A STUDENT’S STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME SPEAKING ANXIETY IN PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS

AN ARTICLE

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to find out the strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in public speaking class at English Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Tanjungpura University. The problem of this research was student's anxiety in public speaking class and how to overcome it. Based on the research problem, the design of this research is case study. The subject of this research is one student (Mr X) who has some criteria of having the experiences in public speaking anxiety, having the strategies to overcome the anxiety and has overcome the anxiety. The data were collected through personal narrative inquiry, semi structured interview and direct observation. The results of this study showed that rehearsal, relaxation, visualization, gestures, and using note card were the strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in public speaking class. It can be concluded that the student found strategies to overcome speaking anxiety in public speaking class. In other words, these strategies gave significant effect to Mr X’s performance during his speech and now Mr X feels comfortable to speak in front of the class.

Keywords: Public Speaking, Speaking Anxiety, Student’s Strategies

INTRODUCTION
Public Speaking is different from other forms of communication because speakers recognize the central role of their audience. According to Steven A. Beebe and Susan J. Beebe (2013, p. 82) “Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of individuals, each with a unique point of view”. When the students find themselves in situations where they become the focus of attention as they have to address to the audience, they experience emotions like fear and anxiety, leading to become nervous. This phenomenon is called public speaking anxiety.

Public speaking anxiety is a dilemma faced by the populace, especially students in particular. Public speaking anxiety is one of the most common difficulties that students face in their academic career, and it is a part of a problem that faces them in building their professional career opportunities as well. There are some causes for public speaking anxiety. According Stephanie J. Coopman and James Lull (2012, p. 26) fear of public speaking stems from two sources: the temperament and how the speaker learned to respond to uncertainty.

Therefore, English Education Study Program of Teacher Training and Educating Faculty Tanjungpura University provides a subject that is related to Public Speaking, it is Speaking for Academic Presentation. Speaking for Academic Presentation facilitates the students to speak in front of the class which is considered as public speaking. Public speaking involves students to talk in front of a group of people. In order to do public speaking, the students usually have some preparation before they speak in front of the class. In fact, sometimes the students do not have enough preparation to do public speaking. As a result, it will give them anxiety in public speaking. According to Stephanie J. Coopman and James Lull (2012, p. 25), “speech anxiety refers to fear of speaking in front of an audience. Before, during, and after giving a speech,
speakers experience a wide range of sensations and behaviors that spring from the internal causes of nervousness. The students who have experienced in public speaking got anxious that made them embarrassed if they were speaking in front of the class. They were worried if they will make a mistake, or be judged unattractive. They also got upset if they thought about others looking at them or being the center of attention. Such beliefs can affect their self esteem and lead them to feel worry in classroom. The students who experienced in public speaking got anxious that made them embarrassed if they were speaking in front of the class. They were worried if they will make a mistake, or be judged unattractive. They also got upset if they thought about others looking at them or being the center of attention. Such beliefs can affect their self esteem and lead them to feel worry in classroom.

The students who experienced in public speaking felt a little nervous before a performance. They tended to be anxious and terrified to speak in front of others and many of them were reluctant to speak in front of the class because of their lack of confidence. However, for some students, the anxiety becomes so intense that interfere the ability to perform at all, one of them is Mr X. Mr X has been experienced speaking anxiety since he was in senior high school. He got anxious, panic and feeling tension in the classroom. He was afraid and shy to speak in front of the class, in this case the target language is English, because he was worried about making mistake. When he was asking to speak in front of the class, he started to stutter. As the time passed by, he got the strategies to overcome his anxiety by take a deep breathe also moving his hands and many others. Riding and Rayner (1998) defines a language learning strategy as ‘a set of one or more procedures that an individual acquires to facilitate the performance on a learning task.

