

## ANALYZING THE SPEAKING ANXIETY OF THE SIXTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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### Abstract

*In our globalized era, English has become the predominant language for communication. While mastering English speaking is essential, many students grapple with speaking anxiety. This research paper delves into the challenges students face in acquiring speaking skills and the strategies employed for overcoming them. Using a qualitative approach with a descriptive study method, the aim is to comprehend and articulate these issues. Data collection involved student questionnaires. Results reveal varying levels of speaking anxiety at Universitas Tanjungpura, with prevalent strategies for mitigation including increased practice, self-control, and preparation. These findings hold implications for educators and institutions, suggesting a need to tailor support and interventions to enhance students' English-speaking proficiency. Recognizing and addressing these challenges can contribute to more effective language education strategies in a globalized academic environment.*

**Keywords:** English language education students, speaking anxiety

### INTRODUCTION

English has become the global language of communication in today's world. Given the significance of English as a means of communication, English speaking is considered a crucial skill. Speaking serves as a fundamental way for people to interact and communicate with each other (Suryadi, 2021). It enables individuals to express their thoughts, share information, and engage in meaningful conversations. Speaking is a common activity that people do in daily life that plays a vital role in various aspects of life. Therefore, evaluating students' speaking skills is of great importance in an educational context.

English speaking skills are crucial for students to master, as they are vital for their future careers. Given the importance of English in various aspects of life, students are expected to develop proficiency in speaking English. Additionally, mastering English speaking skills will assist them in preparing for their future careers and lives (Suparlan, 2021). Therefore, students need to possess strong communication skills in English. With the ability to speak, students can easily access information. However, despite the necessity of mastering English speaking skills, students often face challenges in doing so. One common problem experienced by many students is speaking anxiety.

Speaking anxiety is a common issue that affects students in various educational settings. It refers to the fear experienced by individuals when they are required to speak in public or engage in verbal communication in front of others. Despite the challenges, effective speaking skills are essential for academic success, personal development, and future career prospects. However, based on

the interview, most students still experienced speaking anxiety while speaking in front of crowded people. Damayanti and Listyani (2020) identified speaking anxiety as a prominent issue in their research. Their findings revealed that speaking anxiety in the classroom could be attributed to factors such as vocabulary and preparation. They also discovered that making errors, a lack of confidence, and embarrassment are all variables that might contribute to public speaking anxiety. Many students feel nervous when they are asked to engage in speaking activities. Speaking is the most stressful language skill in a foreign language situation (Suparlan, 2021). While various methods, approaches, and techniques are employed to teach speaking skills and alleviate anxiety, speaking anxiety continues to be a challenge for some students, particularly those studying English as participants in this descriptive study.

Generally, anxiety in speaking English can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of knowledge, inadequate preparation, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and difficulties in understanding instructions from the lecturer (Syahfutra & Wibowo, 2021). Students' speaking difficulties are often rooted in their linguistic competencies, such as insufficient vocabulary, poor grammar, lack of ideas, incorrect tone, and pronunciation errors (Zainurrahman & Sangaji, 2019). A lack of knowledge, specifically a limited vocabulary, can increase students' fear of making mistakes when speaking in front of others. These factors are interconnected and contribute to the overall anxiety experienced by students. Low self-confidence is another significant factor that triggers anxiety when students have to speak in front of a large audience. Anxiety is a physiological reaction that occurs when individuals experience certain emotions (Kwiecień-Niedziela et al., 2020). Another study conducted by Sinaga et al. (2020) investigated speaking anxiety among students and found that a majority of students already felt anxious when speaking in a group or individually in front of others, especially when being evaluated by their English teacher. Students often fear being judged and laughed at by their peers. Overall, anxiety in speaking English is influenced by a combination of factors, including knowledge gaps, linguistic competencies, self-confidence, and fear of negative evaluations. These factors contribute to the speaking difficulties and anxieties experienced by students.

Based on related studies, this descriptive study aims to explore and analyze students' speaking skills across different educational levels. By examining the speaking abilities of students from English students education Universitas Tanjungpura, researchers can gain valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their oral communication and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, this study seeks to gather information from participants regarding their strategies for managing speaking anxiety. The study was not limited to a specific educational level but instead take a broader perspective to understand overall patterns and trends in students' speaking skills. Furthermore, this study aims to explore potential factors that may influence students' speaking skills. These factors may include instructional strategies, curriculum design, classroom environment, individual learner characteristics, and exposure to the target language in both formal and informal settings. Understanding these influencing factors can assist educators in tailoring teaching approaches and implementing targeted interventions to enhance students' speaking skills effectively.

