Strategies and Factors Influencing Speaking Anxiety Perceived by Parallel Students at Esa Unggul University

Cecilia Vicontie[1], Hartini Ayuningtyas[2], Wawan Setiawan[3]

[1]English Education Department, Esa Unggul University
Email: ms.vicontie@gmail.com
[2]English Education Department, Esa Unggul University
Email: hrtnayuningtyas@student.esaunggul.ac.id
[3]English Education Department, Esa Unggul University
Email: wawan.setiawan@esaunggul.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Language is the important source of communication. For that, communication skills become important skills in language learning. However, making the students speak up in English is not always easy. There may be several obstacles to speak such as speaking anxiety and its effects on second language acquisition. The study aims to analyze the factors influencing speaking anxiety of Parallel Students at Esa Unggul University in the synchronous online learning and the strategies they employed to cope with it. The data were collected through the structured interviews with six Parallel Students at Esa Unggul University. The findings of this research show that almost all students who faced speaking anxiety demonstrate signs of restlessness in their speaking performance in the synchronous online learning. To cope with the anxiety, it is important to strive for communication activities using English in the classroom with a pleasant atmosphere where every student can feel relaxed and motivated to communicate verbally.

Keywords: speaking anxiety, synchronous online learning, strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

As the first world language, English is the most widely spoken language in the world. English is not only used as the language of instruction in the business world but also in the world of education, diplomacy, mass entertainment, etc. That is why English is becoming more crucial in both native and non-native English-speaking countries.

Having good skills of English helps us to have more opportunities in life, not only an improved social life but also better job opportunities in the future. Speaking skills are one of the most central skills we must learn. Proficient in English means being able to communicate clearly and effectively, thus achieving one-way communication. However, learning English speaking skills does not necessarily mean it is a simple skill to master, it can be a challenge for anyone, especially for second language learners. One of the major challenges faced by second language learners in this skill is speaking anxiety.

According to Ormrod (2011), anxiety is temporary feeling of anxiety emerged by a threatening situation. It is nervousness or tension at a certain moment in response to some outside stimulus. In speaking anxiety, students feel anxious about what other people think of them when they say words in English, making mistakes

and failing, afraid to answer questions spontaneously, etc. Consequently, speaking anxiety can inhibit a student's ability to learn effectively, causes emotional stress, and lower self-esteem and self-confidence in students. This lack of confidence will be an obstacle to the development of their skills because it can prevent the learners from using their current ability and discovering their full potential.

There are many factors that can cause students have speaking anxiety. The components of foreign language anxiety have been identified to narrow down this concept into researchable issues: (1) communication apprehension or anxiety. (2) Test anxiety. (3) Fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, et. al, 1986). Based on these considerations, this research is aimed to find out the factors that influence speaking anxiety of parallel students at Esa Unggul University in the synchronous online learning and the strategies to cope with it.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Burns and Joyce (1997), speaking skill is a capability to make an interactive process to making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information. Speaking skill is a skill to speak words to express thoughts, ideas, or feelings (Saldaria, Ariawan & Cahyani, 2019). Speaking skill is one of someone's ability and performance in language (Pakpahan & Gultom, 2020). In addition, speaking skill is one of important position in language learning because it symbolizes students' communicative skill (Saldaria, Ariawan & Cahyani, 2019).

There are several definitions of speaking anxiety. Foreign language learning anxiety has been defined as "a distinctive complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128).

Speaking anxiety is of the results of effective factors that arise because of several things such as lack of knowledge, low preparation, fear of making mistakes and difficulties in understanding the instructions from the lecturer (Syahfutra & Wibowo, 2021).

