English Department Students' Learning Strategies to Overcome Speaking Anxiety

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Abstrak

Dalam mempelajari Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing, siswa harus menguasai 4 keterampilan yaitu mendengarkan, membaca, berbicara, dan menulis. Berbicara dianggap sebagai keterampilan paling penting. Namun, dalam belajar berbicara, siswa dilaporkan memiliki kecemasan dalam bahasa (Tanveer. 2007). Dengan demikian, siswa dilaporkan memiliki strategi belajar untuk mengatasi kecemasan mereka. Penelitian ini menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara siswa dan strategi belajar mereka untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dalam proses pengumpulan data dan menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Studi ini menemukan bahwa ada beberapa situasi yang mengarah pada kecemasan berbicara siswa seperti prosedur kelas, keyakinan siswa, keyakinan guru, persepsi diri, lingkungan sosial, kesalahan di lingkungan sosial, pemahaman topik, dan perbedaan budaya. Temuan lain dari penelitian ini adalah strategi pembelajaran yang diterapkan oleh siswa seperti strategi memori, strategi kognitif, strategi kompensasi, strategi metakognitif, strategi afektif, dan strategi sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Kecemasan Berbicara, Strategi Belajar.*

Abstract

As learning English as Foreign Language, students have to master 4 skills which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Speaking considered being the most important skill among other skills. However, in learning speaking students are reported to have language anxiety. Thus, students are reported to have learning strategies to overcome their anxiety (Marwan , 2007). This study investigates the factors that provoke students' speaking anxiety and their learning strategies to overcome speaking anxiety. This study used qualitative methods in the process of collecting data and answering research questions. This study found that there are some situations that lead to students' speaking anxiety such as classroom procedure, student's beliefs, teacher's beliefs, self-perceptions, social environment, errors in society, topic understanding, and cultural differences. Another finding of this study is learning strategies applied by students such as memory strategies, cognitive.

Keywords: *Speaking Anxiety, Learning Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

In this modern life, learning foreign language is important. It will affect people's lives, careers, and perspectives. However, learning a foreign language requires complicated process (Kamali, 2012). As learning English as a foreign language (EFL), there are four skills that students have to master, listening, reading, speaking and writing. As English is an international language, English is used to communicate in all over the world. Oral communication is one of the important skills in English as the foreign language that students have to master. According to Fariadian et al. (2014), oral communication abilities are important tools in our lives. All human interactions are in a form of communication.

In the area of ESL, speaking is regarded as one of the four important skills since it is used to communicate and it needs to be developed to improve students' communication in target language. Speaking in the classroom language is a process where they communicate with each other to state their meaning and their knowledge (Bakar et al., 2013). However, Fariadian, et al. (2014) stated that speaking might be more important skill than other English skills and it is a common that speaking is harder than other skills.

However, in learning English as foreign language, students are reported to have language anxiety. As stated by Marwan (2007) that most EFL learners are experienced a certain degree of anxiety. As stated by Karatas et al. (2016), in nowadays foreign language

classrooms procedures require students to perform orally in front of the class or participate in group discussions. Tanveer (2007) stated that those kinds of activities may make students feel anxious speaking in the foreign language. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) indicate that foreign language anxiety may affect students' oral comprehension in the classroom. Anxious students are reported to be always moving around the class during learning process, felt left behind, and need longer time to study. And, the oral production of anxious students is reported to be smaller than the relaxed ones. These may lead to the image that anxious students are incapable foreign language communicator (Macintyre & Gardner, 1991).

Based on a study by Hembree (1988), generally, language anxiety focused on cognitive, affective, and behavioral approaches. Cognitive approach dealing with students' thought of disturbances occurs in the classroom. The affective approach dealing with emotional therapy attempts to change the negative feeling of language learning. The behavioral approach assumes that anxiety occurs due to poor academic skills.

Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) designed a typology of strategies to overcome language anxiety consist of preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation types. Based on their study in Japan, they found that those strategies are able to reduce students' anxiety and lead them to developed 70 basic tactics associate in five strategy types. Preparation strategies (i.e. studying hard, trying to obtain good summaries, lecture notes) is frequently used by Japanese students who experience high level of anxiety. Relaxation strategy (i.e. take a deep breathe, trying to calm down) associated with emotional arousal aims to ease body tension. Positive thinking (i.e. trying to enjoy the tension) and peer-seeking strategies (i.e. asking for friends' help) help to solve problematic thought related to language learning. Their typology of strategies is similar to Language Learning Strategies (LLS) by Oxford (1990) proved that LLS can reduce students' anxiety and its process occurs psychologically inside students' mind.

Moreover, it is reported that students have various learning strategies to overcome their speaking anxiety. Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as students' certain action to make learning process, easier, faster, more effective, more self-directed, more enjoyable, and more transferable to the new learning process. In other words, learning strategies are actions taken by students to understand materials in learning process. This definition explains that learning strategies are tools to achieve goals, problem to solve, and task to accomplish

Learning strategies can help students to become independent learners so that they can learn foreign language effectively. Students' autonomy will automatically promote if they can understand the importance of LLS and equipped themselves with these strategies. The learning autonomy may boost students' desire for learning when they have their own learning strategies.

Learning strategies are reported essential to language learning since it is used to activate students' involvement and it is considered important to develop oral communication competence (Oxford, 1990). In this area, learning strategies will help students actively participate in communication activities because development of communicative competence requires such an active interaction among students (Oxford, 1990).

Another importance of LLS is that it encouraging students' self-direction learning. Self-direction itself is essential for students because they will have situation without the teacher guiding them in learning language. Thus, self-direction is important to activate the development of ability in a new language (Oxford, 1990).

According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies are easier to teach and modify through strategy training which will guide students to be more conscious of strategy use. Strategy training will be more useful when students know why and when they have to use specific strategies, how to use those kinds of strategies, and how to administer it to new situations.

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Oxford (1990) has proved that language learning strategies can reduce speaking anxiety. Therefore, this research was conducted in order to answer following research questions.

1. What are factors that contribute in students' foreign language speaking anxiety?
2. What learning strategies that are used by students to overcome foreign language speaking anxiety?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to explore speaking anxiety factors that provoke students speaking anxiety. Likewise, another purpose of this study is to find learning strategies that used by English Department students to overcome speaking anxiety. Moreover, the results of this study were interpreted in a form of description. Therefore, this study used qualitative method to find the data.

The subject of this study was 16 students of Academic Speaking Class D in English Department UNESA, In order to gather the data, the researcher used observation field notes, questionnaire, and interview instrument.

First, the researcher observed the teaching learning process and situation inside the classroom that might provoke students speaking anxiety. The observation was conducted twice. In the field notes instrument, it provides both teacher and students behavior when the teaching learning process occurred. When conducting the observation, the researcher acted as a passive researcher which only observes the activities without take any parts in the teaching learning process.

For the questionnaire, there were 4 sections consist of students' identity, students' English comprehension backgrounds, students' speaking anxiety factors, and students' learning strategies. The questionnaires were distributed to the Academic Speaking Class D to be fulfilled. There are only 16 students willing to participate in this study. While for the interview, the researcher chose 5 students for being the participant. There are 8 questions asked to the participants.

After the data was collected, the next step was analyzed it. First, The researcher coding the data from field notes into Tanveer's (2007) student anxiety factors criteria such as self-perceptions, students' beliefs, teachers' beliefs, classroom procedure, and social environment, errors in society, social status, cultural differences, and gender. While the data from questionnaire were coding based on both Tanveer's (2007) anxiety factors and Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies such as memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. And the data from audio recording interview were transcribed manually without any changes to avoid preconception in interpreting data later and after that, the researcher coding it based on both Tanveer's (2007) anxiety factors and Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies.

