

The Correlation of EFL Students' Speaking Anxiety and Their Speaking Performance

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Abstract. This study is conducted to see if there is a significant correlation of the EFL students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance. It used quantitative research method with correlation research design. There were 36 eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Madiun, participating in this study. Data were collected through using a speaking test and a questionnaire of the students' speaking anxiety. The speaking test was assessed by using Brown's speaking assessment and the questionnaire was measured by using 1-5 Likert-scale. The questionnaire was adapted from Woodrow (2015) to investigate the students' speaking anxiety. The data were analyzed using normality and Pearson correlation test of IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 22. The result shows that H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted. There is a significant correlation among two variables that they are strongly negative correlated. The speaking anxiety is affecting the students' speaking performance. It simply can be said that the more anxious someone the worst speaking score they get.

Keywords: *Speaking Performance, Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety*

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INTRODUCTION

Spoken language is an important aspect for human in social life especially communication. The spoken language is the most common form of language to be used in daily communication. When people are communicating directly, the basic form of language used is spoken language. Spoken language which is called as conversation has social function that is to reduce personal distance or to establish a good relation among two people. [Richards \(2008\)](#) asserts that people speak to exchange greetings, small talk, experiences and another message with the other to create comfortable zone. In sum, spoken language is important to be mastered by anyone so that they can communicate well and reach the goal of communication, students are no exception on this so they should learn how to speak by studying speaking skill.

Speaking skill is essential skill to be mastered by people because by mastering speaking, they can deliver their idea to others. Exchange information in a good and proper way is also the benefit of mastering speaking skill. [Rao \(2019\)](#) asserts that speaking skill development is not only significant on helping effective communication in English as the second language but it also helps in building an effective communication so that the students may be able to achieve their goals on communication. Speaking skill activities help students to improve their communication ability which is can be seen from the product of speaking skill lesson that is speaking performance.

For English Foreign Language (EFL) learners, mastering speaking is a must. They use speaking for presenting their works in front of the class, when the teacher conduct group discussion, when they are asked to give a speech in a competition, and the others. Later, it is called as speaking performance. Speaking performance becomes one of important aspect to be assessed by the teacher. [Richards \(2008\)](#) states that the success of English learner is the development of their speaking performance in accordance with the effectiveness of their English course. The effectiveness of the lesson relates to the method, approach, media and the teacher who gives the materials. Briefly, speaking performance is the product of speaking skill class and it is assessed to see whether the lesson is effective or not. In the process of speaking class establishment and assessment the students are still having negative thoughts on speaking skill lesson, specifically it is hard.

Speaking skill is the hardest skill to be mastered by the students. According to [Adriana, et.al \(2014\)](#) speaking English skill is hard. It is one of the most challenging skills to be practiced by the students. In this case the students are not only taught to speak in the class but also outside of the class, for example, activities in extracurricular activities. In sum, it can be understood that the students are having speaking anxiety.

Some research investigating speaking and anxiety have been conducted. They reveal the solutions to decrease the students' speaking anxiety. One of research conducted by [Young \(1990\)](#) finds that the students more likely to be anxious when they were asked to speak in front of their friends. She also stated that their anxiety was decreased when they were asked to speak in pair or in a group discussion. Therefore, speaking activity should be brought together with the other activity such as discussion rather than only conducting monologue. The other

research is done by [Tsiplakides \(2009\)](#) resulting on the conclusion that the students are having speaking anxiety and why the students experiencing it. Besides, he also noted that the speaking anxiety can be reduced by using project work, build convenient and supportive atmosphere in the class, establish a good relation among the students and the teacher, avoiding direct correction, keep the students' confidence, pay attention on teachers' attitude towards the students and praise the student. Those solutions may solve the problem of speaking anxiety in the class. The speaking anxiety of the students really exists when they are asked to speak, especially in English, however there are solutions to solve the problem based on the other researcher.

Some research offers solutions to reduce the students speaking anxiety. The research conducted by [Anderson et al. \(2005\)](#) report that the Speaking Anxiety or in that research it is called as Fear of Public Speaking (FOPS) can be decreased by the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) using Virtual Reality (VR). They add that the use of CBT and VR is effective to reduce FOPS. However, the research by [Chou \(2018\)](#) resulting the solution to face students' speaking anxiety that is by using full English Medium Instruction (EMI). EMI is a way of teaching to teach subjects in non-native English speaker, in the context of the Taiwanese students in Taiwan. The result shows that the students who receive full-EMI having their speaking anxiety decreased. In sum, some research investigated in relation to speaking anxiety generally talk about solutions to minimize the students' speaking anxiety that is for EFL students in the class.

