

## **An Analysis of Students' Anxiety in Speaking English**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was intended to investigate; (1) the factors of students' anxiety in speaking English, and (2) the strategies used by the students in overcoming their anxiety in speaking English at the first grade of MAN I Kolaka. This study used a mixed method namely quantitative and qualitative. In conducting the study, the researcher collected the data by using questionnaire and interview. The participants of this research were 30 students of class X IPA 1. The result of this research showed that the factors of students' anxiety in speaking English of MAN 1 Kolaka were communicative apprehension, with mean value (3,82) test anxiety with mean value (3,4) fear of negative evaluation with mean value ( 3,67). The result of interviewed showed that there were five strategies that students used to overcome their anxiety in speaking English, such as preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation.

**Keyword** : Anxiety, Speaking English, Analysis

### **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking is one of the four basic skills of language which is used as a medium of interaction to express one's thoughts and emotions. In the teaching of English, as one of the productive skills, speaking activity must focus on how to assist students in using and to communicate in English (Richard, 2008).

As one of the dynamic skills in English language knowledge, English speaking skill is measured to be a significant skill that has to be realized by the learners. The notion lies upon some components of speaking like conversational discourse, pronunciation, accuracy, and fluency, affective factors also the interaction effect or negotiating meaning (Brown, 2001). In reality, even though English has been taught for at least six years in school levels in Indonesia, which is Junior High School and Senior High School level, the students still face some

difficulties in learning English, particularly speaking. It becomes a required subject to be occupied by Junior High School students. In the implementation, it seems that English becomes one of the subjects that is avoided by students especially in senior high school

Most of the students have difficulty speaking a foreign language, specifically in English class. It can be more worrying when they are probably to speak the second or foreign language before their fluency in speaking is succeeded, especially for students in the first-grade level. They have been stirring on from junior high school. In the first year in senior high school, most of them still face difficulty in familiarizing themselves with new friends, teachers, situations, subjects, and roles. They still felt peculiar; consequently they don't feel confident to convey their ideas distinctly. It makes them suddenly get anxious when they have to speak English, even in front of their classmates. They still got nervous, whether in spoken test or responding to teacher's questions, however as we recognize that every teacher has dissimilar strategy to manage students' anxiety of speaking in the class. However, to have an English speaking ability is a very difficult task, considering the nature of what is involved in speaking. The students are hesitant to speak. English has become a fundamental factor that can stimulate their ability to learn a language. Students tend to be soundless when they are questioned by their teacher to speak in front of the class. Sometimes, they keep silent even if they recognize the questions and can answer the questions from their teacher. Snell (1999) cited in Rini Anggraini (2015). Togatorop (2009) identified that students tend to be silent in EFL classroom since they are unable to accomplish their feeling including nervousness, lack of motivation, shyness, lack of motivation and boredom.

In addition speaking becomes an anxious causing activity that makes students felt nervous simply when they are in the classroom. Many students are in highly anxious because of contributing to speaking activities (Keramida, 2009). In fact, it is often suggested that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking language skill in foreign language learning circumstances. It has even become more anxious when the students are given questions or asked to perform in front of the class. This phenomenon has some similarities that showed students are afraid speaking in English and making mistake. It doesn't have the courage to speak in front of the class because of their high self-consciousness

In addition Liu (2007) said that most of the students avoid speaking when he or she believes that one must speak in English correctly. Some students might prefer to keep quiet during the lesson because they are reluctant to speak English. Anxious students tend to think about negative evaluations from other people. To manage this problem, teachers should found ways to make the English learning process less stressful and create teaching the methods creative which helps the students in reducing anxiety in speaking English.

Anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension or fear caused by the anticipation of something threatening. Chan & Wu (2004) defines anxiety as “subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” It is a kind of troubled feeling in mind. Anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates learners to adopt an approach attitude and is willing to confront the new learning task. While debilitating anxiety motivates learners to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task. The factor of difficult task affects learners to develop facilitating or debilitating anxiety. Anxiety is the existence of fear thinking to cause a sense of confidence, nervousness.