Next, The researcher explained the factors of speaking anxiety that they experienced and learning strategies that they used in order to overcome speaking anxiety in a descriptive way.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSIONS

The result showed that there are 9 students stated that they feel anxious in academic speaking class. The three others felt more anxious in public speaking class and there was one of them feeling anxious in both classes. It is also showed that there was only 1 out of 16 students who did not feel anxious in speaking English.

While other 7 students felt anxious and the 8 other sometimes felt anxious to speak in English.

English Department Students' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Factors

The result of observation showed that there was no sign from the teacher's behavior that made students anxious. There are some things that researcher note from the first day of the observation. The teacher used both English and Indonesian in explaining the materials. She seemed like explaining the materials as she explains to her friends because she really enjoyed her time explaining the materials and her students seemed enjoy listen to their teacher. When there were some students coming late, she let them come to the class without asking them why he/she coming late and she continued the lesson smoothly. Most of the time, the students only listen to her explanation quietly.

From the second observation, the researcher notices that the teacher was wise. She complementing first before criticizing. While criticize the presenters, she uses appropriate words. She was being fair to all of her students. She let the last group to present their presentation after having some consultation with the teacher as well as the other groups.

After conducted two observations in academic speaking D class, researcher found that there was no teacher's activities or class situation that provoke speaking anxiety. When there was a presentation, both teacher and audiences quietly pay attention to the presenter.

Besides the result found from observation, researcher also found some speaking anxiety factors that experienced by the students from questionnaires and interview techniques. The factors are concluded as follows:

a. Classroom procedure

The results showed from the questionnaires proved that there were 4 students who felt anxious when they need to speak in English in a formal way and when they have to do an individual speaking task. While, the others felt anxious when they have to do an individual presentation (12), public speaking (7), oral skits activity (3), give a sudden response (6), give a response voluntarily (4), group discussion (2), a discussion in a group consist of 2-6 members (2), and a discussion in a group over 6 members (2).

Beside the results found from questionnaire, researcher also did some interview to the students. The data showed that some interviewees explained the reason of academic speaking class as the most anxious speaking class in English department UNESA. According to the interviewees, academic speaking class that applied a formal speaking environment in which formal and strict

learning environment are one of the students' speaking anxiety factors. Doing an impromptu speech is another speaking anxiety factors agreed by all interviewees. In impromptu speech students are asked to It was because they have no time to prepare their speech.

b. Student's beliefs

The results from the questionnaire showed that beliefs such as English students must have perfect accuracy, pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and proficiency lead them to the speaking anxiety. There were 10 students who answered that fluency makes them anxious. There were 7 students answered that grammar and proficiency are the other things that made them anxious. There were 5 students stated that afraid of producing incorrect accuracy made them anxious. Incorrect pronunciation was another thing that makes 6 students anxious.

The data from interview showed that thinking about grammar, accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation make them more anxious. All of the interviewees stated that whenever they thinking of having perfect grammar, accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation made them more anxious.

First student said that he surely anxious whenever he thought about having a good a grammar, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. While the second student felt anxious when he afraid of having grammatically wrong, he did not really think about having a good fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. The third student said that she felt anxious when her performance did not reach her expectation which was having a good grammar, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation. As well as the fourth and fifth students, they felt anxious when they expect of having a good grammar, fluency, accuracy, and pronunciation.

c. Teacher's beliefs

From the questionnaire and interview showed that when the teacher act as a judge, create uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom, intimidate the student, and being unfriendly to them are reported by English department student as one of their speaking anxiety factors.

The data from the questionnaire showed that there were 5 students who anxious when lecturer creates uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom makes them anxious. 4 students stated that lecturer acts as a judge make them more anxious. Most of the students answered that intimidating lecturer make them anxious to do a speaking task.