Further, speaking anxiety also exists as the problem faced by non-native college students in Australia. The previous research conducted by [Woodrow \(2015\)](#) in Australia, concerns on the anxiety faced by non-native students in English speaking country (Australia). The researcher reports that the second language anxiety which has been measured by the scale of the second language speaking anxiety is relevant to English students studying in Australia universities. Another factor leading students into speaking anxiety is the involvement of the natives. [Ça \(2015\)](#) finds while speaking with the native, the anxiety of the students is getting worst. Further, [Rector et al \(2005\)](#) show that there is at least one of four people having an anxiety, whether it happens in the present or happened in the past. They also assert that anxiety affects human in some aspects. All in all, some research above share that the results of speaking anxiety are faced by adult students with certain reasons and backgrounds.

Some interesting parts apparently come up that anxiety and speaking performance become problems for adult students who study in the college or university. The problems occur since the students have communication with their natives' fellows and when they learn English as a second language. Besides the research that have been conducted most in the area of qualitative research. We, therefore inform that the students' speaking anxiety and speaking performance are still rarely investigated viewed from EFL students and conducted by using correlational study. In sum, we are interested in investigating more about the correlation of EFL students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, we were using quantitative research design. The design of this study was Correlational Study. This design investigated the correlation of those variables included in the study. There were some possibilities in this study: correlated or not correlated.

The population of this research was the eleventh grade students of MAN 2 Kota Madiun. The total of the eleventh grade students was more than 400. The eleventh grade students were chosen because we believe that they are already mature enough, in the terms of age and psychology which could affect on their self-responsibility to do their roles in the present study. Second, they already had enough knowledge, especially in speaking skill, whenever they are asked to perform their speaking skill, they are ready to operate their vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar mastery. The sample of this study was the students of the eleventh grade in MAN 2 Kota Madiun, class XI MIA 5A which contains 36 students, 14 male students and 22 female students. We made the lots of 12 classes of eleventh grade in MAN 2 Kota Madiun and then drew one class to be the sample. We used simple random sampling technique in order to make the study more effective.

Data were collected through speaking test and a set of questionnaire. The test was done by the students in turns. The test was speaking test in a certain materials which is taught during conducting the present study. The students performed a monologue speech with certain topic in front of the class. Their performance was assessed with the speaking performance assessment table, suggested by [Brown \(2004\)](#). There were six aspects in assessing speaking namely grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and task. The questionnaire was to check the students' anxiety, adapted from [Woodraw \(2015\)](#). It consisted of twelve points of questions or other types of prompts. Each point explained a situation faced by the students. The situations were such as their anxiety on facing speaking test, having interaction with teacher and the problems around the topic. For each point there were five range of anxiety. The students should read the points carefully and circle the 1-5 numbers Likert scale in anxiety column based on their experiences. The analysis were done by testing the data using SPSS ver 22. The tests were normality test, to ensure that the data were normal and Pearson correlation test is operated to see the correlation among two variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Normality Test

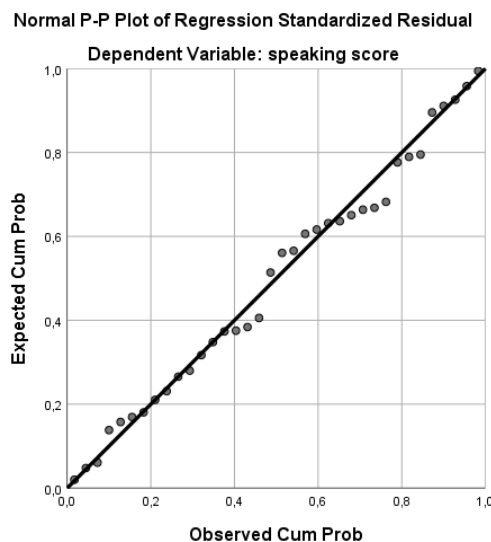
The normality test was using Saphiro-Wilk test because the number of the sample is under fifty (<50). The sample (n) of this research is 36. The analysis of the normality test can be seen in table below.