Horwitz, & Cope (1986) stated there are three factors influencing speaking anxiety which are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is defined by them as a type of nervousness characterized by the anxiety to communicate with people due to constantly monitored and lack of situational communicative control as well as personal knowledge as it influences the ability someone to make ones understand as well as understanding others' speeches. Test anxiety is defined as a type of performance anxiety which is coming from a fear of failure in mastery of foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). Fear of negative evaluation is defined as the act of avoiding the evaluative situations (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

Strategy to cope speaking anxiety is needed for learners since speaking anxiety become the real issue in English speaking. By knowing a proper strategy to cope speaking anxiety, it can help learners to identify their mistake and reduce feeling of fear in speaking English (Hidayoza, Amri & Wahyuni, 2019). Furthermore, to help learners to cope their speaking anxiety, Kondo and Yang (2004) analyzed some strategies related to affective, cognitive and behavioral of learners. The coping strategy consists of 3 major strategies: self-confident, improving language or knowledge skills, and practice.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The qualitative design was applied in this research to gain an in-depth understanding of students' perceptions of

speaking anxiety in English learning classes and to help on providing some effective strategies for overcoming this issue. In collecting data, the researcher conducted interviews recording with six participants from the fifth semester of Parallel Class students at Esa Unggul University. The Parallel Class is a class consisting of students whose majority is workers, where this class has four synchronous meetings at the first, seventh, eighth and fourteenth meeting. Contributors in this study were 5 female students and 1 male student, aged from 21 up to 25 years old. In order to get comprehensive data from the interviewees, the interviews were conducted in Indonesian to overcome the language barrier and then translated into English.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Qualitative Findings

During the interview, the researchers found a key theme regarding the causes of students' speaking anxiety. Here is a table of interview results.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Speaking Anxiety.

Factors	Questions	Participants	Sign of Speaking Anxiety
Communication Aphrension	Do you feel quite sure of yourself when you are speaking English in the classroom in the SOL?	P2, P4, P6	"I'm not sure when speaking English. I think my potential in speaking English is a bit lacking. Maybe because I don't practice enough and I need to learn more."
			"For me, I'm not too sure because I'm not confident in what I say. Fear of pronouncing it wrong, or fear of being misunderstood by others, so before speaking, think about it first."
	Does it frighten you when you don't understand what the lecturer is saying in theSOL?	P4	"Possibly yes. I'm a little scared because I'm a bit lacking in English. If I don't understand what the lecturer explains, I will ask them what part I don't understand. So I'll ask again what they said."
	Do you get upset when you don't understand what the lecturer is correcting in the SOL?	-	-

	Do you feel confident when you speak English in the SOL?	P2, P4, P5	"Not really, still not confident enough."
			"I still do not feel confident because my English is still lacking. I still have to practice more."
			"Still half-confident. Because I rarely speak English. And because of this online class, synchronous classes are only available four times, so I rarely practice. Sometimes, I'm not that confident."
	Do you feel nervous when you don't understand every word the lecturer says in English in the SOL?	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	"Yes, I'm nervous. Because there are some words that I do not understand in English, so I'm afraid to be wrong."
			"That's right, I am nervous because some lecturers speak quickly when explaining materials, so I can't automatically catch what the lecturer is saying."
Test Anxiety	Do you tremble when you know that you are going to be called in the classroom in the SOL to speak English?	P4	"Yes, my hands are shaking and wet."

Do you worry about the consequences of failing your class in in the SOL?	P1, P2, P4, P5, P6	"Yes, sometimes. For example, during synchronous class, there is a task that is quite difficult, yes... it's quite worrying."
		"Sometimes worried. Worried about what to prepare, suddenly forgot."
		"Yes, of course, I'm worried. Because taking this course is very dangerous. Maybe if you want to write a thesis or trial, you have to speak English, right? So you have to be fluent and you have to practice to do it."
Do you feel the more you study for the class in the SOL, the more confused you get?	P2, P4, P5, P6	"Yes, I feel like that. The reason is that we don't meet directly with the lecturers. Sometimes the lecturer is active, but we are not active, so we don't understand."
		"It's getting more confusing because we have to learn and understand it ourselves without the help of a lecturer."
		"To be honest, it's hard. Because we have to do our assignments every week while we are in parrallel class, we are studying while working. So our time is limited. Sometimes we do not read the module or the video completely, because our prioritas is to finish the assignment on time. So if you

ask me, does this online class increase my knowledge or not. I can say yes, but I don't know if it's maximum or not.”