Meanwhile, the data from interview showed that all of students explained that how their lecturer acts when they are perform a speaking task has something to do with their anxiety. Three of them explained that when

their lecturer straightly focuses on them make them anxious.

d. Self-perceptions

As mentioned by one of the interviewee that someone who does not like to speak in a formal way lead him to the speaking anxiety. Another perception such as afraid of being called as a 'dumb' students and getting bad score also provoked them to the speaking anxiety.

e. Social environment

From the results of questionnaire and interview showed that environment which provides less exposure and limited opportunities to practice lead the students to speaking anxiety factors. From the questionnaire, there are 3 students stated lack of exposure made them anxious and limited practice opportunities made 7 students anxious. Other environment such as the audience being noisy and unfamiliar environment or situation made them anxious.

f. Errors in society

Afraid of getting negative responses from teacher and students are reported to be one of students' speaking anxiety factors. As proved by the data from questionnaire, that there are 4 students afraid of getting negative responses.

g. Topic understanding

Another anxiety factors that mostly happened to the student was if they cannot understand the topic. From the interview, interviewees explain that having someone journal to be the source of their presentation is hard because they barely understand it. However, if they choose their own presentation topic it is considered as having less speaking anxiety. Some interviewees explained that this factor contribute in their speaking anxiety. It is because they had some difficulties in understanding the content

h. Cultural differences

Situation such as speaking to strangers contribute in English Department students' speaking anxiety factors. As proved by data from questionnaire that speaking to strangers make 1 student anxious

English Department Students' Learning Strategies to Overcome Speaking Anxiety Factors

Oxford (1990) defined learning strategies as students' certain action to make learning process, easier, faster, more effective, more self-directed, more enjoyable, and more transferable to the new learning process. In other words, learning strategies are actions taken by students to understand materials in learning process. This definition explains that learning strategies are tools to achieve goals, problem to solve, task to accomplish (Oxford, 1990). In conclusion, language learning strategies are tools used by EFL students to learn English as foreign language easier,

faster, and enjoyable in fun learning environment to accomplish goals based on their own ways. More, it can help students to become independent learners that learn foreign language effectively. Students' autonomy will automatically promote if they can understand the importance of language learning strategies and equipped themselves with these strategies.

Learning strategies are reported essential to language learning since it is used to activate students' involvement and it is considered important to develop oral communication competence (Oxford, 1990). In this area, learning strategies will help students actively participate in communication activities because development of communicative competence requires such an active interaction among students (Oxford, 1990). Another importance of language learning strategies is that it encouraging students' self-direction learning. Self-direction itself is essential for students because they will have situation without the teacher guiding them in learning language. Thus, self-direction is important to activate the development of ability in a new language (Oxford, 1990).

According to Oxford (1990) learning strategies are easier to teach and modify through strategy training which will guide students to be more conscious of strategy use. Strategy training will be more useful when students know why and when they have to use specific strategies, how to use those kinds of strategies, and how to administer it to new situations. Moreover she defined some learning strategies that can be applied by the students.

a. Memory Strategies

Oxford (1993) stated that memory strategies are techniques that specifically help learners to keep new information's in memory then use it later. Memory strategies have been used since a long time ago. She explained that activities such as creating mental strategies, applying images and sound, reviewing well, and employing action are considered as the memory strategies.

In order to overcome speaking anxiety, some students said that they would review and read their notes or outline right before going on stage. Even though the questionnaire result showed that there were only 1 students who overviewed the materials; the interview results showed that All interviewees said that they did material or outline reviewing while waiting for their turn to deliver the speech.

The first student said that he would re-read his outline and tries to relax himself while waiting his turn. The second turn said that he would try to remember his outline because he tries not to bring any notes while delivering the speech. The third student said that she

would re-read the material over and over. As well as the fourth student, she said that she would re-read the outline and material over and over. The fifth student said that she would understanding what topic that going to be delivered and she would remembering the points of the topic.

b. Cognitive Strategies

According to Oxford (1990), cognitive strategies are important in language learning. It involve manipulation or transformation directly (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). These strategies are reported to be the most common learning strategy used by the students. She explained that there are some activities considered in cognitive strategies such as practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output

Moreover, students were shown that they use practicing strategy by practicing in natural setting and practicing with sounds. The questionnaire proved that almost all participants practice before having speaking task. There were 15 out of 16 students. From the interview, some students explain that they would have some rehearsal in front the mirror before and record their rehearsal. In the interview session, they explained that they would repeat their rehearsal silently while waiting their turn to be on stage.