The researcher conveyed two research questions:

- a. What factors caused students’ anxiety in speaking English at the first-grade student of MAN 1 Kolaka?
- b. How do the students overcome their anxiety in speaking English?

This study was aimed to investigate the factors of students’ anxiety in speaking English, and to investigate the way the students overcome their anxiety in speaking English in the first grade of MAN I Kolaka.

## LITERATURE OF REVIEW

### Basic Concept of Speaking

There are several definitions of speaking described by the experts; one of them is Fariadian (2014). He argued that Speaking is a significant skill for everyone who learns foreign language. Speaking is an implementation that used to connects people's conversation the same language. By speaking we can share our thoughts, sense and opinion/information.

Meanwhile, Gowhary (2014) said that speaking is one of the most multifarious cognitive, linguistics and motor skills. It is used in natural communication, giving and getting information, and for teaching and learning verbally. Lejla (2011) says that the speaking skill is the most significant one since foreign language learners are most of all concerned in becoming actual speakers of language.

Likewise, Keramida (2009) specified that speaking is an anxious causing activity that makes students anxious when they are in the classroom, many students are very anxious because of contributing in speaking activities (cited in Mayangta 2013) whereas Subasi (2010) proposed that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking language skill in foreign language learning situations.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concluded that speaking is the ability to produce a language and as a way to make communication in transferring thoughts or information that used to express some feeling in mind and anticipating misunderstanding in communication.

### **Basic Concept of Anxiety**

Brown (2007) defines anxiety as subjective, intentionally perceived a feeling of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system

In addition, Ellis (2011) stated that anxiety is the feeling of uneasiness and apprehension concerning a situation with an uncertain outcome. Meanwhile, Dixon (2015) stated that anxiety may come in many forms. Sometimes anxiety is accompanied by intense panic, dread, or fear in which an individual may experience chest pain, shortness of breath, racing heart, dizziness, and discomfort. Anxiety can manifest as unwanted, repetitive thoughts and compulsive behaviors that seem impossible to stop. Sometimes anxiety is specifically tied to a certain situation, like speaking in public. Some people believe that anxiety is an additional inconvenience for students.

Lanerfeldt (2011) described speaking anxiety as something that has a great impact on one's self-confidence since it often makes one experience failure when not being able to speak out and show what one knows. Irregular heartbeat, perspiration, stumbling, and an inability to act are a few symptoms that block one's capacity to act and speak. This issue often turns into a vicious circle because one bad experience from speaking often becomes a reminder when the next opportunity arises. If a student with speaking anxiety experiences failure he or she will rather remain quiet than take the risk of failing again. This situation drags them into a silence that becomes more and more difficult to break since it contributes to a role as "the quiet one" in class. Speaking anxiety creates a low self-confidence, which makes students remain quiet in all situations, even if they have the capacity to express themselves and knowledge that is worth hearing.

### **Types of Anxiety**

Greenberg divides the types of anxiety into two, namely trait and state anxiety:

1. According to Greenberg (2006) trait anxiety is "a general series of anxiety not specific to a particular stimulus." Another definition gives by Spielberger cited in Toth (2010) trait anxiety refers to "relatively stable individual differences in anxiety-proneness," the differences between people in the tendency to perceive stressful situations as dangerous or threatening and to respond to such situations with elevations in the intensity of their state anxiety reactions. Ellis said that trait anxiety is pattern of responding with anxiety even in non-threatening situation. Ellis (2011).
2. State anxiety, it is considered as an obstacle and an interruption of an individual's emotional equilibrium. Greenberg (2010) suggests that "state anxiety is either temporary in nature or specific to a particular stimulus." Ellis (2011) stated that temporary feeling of anxiety elicited by threatening situations is called by state anxiety. State anxiety is an unpleasant feeling which can seriously disturb the individual's ability to react positively to any situation and in a certain environment. For example, when the person hears bad information about his parents, he becomes so anxious, so that emotional equilibrium would be put in to question.