Some of researches have been conducted that show that public speaking anxiety is occured among the students. One of them is from Zainal (2013) which is about public speaking anxiety. The results of this study show that public speaking anxiety is a feeling afraid of standing in front of many people, feeling scared of appearing nervous and also feeling concern of others judging them. It showed that the students were quite concerned with the perception of other people towards them rather than their view towards themselves. The focus of research was different. The researcher focused on the Mr X's factors that caused his speaking anxiety and the strategies to overcome it while the previous research, the researcher only focused on the factor that caused speaking anxiety.

The second research that had been done by Sari (2017) with the title speaking anxiety as a factor in studying EFL. The findings showed that communication apprehension was the anxiety factor that most often appeared and caused students to not want to speak English in the front of the classroom. Communication apprehension led students to have difficulty with speaking fluently and correctly. Furthermore, the students also felt strange internal disruptions such as trembling and feeling their heart pounding when they knew that the teacher would ask them to speak English in the front of the classroom. The findings also revealed how anxiety affected to their performance and what kind of nervous they got. In essence, this paper was designed to explore the types of anxiety and how to overcome it.

The third was about The Reason Of Students' Reticence In English Education Study Program by Emi Irwanti from Tanjungpura University. The participants were 10 students of the 2nd semester students. The study found that the main reasons of students' reticence were anxiety, shyness, unfamiliarity with the topics/materials, low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, lacking confidence in oneself, and being underprepared. The method of this research was case study. The problems were chosen by the characteristics of reticence such as tending to be reluctant in responding lecturers’ or other students’ questions, sitting at the middle/back rows, and rarely asking questions (rarely raising hand). The result of data gathered from direct observation and semi-structured interview (Irwanti, Ikhsanudin, & Salam, 2017).

The last was about Factors Affecting EFL Students’ Unwillingness To Communicate In English In Campus by Marnangkok Pakpahan from Tanjungpura University. This study was conducted to explore the possible factors affecting EFL students’ unwillingness to communicate in English in campus. The data
were gathered from three research participants using unstructured interview and were analyzed qualitatively using narrative inquiry method and thematic analysis strategy. The findings of this study revealed that the main factors affecting the students’ unwillingness to communicate in English during the learning time in campus were linguistic, psycholinguistic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. (Pakpahan, Ikhsanudin & Sada, 2017).

The reasons of students being anxious studied by previous studies are good findings to be used in English Language Classroom. The findings of the researches above showed that it is important for people who involved in English Classroom to know the reasons of students’ anxious because it can contribute to the betterment of language teaching and learning practices.

These previous researches were guides to help the researcher in making the research. As the solution for this problem, the researcher found how to overcome speaking anxiety in public speaking and at the same time found the strategies to minimize the same problem that will come in the future so that teaching and learning can be more effective and actively involved. The result also could be as the reference to give the solutions and motivation for the other students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research presented here was used a “case study” which was described by Yin (2003, p. 15) was like other research strategies, a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of prespecified procedures. Case study was chosen as a framework for the study because its research goals, instruments, and data collection/analysis process are in line with the research questions that were investigated. In a case study a single unit was taken and investigated in detail and in relation to the research questions asked. In addition, “case study allowed the scholar to take a holistic approach to studying a phenomenon in its natural setting” (Willis, 2008, p. 212). The research questions of the study required the researcher to investigate the factors that cause speaking anxiety in public speaking class and strategies do students apply in overcoming speaking anxiety in public speaking class. Thus, there was a match between the phenomenon at hand and the research framework case study provided. Case study also required a detailed description of the case subjected to the study; therefore, the rest of the chapter provides a thorough presentation of the context, participants, and data collection/analysis processes.

This research was intended to analyze a student experience speaking anxiety in public speaking class. Therefore, the researcher only took one student that had experienced in public speaking or at least a 3rd semester student who was in English Study Program in Teacher Training and Education Faculty with the subject Speaking for Academic Presentation class. In selecting the participant of this research, the researcher applied several criteria. Therefore, below requirements are the criteria that were used to select the student who was the participant of this research project

1. The student must have experiences in public speaking
2. The student must be at least a 3rd semester student who is in Speaking for Academic Presentation class.
3. The student must have strategies to overcome the anxiety
4. The student has overcome the anxiety.