Do you think the class moves quickly in the SOL, so you worry about getting left behind?	P3, P4, P5, P6	“I've always been worried about my friends who have higher knowledge than me. For example, when in synchronous class, they can immediately understand what the lecturer is saying, while I have to process first what the lecturer is saying. Maybe because I also rarely read modules, that's what makes me feel afraid of being left behind.”
		“Feel fast. 100% of us don't understand the material because we focus on doing assignments, quizzes. So for now, we only have a brief look, so focus on working on the task before the due date.”
Do you feel more tense and nervous in English classroom in the SOL than in other classes?	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	“More nervous in English class. I was afraid of being wrong and being laughed at if there was an error in English. Indonesian class is more relaxed because we use our

			native language."
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Do you worry about making mistakes when speaking English in the in the SOL?	P2, P3, P5, P6	"Yes worry, I'm afraid to be wrong."
			"Yes, I'm afraid to say the wrong thing, like the intention won't reach the lecturer."
	Do you keep thinking that the other students are better at English than you are?	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	"Yes, sometimes. Some classmates speak English very fluently in class and present a good presentation. I think this is natural."
			"Yes, very often. I ever thought like that and felt the stupidest among my friends because my English is not good. But I think I can't think like that. If my classmates can do it, why can't I ?"
	Does it embarrass you to volunteer answers in English in the SOL?	P2, P3, P4	"Sometimes I feel embarrassed if the answer is wrong or has a different opinion with the lecturer."
			"Yes, sometimes I feel shy. Because sometimes I don't know the meaning of some words and it makes me embarrassed, I'm worried that my English is wrong."

Are you afraid that the other students will laugh at you when you speak English?		P2	"Yes. There is that fear. Fear of being ridiculed for saying the wrong thing."
Do you get nervous when the lecturer asks questions in English which you haven't prepared in advance?		P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	"That's right, sometimes. Even more surprised, even though I have prepared another answer."

From the analysis above, almost six students felt anxious when speaking in English in the synchronous online learning. Almost all students who face anxiety show signs of restlessness in their speaking performance. Several factors cause students speaking anxiety, such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative eveluation.

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1 Factors Influencing Speaking Anxiety Perceived by Parallel Students at Esa Unggul University

a. Communication Apprehension (CA)

Horwitz et al. (1986) define communication apprehension (CA) as a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. The condition appeared in speaking performance when the students were asked to speak in English in the SOL. The result shows that P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 did not master communication apprehensions. From the table finding above, we can find the most factor that caused students communication apprehension is the lack of understanding of vocabulary. They felt nervous because they did not understand every word the lecturer said in English in the SOL ("Yes, I'm nervous. Because there are some words that I do not understand in English, so I'm afraid to be wrong."). So that this nervous feeling can have an impact on their confidence when speaking English.

b. Test Anxiety

An understanding of test anxiety is also related to the discussion of English speaking anxiety. Test anxiety is defined as a type of performance anxiety which is coming from a fear of failure in the mastery of a foreign language (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). The result shows that P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 feel more tense and nervous in the English classroom in the SOL than in other classes that use Bahasa (their native language). Some students as P1, P2, P4, P5, P6 also worry about the consequences of failing in the SOL.

c. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as the act of avoiding evaluative situations (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). The result shows that P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 get nervous when the lecturer asks questions in English which they haven't prepared in advance. The students fear if the teacher conveys their lack of English and worry about making mistakes when speaking

English in the in the SOL ("Yes, I'm afraid to say the wrong thing, like the intention won't reach the lecturer."). They also keep thinking that the other students are better at English than themselves. It can cause stress when they have low self-assessment compared to others.

