakes and make them more courageous, not to insult them. This can at least change the mindset of students and make them more courageous and confident to speak.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### Conclusions

Based on the results, most grade 8 students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya are indicated to have a moderate level of anxiety, there are 88 respondents (72.1%). Based on the interviews, the researcher conclude that some causes that made 8-grade students of SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya were fear of making mistakes, insecure with the other classmate, difficulties in grammar, fear of mispronunciation, shaking and nervous when presenting in class, and sometimes students don't understand what the English teacher is saying. Then most of them anticipate their anxiety in a way; regulate their breath, calm down, be brave, encourage themselves, and there are also students who do not hesitate to discuss and ask questions to classmates and also the English teacher.

### Suggestion

Based on the conclusions, the researcher purposes some suggestions. The first is for Students that must try to overcome their anxiety. because the one who can really reduce their anxiety is the students themselves and the researcher hope that students can try various things or methods offered by the author, or other researchers on how to deal with their anxiety. Then, teachers must pay more attention to students who really do not understand English lessons and teachers must help reduce students who are anxious about speaking English, namely by making the class atmosphere fun and comfortable, so that EFL students are not too tense. In addition, the other researcher must really know the background of the school and students who will be researched and also read more research and method books.

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