There were some of them who did a speaking practice in front of the mirror. The first student said that he always rehearse his speech in front of the mirror before doing a speaking task. As well as the second student, she also has rehearsal in front of the mirror before doing a speaking task. However, the third student said that she would have a rehearsal in front of the mirror if she had to do a serious speaking task.

c. Compensation Strategies

These strategies are enhancing learner to use target language for either comprehension or production. It helps students to overcome target language in four skills (Oxford, 1990). She explained that activities such as guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations are included in this strategy.

These finding proved that students used overcoming limitation strategy by selecting the topic and getting some friends' help. As it was mentioned in the previous part that topic became one of the speaking anxiety; to cope this kind of anxiety, if they can choose their own topic, the first they would do is selecting the topic that they know best. From the interview, research found that to overcome their limitation, student used mime or gestures as a way to cover his nervousness. Also, there were also some students that need help from their friend.

From the questionnaire, it showed that there are 8 students who selecting the topic that they are capable

with. The interview result clarified that another most common speaking anxiety factors was the topic. Most interviewees said that they had to fully understand the topic so that they can deliver the speech perfectly.

The first student said that he would look for a topic that he understands. The second student also said that to be able to deliver the speech smoothly, she would study the topic. The third student, she said that the first thing to do to prepare a speaking task would be mastering the topic, then understanding the content of the presentation, and after that she think about what aspect that would be asked by the audiences. And the last preparation that she would prepare was the formal outfit.

d. Metacognitive Strategies

These strategies are essential for successful language learning. Metacognitive strategies require students to seeking for practice opportunities outside classroom. Those who seriously want to be able to communicate with target language must look for practice opportunities as much as possible. This strategy involves activities such as centering learning, arranging and planning learning, and evaluating learning.

This study found that the students applied all activities in these strategies. It was reported that students make an outline, make a small note, make a speech organizing, and make a speech summary before doing a speaking task. Students were also reported preparing the materials used few days before.

From the questionnaire, it showed that there were 9 students make an outline, 8 students make speech organization, 12 students make a small note, and 3 students make a speech summary. Also, 5 students made a schedule to prepare their speech.

From the interview, students clarified that Most of the interviewees were making an organization. All of them said that they need to organize what should be included in their speech by making a small note or outline.

The first student said that he made a small note of what being spoken, synchronized the materials with the speech, and if it is a group task, he would synchronize his speech with the other members. The second said that he made a note of what being spoken from the beginning until the end of the speech. As well as the other students, they said that they made a note before doing a speaking task.

Another preparation that some interviewees did was planning for a language task. All of them said that they need a few days before the D-day they do a speaking task.

The first student said that she prepared her speech few days before the D-day of the performance. She would prepare it gradually. For the example, she would read the first page of the material on the first day, the second day the next page of material, and so on. The second student would prepare an outline few days before and on the day before the D-day, she would have serious preparation such as rehearsing over and over.

In terms of overcoming a speaking anxiety factor that is giving a sudden response, students were reported to overviewing and linking materials given with their background knowledge(s). As mentioned in the part 4.1.1. English Department Students Speaking Anxiety, that impromptu speech in which students have to do a speaking task spontaneously became the most provoking anxiety factors. Dealing with that speaking task, most of interviewees mentioned that they linking the speaking material with their own background knowledge(s) and tried to make a short outline. Also, there was an interviewee who paraphrased some knowledge he knows when he suddenly got blank.