4.2.2 Strategies to Cope Speaking Anxiety

a. Self-Confident

Speaking anxiety is a negative feeling that can make learners to be less confident in their speaking in synchronous class. In this case, some anxious learners try to build a self-confident to cope their anxious. This is supported by the findings of student' interviews, "Strateginya ya yakin atau percaya diri aja. Yakin kalo yang di kelas tuh ya orangnya teman-teman kita juga."; "(strategi) ketiga, percaya diri."; "Merubah pola fikir, untuk menghindarkan dari fikiran negative seperti takut salah. Gapapa salah, lagipula gaakan ada yang ngetawain juga."

b. Improving Language or Knowledge Skills

In this strategy, students attempt to control their own self by improving their language or knowledge skills. By using this strategy, students are expected to increase their mastery of subject matter and reduce their anxious associated with language in synchronous class. The students can cope their anxiety with improving language or knowledge skills during in the class. This is verified by evidence from students' interviews confirming "saya harus menguasai materi dengan baik atau menyiapkan presentasi dengan baik, supaya gak gugup saatn gomong ke dosen."

c. Practice

This strategy is necessary for successful language learning. It requires students to seeking for practice opportunities inside and outside classroom. Those who seriously want to be able to cope their speaking anxiety must look for practice opportunities as much as possible. The supporting evidence were from students' interviews, "Jadi kalau kita bicara langsung pakai bahasa inggris sih kemungkinan jadi lancer ngomong bahasa inggrisnya."; "prakteks upaya jangan salah, untuk mengurangi kesalahan"; "Menurut saya strategi nya adalah kita harus banyak berlatih."

5. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed students' factors influencing and strategies to cope with speaking anxiety during synchronous online learning. The structured interviews were used to collect the data with six Parallel students at Esa Unggul University have committed to participate in this study. Based on the research findings, the factors influencing speaking anxiety of participants: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, three coping strategies are used by students: self-confident, improving language or knowledge skills, and practice.

According to the students' responses toward an interview, they mostly feel nervous when they do not understand every word the lecturer says, keep thinking that the other students are better at English than they are, and get nervous when the lecturer asks questions in English which they have not prepared. Most of students use Practice as a coping strategy for speaking anxiety. They have to look for practice opportunities as much as possible. More research in the future is suggested to explore how the students cope with their speaking anxiety and providing more comprehensive results. The comprehensive results of the following research might be useful in English teaching-learning process, particularly during online learning.

REFERENCES

Burns, A. & Joyce, H. 1997. Focus on Speaking. Sydney: Macquire University Press.

Hidayoza, P., Amri, Z., & Wahyuni, D. (2019). LEVEL OF PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY AND COPING STRATEGY USED BY ENGLISH DEBATERS AT UNIT KEGIATAN BAHASA ASING IN DEALING WITH ENGLISH DEBATE. Journal of English Language Teaching, 8(1), 51–60.http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt/article/view/103271

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. The Modern Language Journal, 70(2).

Kondo, D.S., & Ying-Ling, Y. (2004). Strategies for coping with language anxiety: the case of students of English in Japan. ELT Journal, 58(3), pp.258-265. Retrieved from http://203.72.145.166/ELT/files/58-3-5.pdf

Ormrod, J. E. (2011). Educational psychology: developing learners. 7th ed. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Pakpahan, E. M., Gultom, I., & Pakpahan, E. M. (2020). Foreign language speaking anxiety in online learning. Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching, 04(02).

Saldaria, E., Ariawan, V., & Cahyani, I. (2019). Speaking skill of elementary students reviewed by gender. Jurnal Prima Edukasia, 7(1), 20-27. doi:https://doi.org/10.21831/jpe.v7i1.20363

Syahfutra, W. (2021). Students' Speaking Anxiety in English Education Study Program. ELT-Lectura, 8(1), 74-83. https://doi.org/10.31849/elt-lectura.v8i1.5920