From the criteria above, the researcher had found one student. He was on 3rd semester student. He had experiences in public speaking. The researcher had seen his performance in classroom and he spoke very well when he was speaking in front of the class. The researcher did an interview and found that he had an anxiety in public speaking in the past and now, he already overcome his anxiety by using his strategies. The participant was referred as Mr. X.

In order to conduct this research, the researcher did the preparation of the research

1. Asked the information about the student that had fulfilled the criteria,
2. Constructed the instrument for collecting data (interview).

Then conducting the case study by interview, personal narrative inquiry. After that, analyse the data and developed conclusions and constructed the research report.

In this research the data and information were collected from a student’s experiences in
public speaking. The experience data was collected from interview questions and personal narrative inquiry. The researcher did personal narrative inquiry and semi-structure interview to a student also observation by recording a video Mr X’s performance in the classroom.

Techniques that used is direct observation and interview. Observation is a systematic method of data collection that relies on a researcher’s ability to gather data through his or her senses (O’Leary, 2004, p. 170). Observation was conducted to see Mr X’s performance in the classroom. It was done to provide the proof of Mr X’s strategies to overcome his anxiety in public speaking class. Moreover, for collecting the data, the researcher used photos and video to support the statements in the interview. The other technique of collecting data used in this research was interview. Interview could be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. The form of interview in this research was semi-structured interview. O’Leary (2004, p. 164) stated that these interviews were neither fully fixed nor fully free and were perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviewers generally started with some defined questioning plan, but pursued a more conversational style of interview that might see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation. In this case, the researcher provided the interview guide questions, but the questions could be added depending on the interviewees’ answers. So that, it did not only focus on the interview guide questions.

The questions covered such aspects as how were his experiences in public speaking, what factors that caused the anxiety and how Mr X used the strategies that helped him to overcome public speaking anxiety. Finally, for collecting the data, the researcher recorded the conversations and transcribe them.

For this research project, the researcher used interview as the techniques of collecting data. For the interview, the researcher used personal narrative inquiry, semi-structured interview guides, and voice recorder for conducting it. For the observation, the researcher used a video and some photos to support the statements in the interview. After all the interview data collected, the researcher transcribed the data. Therefore, there are five instruments of collecting data used in this research as a video, some photos, semi-structured interview guides, and voice recorder.

In order to analyse the interview data, there are three phases according to model of Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 10-11) those are data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction was defined as the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up transcription. After data collection proceeded, the next was data reduction (summarising the data, coding, determining the theme and pattern of the data and discarding unnecessary data). In this case, the researcher reduced, summarised and coded the students’ answer to interview questions about her experience in using blog as learning tool for writing activity.

Displaying the data means to present the data. So that it was easier to understand what was happening and to plan the next step based on the understanding. In qualitative research, the data could be present in the forms of narrative explanation, charts, diagrams, graphics, network, etc.

The third phase of analysing qualitative data according to Miles and Huberman (1994) was conclusion drawing and verification. It meant drawing meaning from displayed data or explained the meaning of the data.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Findings**

Overall, from the findings above, we can confirm that Mr X had an anxiety in public speaking but behind that, he already overcome his anxiety. The findings revealed several factors that possibly contribute to Mr X’s anxiety also findout some strategies to overcome his anxiety. That fact is in line with the previous research that is done Zainal (2013) with a title Public Speaking Anxiety. From the previous research, the factors that
caused the anxiety that felt by other students are same with Mr X felt. They are fearing of appearing nervous, fearing of standing in front of a large group of people and feeling concern that others are judging them. Mr X felt nervous when he was given a task to speak in front of the people which is leads him to feel nervous. He got anxious when he was presenting the speech. The feeling embarrassed if he makes some mistakes in front of a large group of students that may lead him to get some negative evaluation. He concerned that others are judging them was one of the factors that made Mr X felt nervous, this is because he didn’t want to have negative evaluation by his classmates. This fact is also supported by Sari (2017) in her research is speaking anxiety followed by fear of negative evaluations and anxiety in English classes. These factors are in line with what Mr X felt before.