## **METHOD**

This research paper utilized a qualitative descriptive study to investigate the problem of students' speaking skills, particularly their speaking anxiety. The participants in this research were students in the 6th semester at Universitas Tanjungpura in Pontianak.

According to Ummah (2010), descriptive studies are intended to ascertain the current status of phenomena and are focused on identifying the nature of the situation at the time of the study. Supported by Creswell (2023), qualitative is a process of knowing that investigates a social or human issue using different methodological traditions. In qualitative research, descriptive data, as described by Ary et al. (2010), are utilized to present the study's findings. These data types include quotes from documents, field notes, and interviews, as well as excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, and electronic communications. The collected data consist of participant experiences and perspectives. Based on the theories above, the researchers concluded that descriptive qualitative study is a research technique used to investigate, explore, and analyze a study problem. This approach is utilized in descriptive research to provide details and a precise depiction of the social context. The researchers aim to describe the problems faced by students' speaking skills, which is the anxiety of speaking skills with the strategy they use to overcome the problem.

The researchers utilized questionnaires to gather information from the students. The questionnaires were distributed to the students in class A2+ of the English Language Education study program, who were sixth-semester students at Universitas Tanjungpura in Pontianak. The questionnaire used was in the form of a checklist questionnaire, where the students only had to mark the appropriate column. The questionnaire consisted of 16 statements related to speaking issues, and each statement had a scale of 5 options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. The students were required to select the scale that best represented their situation.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

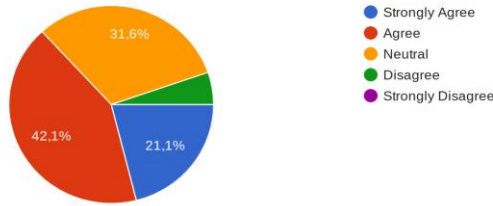
The research findings were obtained from the questionnaire that was distributed to one class in the sixth semester at Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak. The research findings presented to answer the research problem are; what are the students' problems in English teaching and learning speaking skill, and what are the solutions to students' problems in English teaching and learning speaking skills.

From the questionnaire that was distributed to students, the researcher can get data about what kind the students' speaking problems and how many percent of students have a speaking anxiety problem, and also the strategies or techniques for managing the students' speaking anxiety.

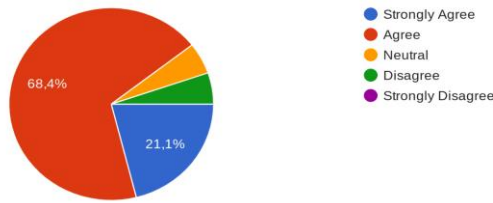
### **1. Students' speaking skills problems**

The researcher got the data from the questionnaire that was distributed. For easier understanding see the following diagram.

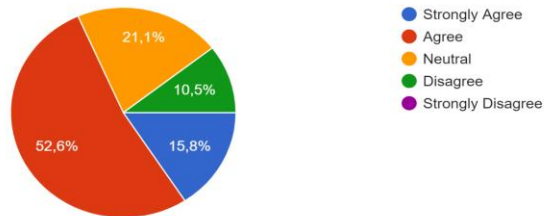
I feel anxious when I have to speak in public.  
19 jawaban



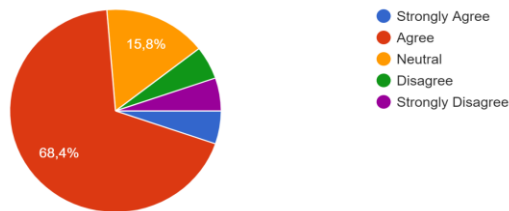
I worry about forgetting what I want to say when speaking in front of others.  
19 jawaban



I feel nervous before speaking engagements or presentations.  
19 jawaban

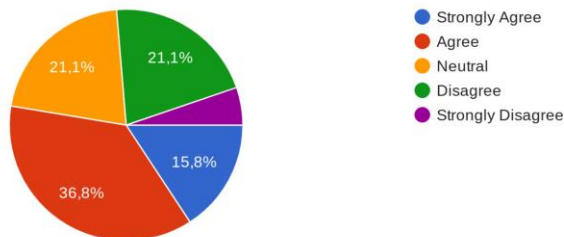


I experience physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, or a racing heart when speaking in public.  
19 jawaban