### **Foreign Language Anxiety in Speaking Skill**

Liu (2008) argued that one of the problems that cause students to perform unwell in speaking class is foreign language anxiety. Foreign language anxiety is a feeling of anxiety that students have when they learn foreign language, especially in speaking class. When students don't want to speak or feel anxious to speak a foreign language that they learn, it may become a problem for them. The feeling of anxiety is common among foreign language students. Some students felt worried, nervous and apprehensive when they are in speaking class. Foreign language anxiety is one of the affective factors that can impede learners' language performance because of its negative effects. It could influence learners' motivation, create negative attitudes and inhibits communication in the speaking class.

Meanwhile, Dordinejad and Ahmad (2014 cited in Eleldi, 2016) explain that foreign language anxiety is an important factor that influences one's level of achievement in foreign language learning, especially in speaking class. In addition Occhipinti (2009), argues that speaking in the foreign language is often cited by students as their most anxiety-producing experience, and also difficulty in speaking is probably the most frequently cited

### **Factors of Anxiety**

Tanveer (2007) stated that this description was general for the causes of students' anxiety in speaking English (foreign language). Providing an insight to comprehend the sources or causes. It could originate, there are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

#### **1. Communicative apprehension**

As the first factor of anxiety, communicative apprehension is a variety of shyness characterized by panic or anxiety about communicating with people. This anxiety very often plagues EFL students in English classes. Students feel embarrassed to talk to the teacher and/or their peers in English. These students feel like someone is observing them watching out for them to make mistakes in their grammar; this causes the students to be anxious when asked to speak English. Students feel that their English language is not as good as the ability of their peers

#### **2. Test Anxiety**

Meanwhile, test anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. This factor usually occurs when students face an English language test, especially an oral test. Students feel pressured and uncomfortable in this situation. Even students who have prepared themselves perfectly for an oral English test can make errors in the test. They seem to lose their ability during the test. Students make untypical errors and apparently did not know what they have to do on the test. According to Yamashiro and McLaughlin (2001), "test anxiety is a form of anxiety that is like a motivating factor to study harder and perform better." But on the contrary, Horwitz and Cope (1986) reveal that frequently students who

definitely knew the answer before the test experience forgetfulness because of their nervousness that causes them to lose memory power so that they give wrong answers in a test.

3. Fear of negative evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as apprehension about the evaluations of others, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate one negatively. This factor causes students to feel anxious to show their abilities directly in English because students felt that their classmates would give negative comments on their performance. Students also felt anxious when their teacher gives them correction which make their self-esteem fall in front of their peers. Particularly, in giving feedback to students, the teacher is not justified to give just negative feedback that can marginalize one or more students. The teacher's feedback on students' responses has to contain an element of positive reinforcement that can motivate the students, even when students' responses are wrong. Teachers should respond to students' correct answers with praise so that students get reinforcement for what they have learned

### **Strategies in Overcoming Anxiety in Speaking English**

Kondo and Ling (2004) argued that there are five strategies used by students for reducing their anxiety to perform in front of the class, namely: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation, explained as follows:

1. Preparation

The first strategy is Preparation. In this strategy, students try to control their self by improving learning and study strategies (example: study hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes). By using these strategies would be expected to increase students' subjectively assessed mastery of the subject substance and reduce the anxiety related to the language class.

2. Relaxation

The second strategy is Relaxation; the aim of this strategy is to reduce somatic anxiety symptoms. Making the body relax by doing something. For example: take a deep breath.

Exercise will make nervous into positive energy through a relaxing release of breath (Tseng, 2012). The more one relaxes, the more anxiety reduces. Sit comfortably and straight in the classroom seat. Before class or during class, take long, slow breaths, hold it for four or five seconds, and release it slowly.

3. Positive Thinking

The third strategy is Positive Thinking. It is characterized by cooling down of pressure problematic cognitive processes that underlie students' anxiety,

think that everything can be well. These strategies are intended to divert attention from the stressful situation to positive and pleasant cues, and bring relief to the anxious student, (Example: imagining oneself giving a high performance, trying to enjoy the tension).

It is necessary to think positive, to realize that everyone makes mistakes learning a language and that making errors is an integral part of the language learning process. It is also important to realize that perfection is an impossible goal and that is not a requisite for success (Tseng, 2012).