Based on the findings, there are some factors that contribute to anxiety to Mr X such as lack of confidence, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes and hate being center of attention. These factors already overcome by the strategies that Mr X applied such as rehearsal, relaxation, visualization, gestures, and using note card.

Lack of confidence is one of the factors that caused anxiety. Mr X felt anxiety because he thought that his classmates are better than him. The result was found by He and Chen (2010), they stated the main cause of students’ confidence is their low ability in speaking English. In this case, Mr X thought he was not better than his classmates that led him to anxiety to overcome this problem, Mr X used the technique of relaxation to help him boost his self confidence before the presentation began. Moreover, relaxation training was effective in reducing anxiety in any kind of participant, male or female, young or old, affected or not by physical or psychological disorders (Francesco et al., 2009). In addition, Young (1991) and Zeidner (1998) cited in Woodrow (2011) explain this is a recommended strategy for dealing with anxiety. Skills deficit anxious individuals benefit from improving learning strategies and focusing on learning the necessary skills and linguistic features of the language whereas interference retrieval anxious individuals can focus on relaxation techniques and positive self-talk.

Lack of preparation was another factor that made Mr X got anxious. Lack of preparation was a great contributor to Mr X’s anxiety. He got anxious because he could not do impromptu speak. He was not good at English that means he needs a preparation first. This finding was also found in other studies Iizuka (2010) lack of preparation often lead to anxiety. Similarly, Thulasimani Munohsamy et al (2015) studied anxiety in oral presentation among ITB students, and found that the lack of preparation was one of possible causes of anxiety which leads to higher anxiety level. Some studies have concluded that preparation should be planned properly so that students do not feel flustered or lost when they have to speak. Mr X had a strategy to overcome his problem by rehearse before the day of the speech. The public speaking process involves a lot of preparation and practice to help Mr X become a good speaker. Rehearsal or practice at before the day of the speech helped Mr X to overcome his anxiety. Rehearsal is vital for a good presentation. By rehearsing, he tried to refine the presentation, the language and tone he will use, as well as the fine points of delivery.

Fear of making mistakes also another factor that cause Mr X got anxious. As Mr X told from his interview and personal narrative inquiry. It was clearly stated that Mr X got anxious when he was speaking in front of the class and he did a mistake, like slip tongue, wrong pronunciation and got nothing to say. This finding is in accordance to the study done by Rajoo (2010) who had done a research in investigating the students’ problem in speaking in front of public said that students often became blank in the middle or beginning of the presentation because they forgot what they would say. Therefore, Mr X was afraid of making mistakes because he didn’t want to get laughed by other students. He felt uncomfortable mostly when he made mistakes, the classroom environment where the students noticed his mistakes. Furthermore, it can affect
his performance and score. Moreover, he had terrible memories of being ridiculed by other students. On the other hand, he was concerned about being laughed at by others or making fool himself in front of the class. It just simply makes him lose his focus and feel so embarrassed. Similar result was found by Hieu (2011) and Zang (2006) cited in He and Chen (2010) explain that students feel afraid of the idea of making mistakes as they are worried that their friends will laugh at them and receive negative evaluations from their peers if they make mistake in speaking English. Students’ fear of making mistakes in speaking English has been a common issue especially in an EFL context like in Indonesia. Further, he found the strategy to overcome his anxiety about fear of making mistakes. He used note card as a strategy to overcome his anxiety about making mistakes in his speech. Using note card was effective to minimize the failure such as mind blank or when Mr X forgot the main point of his speech. He prepared note card before the day of his speech. On the note card, he wrote some main points that he will be delivered. The purpose of his note card was to help him remember his speech outline from the beginning of the sequence of his ideas and some important ideas in case he forgot what he was going to say. In the findings section, his note card not only covered some points but it consists of some sentences which is help him to speak easily without getting blank.