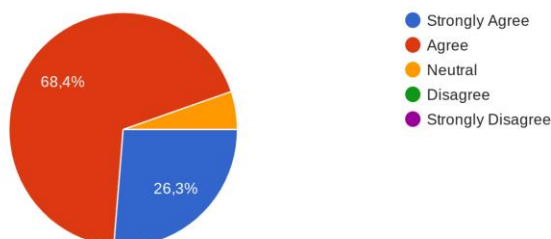
I avoid situations that require me to speak in front of others.

19 jawaban



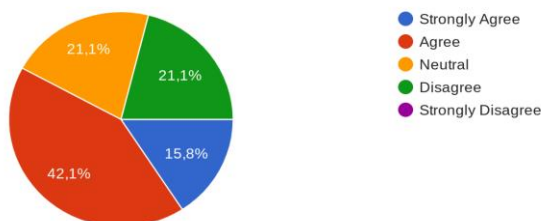
I worry about making mistakes or saying something wrong when speaking in front of others.

19 jawaban



I feel my anxiety levels increase as the size of the audience grows.

19 jawaban



Based on the diagram above, it is evident that 42.1% of the students agreed that they feel anxious when speaking in public. Additionally, 31.6% of the students expressed being neutral, indicating they were in the middle between agreeing and disagreeing with the statement. On the other hand, 21.1% strongly disagreed with feeling anxious when speaking in public. Furthermore, 5.2% of the students disagreed with the statement. In total, 11 out of the 19 students who completed the questionnaire agreed that they feel anxious when speaking in public, while one person chose to disagree. The remaining students chose the neutral option. Regarding the concern of forgetting what they want to say when speaking in front of others, the questionnaire revealed that the majority of respondents, 68.4% of the 19 students, agreed that they are worried about forgetting their speech. Additionally, 21.1% or 4 out of

19 students strongly agreed with the statement, 2 students disagreed, and the others remained neutral.

However, regarding the third statement about feeling nervous before speaking engagements or presentations, the results are as follows: 52.6% of students, or 10 out of 19 students, answered "agree," 21.1%, or 4 out of 19 students answered "neutral," 15.8% or 3 out of 19 students answered "strongly agree," and half of the students disagreed with feeling nervous before speaking engagements or presentations. In addition, some students have reported experiencing physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, or a racing heart when speaking in public. The data indicates that the majority of students, 68.4%, agree with this statement, 15.8% of students answered "neutral," and half of the students answered "strongly agree," "disagree," and "strongly disagree."

Based on the questionnaire, 36.8% of students agreed, and 15.8% strongly agreed or preferred to avoid situations that require them to speak in front of others. On the other hand, half of the students strongly disagreed or disagreed, while 4 students (21.1%) answered neutral. Furthermore, a majority of the students, 13 out of 19 (68.4%), agreed and 5 students (26.3%) strongly agreed that they were concerned about making mistakes or saying something wrong when speaking in front of others. Additionally, half of the students admitted that they were occasionally worried about making mistakes or saying something wrong.

The results of the questionnaire indicated that not all students agreed that the size of the audience could increase their speaking anxiety. Out of 19 students, 8 (42.1%) answered "agree," 4 students (21.1%) answered "neutral," 4 students (21.1%) answered "disagree," and 3 students answered "strongly agree" that a large audience could increase their levels of anxiety in speaking.

**Table 1. Frequency of students experiencing anxiety when speaking in public**

Frequency	Percentage	Category
7	36,8%	Often
7	36,8%	Sometimes
3	15,8%	Occasionally
2	10,5%	Rarely

The table presents data on the frequency of students experiencing anxiety when speaking in public, categorizing their responses into four distinct levels. The majority of students, accounting for 36.8%, reported experiencing anxiety often during public speaking situations. An equivalent percentage of 36.8% indicated that they sometimes encountered anxiety in such scenarios. A smaller proportion, 15.8%, reported experiencing anxiety occasionally, while the least frequent response was "rarely," representing 10.5% of the surveyed students.