#### 4. Peer Seeking

The fourth strategy is Peer Seeking, this strategy distinguished by students' willingness to look for other students who seem to have trouble understanding the class and/or controlling their anxiety. For the anxious student, the realization that others are having the same problem may serve as a source of emotional regulation by social comparison.

#### 5. Resignation

The last strategy is Resignation. This is characterized by students' unwillingness to do anything to decrease their language anxiety. Resignation seems intent on minimizing the impact of anxiety by refusing to face the problem (example: give up, sleeping in class), (Kondo, 1997)

Insight and understanding are essential to overcoming anxiety problems. However, from shyness to depression, there is something else that is equally important namely changing behavior. To change the behavior we have to do the behavior, but it will not help students if they still feel bad about themselves self and they still unanswered their own problem by found the solution. Therefore, successfully overcoming anxiety disorder requires both insight and behavior change, (Dixon, 2011).

## **METHOD**

This research used mix method, namely quantitative and qualitative, in order to investigate students' anxiety in speaking English; and to investigate the way the students overcome their anxiety in speaking English at the first grade of MAN I Kolaka. The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The researcher distributed questionnaire and interviewed the students. After having the data from questionnaire and interview, the researcher analyzed the data collected. The participants of this research were 30 students of Senior High School of MAN I Kolaka class X IPA 1.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The questionnaire is used to answer students' factors of anxiety in speaking English and the interview is used to answer the strategies used by the students to overcome their anxiety in speaking English.

### The Factors of Students' Anxiety in Speaking English

There were 20 factors of students' anxiety in speaking English, it can be seen in the following description:

The first, *I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English in my English class*, showed that there were 53,3% who strongly agreed, there were 30% who agreed, there were 10% who uncertain, and there were 6,6% who disagree of this anxiety.

The second, *I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class*. showed that there were 36,6% who strongly agreed, there were 43,3% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, and there were 3,3% who disagree with this anxiety

The third, *In English class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know*. showed that there were 26,6% who strongly agreed, there were 40% who agreed, there were 13,3% who uncertain, and there were 10% who disagree of this anxiety.

The fourth, *I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class*. showed that there were 46,6% who strongly agreed, there were 33,3% who agreed, there were 10% who were uncertain, there were 6,6% who disagreed, and there was 3,3% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The fifth, *I don't understand why some people get so upset over speaking English*. showed that there were 16,6% who strongly agreed, there were 33,3% who agreed, there were 26,6% who were uncertain, there were 13,3% who disagreed, and there were 10% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The sixth, *Even if I am well prepared for speaking English, I feel anxious about it*. showed that there were 20% who strongly agreed, there were 40% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, there were 13,3% who disagreed, and there were 10% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The seventh, *I often feel like not going to my speaking English*. showed that there were 33,3% who strongly agreed, there were 26,6% who agreed, there were 13,3% who uncertain, there were 20% who disagreed, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The eighth, *It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class..* showed that there were 13,3% who strongly agreed, there were 40% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, there were 23,3% who disagreed, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The ninth, *I worry about the consequences of failing my speaking English*. showed that there were 23,3% who strongly agreed, there were 43,3% who agreed, there were 20% who were uncertain, there were 6,6%



who disagreed, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The tenth, *The more I study for a English test, the more confused I get.* showed that there were 16,6% who strongly disagreed, there were 33,3% who agreed, there were 23,3% who were uncertain, there were 20% who were disagree, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The eleventh, *I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.* showed that there were 10% who strongly disagreed, there were 26,6% who agreed, there were 23,3% who were uncertain, there were 16,6% who were disagree, and there were 23,3% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The twelfth, *During speaking English, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.* showed that there were 13,3% who strongly disagreed, there were 30% who agreed, there were 33,3% who were uncertain, there were 16,6% who were disagree, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The thirteenth, *I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.* showed that there were 36,6% who strongly disagreed, there were 30% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, there were 10% who disagreed, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The fourteenth, *I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.* showed that there were 16,6% who strongly disagreed, there were 36,6% who agreed, there were 26,6% who were uncertain, there were 10% who disagreed, and there were 10% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The fifteenth, *It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the speaking English.* showed that there were 33,3% who strongly disagreed, there were 43,3% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, there were 3,3% who disagreed, and there was 3,3% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The sixteenth, *I keep thinking that the other students are better than I am in speak English.* showed that there were 13,3% who strongly disagreed, there were 26,6% who agreed, there were 23,3% who were uncertain, there were 30% who disagreed, and there were 6,6 who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The seventeenth, *I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.* showed that there were 30% who strongly disagreed, there were 40% who agreed, there were 13,3% who were uncertain, there were 13,3% who disagreed, and there were who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The eighteenth, *I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.* showed that there were 16,6% who strongly disagreed, there were 33,3% who agreed, there were 20% who were uncertain, there were 16,6% who disagreed, and there were 13,3% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The nineteenth, *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English*. showed that there were 40% who strongly disagreed, there were 26,6% who agreed, there were 13,3% who were uncertain, there were 10% who disagreed, and there were 10% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