According to interview and personal narrative inquiry result, hate being the center of attention was the last factor that caused Mr X anxiety. When he performed his speech and speaking in front of the class, he felt anxious and uncomfortable because all the students look focus at him. He felt inferior because he didn’t want to have negative evaluation from the other students. This may be due to the classroom activities or tasks that they have to fulfill in class. This result is in accordance to the study done by Ohata (2005), that fear of losing “face” in front of others was also found to be a shared anxious feeling by language learners. Mr X had expressed anxiety in evaluative situations in which his knowledge and performance in the speech was to be monitored by people around him. This fear of losing “face” may be particularly true for Mr X who had the feeling of being under pressure about the evaluation he will receive. He considered it was a threat for him because he thought that some students were underestimate him. Therefore, the best solution to overcome his anxiety about afraid of being center of attention was gestures when he was speaking in front of the class. For example, moving hands gave him free gesture and freedom to express what is on his mind. He could feel relax, enjoy the speech and avoid the tremble he got. Hands movement and gesture was become an important role in this part. It was kind of distracting the attention from others, so he moved his hands as possible as he could.

Based on the discussion above, the previous research on speaking anxiety in public speaking class and this research have shown many similar results. The previous study and some theories have proven the factors that caused speaking anxiety such as lack of confidence, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes and hate being the center of attention. To overcome the anxiety, some strategies were used such as rehearsal, relaxation, visualization, gestures and using note card. 

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the previous research on speaking anxiety in public speaking class and this research have shown many similar results. Anxiety is clearly an issue in language learning and has a debilitating effect on speaking English for Mr X. According to Mr X, there are various factors that contributed to his anxiety. The previous study and some theories have proven the factors that caused speaking anxiety to Mr X such as lack of confidence, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes and hate being the center of attention. Those factors were discussed in this study, which deepened our understanding about foreign language anxiety. The experiences of Mr X provide a great deal of information about students’ anxiety in public speaking. They offers
insights on what may contribute to their anxiety as well as what teacher can do to reduce the anxiety. Furthermore, Mr X found some effective strategies to overcome his anxiety. Based on the data obtained from interview and personal narrative inquiry, it was found that there are some strategies used by Mr X in overcoming his speaking anxiety in public speaking class such as rehearsal, relaxation, visualization, gestures and using note card. These strategies gave significant effect to Mr X’s performance during his speech and now Mr X feels comfortable to speak in front of the class.

**Suggestion**

Finally due to limitations of this study, future research is necessary to be conducted to investigate the types of anxious learners, in different situations and the sources of their anxiety with the larger population or different group of students will be useful to give a better understanding of the issue of speaking anxiety. It would be ideal to collect larger data samples for further research Therefore, further investigations about certain approaches or methods that can help reduce anxiety in speaking English are needed. As for the students, they need to get involved to reduce anxiety in classroom. In addition, anxious students should realize that mistakes are a natural part of language learning, therefore, it should not discourage them in learning English. They need to stop focusing and expressing the fear and discomfort. Instead, they need to create and reinforce the positive energy and mindset. As a result, students can become more independent and more responsible for their own learning. For the English teachers are expected to be able understand the character of each students in the classroom. English teachers should be able to create a comfortable teaching-learning process for their students and also would continue working towards the reinforcement of positive attitudes in teaching-learning process. Furthermore, teachers are expected to be able to appreciate answers and give positive responses from every student when they are speaking English in front of the class. By providing positive feedback to their students, teachers can offer a possible assistance in coping with speaking anxiety.

**REFERENCES**