After record the speaking rehearsal, students were reported to evaluate the recordings to see which part that needs further improvement. There was a student who did a speaking practice by record her own voice then she would evaluate it.

e. Affective Strategies

The term affective relates to emotions, motivations, attitudes, and values. Negative feeling may obstruct target language skills improvement. However, positive feeling may improve their target language skills. By applying this strategy, students will have control over their self (Oxford, 1990). Activities such as lowering anxiety, self-encouragement, and taking emotional temperature are considered in this strategy.

Besides doing written and spoken strategies, students also reported doing relaxation strategies. From the results of questionnaire and interview, students showed various relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, listening to music, meditating, and dzikir.

The data from questionnaire showed that, some students doing relaxation such as taking a deep breath (9) and listening music (3). From the interview session, interviewees clarified that all them did a relaxation. And in doing relaxation, all interviewees had their own method. There was a student who tried to relax by walking around and dzikir as his meditation method. There was also a student who doing a relaxation by taking a deep breath.

Besides, students also reported to making positive statements for themselves. The questionnaire result showed that there were 10 students suggesting themselves. There were also some interviewees tried to relax by suggesting themself. The first student said that she always suggest herself to relax, to take it calm, and said that this performance would be over soon. The second student said that she always suggest herself that

the performance would be just like the rehearsal in front of the mirror. There were some students stated that discussing their feeling with friends help them release their speaking anxiety. The result from the questionnaire showed that there 2 students stated that this strategies helped them overcoming their anxiety.

f. Social Strategy

According to Oxford (1990), language requires someone's social behavior because it involves communication with others. The communication itself occurs between people. Thus, strategies dealing with social aspect are important in this process. There are three activities included in this strategy, which are asking question, cooperating with others, and empathizing with others.

These finding showed that students only used cooperating with others as their strategy to overcome the speaking anxiety. Students are reported to have some rehearsal with their friends when it comes to a group presentation task. The interview results showed that there were some students who needed help from their friends. They were asked their friend to looked after them when they rehearsing. And in this academic speaking class, there was a group presentation task. When students had to do this task, they always practice together with their group members.

The first student said that he would synchronize the speech with his friends if it is a group task. The second student said that he would ask his friend to take a look after him rehearsing his speech. The third student said that she rarely practice with her friends unless it is a group task. As well as the fourth student, she asked her friends' help when she suddenly got blank in a group presentation while in an individual presentation, she would prepare her speech seriously since no one would help her on the stage.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research showed that students have several factors that lead them to the speaking anxiety. Based on the data, the factors are classroom procedure, student's beliefs, teacher's beliefs, self-perceptions, social environment, errors in society, topic understanding, and cultural differences. Otherwise, gender, and social status, power, identity do not affect students' speaking anxiety. It is because students are likely affected by situations that going on around them in which make them uncomfortable while doing speaking tasks.

Another finding of this study is the learning strategies applied by students to overcome their speaking anxiety. Furthermore, the result showed that students are applied strategies stated included memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies,

metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. Though they did not applied all learning strategies provided.

SUGGESTIONS

After conducting this research, researcher hopes that the findings of this research will inform teachers and students that there are some situations inside the classroom that may lead to a speaking anxiety. However, there are also some strategies provided that can be an alternative for the student to overcome their speaking anxiety. In which, researcher hope that teachers will aware of that kind of situations so that they may avoid creating such situations; for the students as the audiences, researcher hope that they may avoid creating situations that make their friend as the presenter feel anxious; and for the students as the presenter, there are several strategies provided that can be chose based on their needs and preferences though they do not need to applied all of it.

Furthermore, based on the results of this research, it is found that it is possible to conduct further research related to speaking anxiety factors and learning strategies to overcome it. It is because this researcher was only discussing about speaking anxiety factors. There is no explanation about how those situations lead to speaking anxiety. There is also no explanation about how those strategies work in helping students overcome their speaking anxiety. Hence, it is necessary for the future researcher to conduct that kind of researches.

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