The twentieth, *I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make*. showed that there were 30% who strongly disagreed, there were 36,6% who agreed, there were 16,6% who were uncertain, there were 10% who disagreed, and there were 6,6% who strongly disagreed of this anxiety

**Table 1 Factors of Students' Speaking Anxiety based on the component**

No	Components	N	Mean	SD	Category
1.	Communicative Apprehension	30	3,82	0,54	High
2.	Test Anxiety	30	3,4	0,48	Standard
3.	Fear of Negative Evaluation	30	3,67	0,61	High

From the table above, it showed that students' anxiety in speaking English is proved by communicative apprehension with mean value of 3,82, then followed by the component of fear of negative evaluation with the value 3,67, and the last components were the test anxiety with the smallest score 3,4.

In communicative apprehension as the first component is the most influential factors caused students anxiety in speaking English with mean value 3,82 with a high category. Students thought that they were afraid and shy in communicating with others. They were afraid that they would not understand others and others would not understand them.

Fear of negative evaluation as the second component of factors students anxiety in speaking English with mean value 3,67 with a high category. Students felt that they dealt with anxiety mostly because they feared others' negative evaluations. They were afraid and anxious whenever they were in evaluative situation. They afraid performing in the class because they thought people would value them negatively when they perform in English class

The last component of students' anxiety in speaking English was test anxiety with mean value 3,4 with standard category. The students were afraid of English test. Students feel anxious whenever they were in test-taking situation.

## Students' Strategies in Overcoming Anxiety in Speaking English

After conducting an interview with the students, the researcher found five strategies related to Kondo and Lings' theory in overcoming anxiety in MAN 1 Kolaka, namely: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation.

The first strategy was preparation, the students attempted to control their own self to overcome their anxiety, like study hard, trying to obtain good summaries of lecture notes. It proved by students who said that *usually before the lesson begun tomorrow morning in the night I prepare by study hard, making notes, practice a lot, and summarize the lesson*; The second strategy was relaxation, this strategy showed that making the body relax, like take a deep breath' and try to calm down. It supported by the students who said that *before I came in front of the class to present perform I was making my body be relax, by move the body, take a deep breath, and practice*; The third strategy was positive thinking, this strategy was intended to distract attention from the worrying situation to positive and enjoyable cues, and carry relief to the anxious students; The fourth strategy was peer seeking. This strategy was renowned by students' enthusiasm to look for other students who seem to have trouble understanding the class and/or controlling their anxiety.

The last strategy was resignation. This strategy was minimizing the effect of anxiety by denying to face the problem like give up or sleeping in the class. It was supported by students who said that *in teaching and learning process if my teacher ask me to answer the question, I answer as possible as I can, but if I cannot answer I just stay silent, sometimes I gave up, despair if I didn't know the answer of my teacher question*.

## CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussions of the research of students' anxiety in speaking English at MAN 1 Kolaka, it can be concluded that the factors caused students anxiety in speaking English that mostly influent students in learning English were communicative apprehension with mean value (3,82 ) The second factors was fear of negative evaluation with mean value (3,67 ) the last factors was test anxiety with mean value ( 3,4). Furthermore students overcome anxiety in speaking English using five strategies namely: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation.

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