Table 1. Normality Test

	speaking anxiety	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
speaking score	50	,958	4	,764
	58			
	65			
	70			
	77			

From the table above, it can be seen that the sig. number is 0.764. As stated, before that the data are normally distributed (H_0 is accepted) when the sig is ≥ 0.05 while they are not normally distributed (H_0 is rejected) when the sig value is ≤ 0.05 . The number of sig (0.764) is ≥ 0.05 then it can be said that the H_0 is accepted or the data are normally distributed.

Beside only using table to see whether the data are normally distributed, scatter plots can be used. There is a scatter plot called normal p-p plot which is can be seen to derive the result of normality test. The plot can be seen below.

**Figure 1.** Normal P-P plot

The line in scatter plot is from bottom left to top right. Moreover, the dots of each data are spread along the line. This kind of plot shows that the data are normally distributed. When all the data are normally distributed, the analysis can be continued into Pearson Correlation test.

The Pearson correlation was done to see whether is there any correlation of the students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance. The result was there is a significant negative correlation among two variables. The result can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation

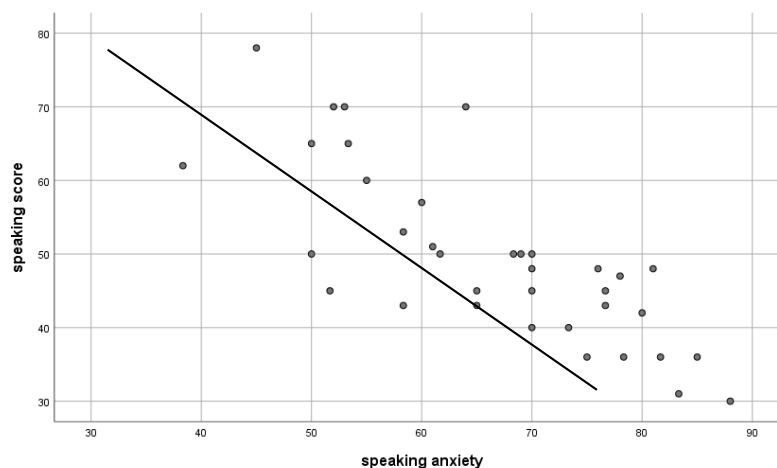
Correlations		
	speaking anxiety	speaking score
speaking anxiety	Pearson Correlation1	-,781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
	N	36
speaking score	Pearson Correlation-,781**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000
	N	36

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The value of Sig. (2-tailed) (0.000) was less than 0.05, or it can be written as Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05. The r count of this research is 0.781, meanwhile, the r table of N = 36 (df = N – 2) in bivariate test is 0.3291. The r count, 0.781 is > r table, 0.3291. When r count is bigger than r count it means the variables are significantly correlated. From the explanation above it can be seen that there is a significant correlation among two variables, the students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance.

The value of coefficient correlation in the table, -0.781 shows the kind and the strength of the correlation. This research result is in negative value; it means the correlation of both variables is negative correlation. The coefficient correlation of this research is 0.781; it is more than 0.5 it means the strength of the correlation is strong. In sum, the value of coefficient correlation, -0.781 shows that the two variables are strongly negative correlated.

The scatter plot of this research also shows that the two variables in this research are negatively correlated. See the figure below.

**Figure 2.** Scatter plot

The data analysis shows that H_a in the present study is accepted. There is a significant correlation among two variables. It can be proved by the value of Sig (2-

tailed) of Pearson correlation analysis in SPSS ver. 22 here. The Sig (2-tailed) value is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 so it shows there is a significant correlation. Moreover, the value of r count is bigger than the value of r table, at about $0.781 > 0.3291$. It also shows that the significant correlation between two variables exists.

The result displays that there is a strong negative correlation between the students' speaking anxiety and speaking performance. The coefficient correlation is -0.781. The negative value represents the negative correlation of two variables. While the value of 0.781 shows the strong correlation because it is more than 0.5. In sum, the students' speaking anxiety has negative correlation with their speaking performance. The significant correlation exists among two variables it means that one variable is affecting the other. It is seen that the speaking anxiety is affecting the students' speaking performance. The correlation is negative correlation so it simply can be said that the more anxious someone the worst speaking score they get. This finding is in line with [Sutarsyah \(2017\)](#) that students with lower level of anxiety get a better result in their speaking test than those who get higher level of anxiety. Therefore, the students with good speaking performance tend to have less anxiety; they feel more confident with their performance. Further, [Horwitz \(2001\)](#) which says that the anxiety makes the students have a difficulties in language learning, including self-presentation and another language practices. It can be accepted that the more students afraid the more errors they produce and make their performance to be the bad one.