**Table 2. Levels of students' speaking anxiety**

Frequency	Percentage	Category
9	47,4%	Mildly anxious
5	26,3%	Very anxious
4	21,1%	Moderately anxious
1	5,3%	Extremely anxious

The table outlines the distribution of students based on different levels of speaking anxiety, providing insights into the varying degrees of discomfort experienced during public speaking. The majority of students, constituting 47.4%, reported mild anxiety levels when speaking in public. A significant but smaller portion, representing 26.3%, indicated feeling very anxious in such situations. The category of moderately anxious students comprised 21.1% of the respondents, reflecting a moderate level of discomfort. The least prevalent response was "extremely anxious," with only 5.3% of students reporting this heightened level of anxiety during public speaking.

**2. The students' strategies in overcoming speaking anxiety**

Based on the research, several factors contribute to the difficulty students face in speaking English. One of these factors is speaking anxiety, which often stems from a lack of self-confidence. Therefore, students to find effective strategies to address these challenges. In the conducted study, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 6th-semester students at Universitas Tanjungpura to gather insights on the strategies students employ to overcome their speaking problems. Students have developed strategies to resolve the speaking difficulties they encounter. The following data presents the strategies by students to enhance their speaking skills:

***Self-control***

As mentioned earlier, speaking anxiety often stemmed from a perceived lack of self-confidence. Consequently, some students believed that enhancing self-confidence was crucial for alleviating speaking anxiety. Certain students underscored the importance of exercising self-control before speaking, emphasizing the need to compose themselves first. They needed to relax, take deep breaths, and bolster their confidence to speak effectively in front of an audience. Conversely, other students prioritized calming themselves before addressing a crowd. They also ensured a thorough understanding of the material they were about to explain, while actively dispelling negative thoughts that could lead to overthinking. This multifaceted approach aimed to guarantee the proper delivery of their message and foster a more confident and composed public speaking experience.

***Preparation***

Another strategy employed by students to overcome their

challenges in speaking English involved thorough preparation before speaking. This preparation took the form of compiling materials, including words and topics they intended to discuss. Students also dedicated effort to comprehensively understand and master the subject matter they would be addressing, ensuring a solid grasp of the content to facilitate smooth recall during the actual speech. Moreover, students took proactive steps to prepare themselves mentally and emotionally before speaking in public. This multifaceted preparation approach aimed to enhance their confidence, minimize anxiety, and contribute to a more polished and effective delivery when communicating in English.

### ***Practice***

The final strategy employed by some students was practicing, and they utilized various methods for this purpose. One approach involved practicing in front of a mirror, aiming to enhance confidence and better prepare themselves for public speaking. This method allowed students to visually assess their expressions and gestures, contributing to an overall improved presentation. Another practice method included meticulously rehearsing the correct pronunciation of each vocabulary, fostering confidence in their ability to articulate their thoughts accurately. Additionally, students engaged in frequent public speaking practice to mitigate anxiety associated with speaking in front of an audience. This proactive practice regimen not only honed their speaking skills but also served as a means of familiarizing themselves with the challenges of public speaking, ultimately contributing to their overall proficiency in spoken English.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In conclusion, the research findings from the questionnaire distributed to students in the sixth semester at Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak provide valuable insights into the students' problems in English teaching and learning speaking skills, as well as their strategies to overcome speaking anxiety.

Based on the findings shown, the majority of English students at the Universitas Tanjungpura often experience speaking anxiety when they are speaking in front of people. Therefore, it indicated that the levels of speaking anxiety in English students at Universitas Tanjungpura were mildly anxious and very anxious. Additionally, based on the result of the questionnaire, concerns about forgetting what they want to say, lack of self-confidence, and experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety were also evident among the respondents. These findings underscore the need to address speaking anxiety as a key obstacle to developing effective English-speaking skills. Moreover, the students' attitudes toward public speaking varied, with some expressing a preference to avoid such situations and others demonstrating a willingness to overcome their fears.

To overcome their speaking difficulties and anxiety, the students employed various strategies. These strategies included enhancing self-control and self-confidence, emphasizing the importance of preparation, and practicing speaking in different contexts. These strategies aim to build confidence, improve content mastery, and reduce anxiety when speaking in public.

Based on these findings, it is evident that addressing speaking anxiety and



providing effective strategies for students to develop their speaking skills are crucial in English teaching and learning. Educators and language instructors can utilize these findings to design interventions and incorporate appropriate techniques that foster self-confidence, alleviate anxiety, and promote effective speaking practices among students.

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