There are various specific causes make the students' having bad speaking performance. Those causes such as low proficiency, afraid of negative feedbacks whether from teacher of their friends and low motivation to learn ([Liu & Tarnopolsky, 2019](#); [Tsiplakides, 2009](#); [Yahya, 2013](#)). Low proficiency on speaking skill of course makes the students difficult to show a performance well because they are not able to deliver the message in a proper language. The fear of negative feedbacks can sometimes prevent the students from performing in their best condition. They are afraid that they can receive negative feedbacks caused by errors they made. Receiving negative feedback means also receiving low score, this actually makes them afraid. While the worst part is having low motivation, it can lead them into having low proficiency since they do not want to improve their skills further. They are afraid to receive negative feedbacks when they perform. Thus, those reasons come up in the surface and trigger the students to have speaking anxiety.

There is an explanation about how speaking anxiety influence speaking performance. Anxiety is related to adrenaline. According to [Rector, et. al \(2005\)](#), when someone is in a danger or a certain occasion which leads his/her into an action to safe his/her life. On the occasion, body sends signals to brain and the brain responds the signal by producing adrenaline. The adrenaline gives alert feelings, energy and power to fight or avoid the danger. At the same time, there are also negative effects of adrenaline such as nervous, increasing heart beat rate, tense, sweaty, trembling, and hard to breathe. Adrenaline contributes to the physical effect of anxiety. Remember that anxiety affecting cognitive, physical and behavior, later he explains for example, in a test, that anxiety affects cognitive in people'

thoughts. It obligates someone to do the best, not fail test and do no errors. It also affects the physical representing in the form of the symptom of strain. At last, it is behavioral effect, they want to avoid studying or avoid studying many materials fast either during a short time till it ends.

Anxiety is a response of a body when it is obligated to do the best, whether it is in an important event and meaningful for his life for example, job interview or test in order to make himself safe. In relation, during joining the speaking test, the adrenaline makes the students always look for the best result. It is important for them to prove their abilities, to get the best score and to make no mistakes. On the other hand, not all students are mastering speaking aspects well. Their expectation to get the best score is not linier to their speaking aspects mastery. The adrenaline, which is affecting the physical, leads the students into strain reflected on their body language such as sweaty, trembling, tense and another movements, then these things make their body language not natural and awkward ([Rector et.al, 2005](#)). The last effect, behavior, they may be decided to stop studying or study too hard in the end. These make their performance on speaking are just not natural and less optimal. In sum, the speaking anxiety affects the speaking performance, since the students are disturbed by their anxiety. It results of being less focus on what should be done in a speaking test appropriately.

The study shows that there is a significant strong negative correlation among the students' speaking performance and their speaking anxiety. There are several causes of speaking anxiety on students such as having low proficiency, facing fear of getting negative feedbacks either from teacher or their friends and having low motivation to learn. This is in line with [Anandari \(2015\)](#) showing evident that the students already have felt anxious at the time they have to perform a monolog-speaking in front of the class. Besides, the speaking anxiety occurs when the students are facing test, in this case, speaking test. When facing the speaking test, they can be obsessed to not produce any errors, show the symptom of strain, which is the negative effects of adrenaline so their performance becomes unnatural and causes a bad behavior, such as stop studying or studying hard. Thus, there is a significant correlation between EFL students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance in the study and then H_a is accepted

CONCLUSION

The study finds that there is a significant correlation among the students' speaking performance and their anxiety. Moreover, the study also find that the correlation is negative and those two variables are strongly correlated. Anxiety is caused by several problems, such as low proficiency, afraid of negative feedbacks whether from teacher or their friends and low motivation to learn. These problems prevent them to get the best result on speaking test. Anxiety is also a response of the body for dangerous or important moments. Speaking test can be seen as important moments. As a response of the moment, the body produces adrenaline, the side effect of adrenaline triggers the anxiety which is affecting cognitive, physical and behavior. In general, the students are disrupted by those problems so that they cannot achieve the best result on their speaking test.

The present study finds that there is a strong negative correlation among the students' speaking performance and their anxiety. The next research may be focus on the problem solving. It may focus on finding the proper way to decrease the students' speaking anxiety depends on their characteristics, the characteristics of science class students (IPA students) or social class students (IPS students) for example. Different major classes may require different method to decrease their speaking anxiety. Thus, it should be analyzed more.

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