

# **SPEAKING ANXIETY OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF DARMA AGUNG MEDAN**

## **Oleh:**

Corry Ester Margaret Siagian<sup>1)</sup>  
Jenny SolitaDuha<sup>2)</sup>  
Universitas DarmaAgung, Medan <sup>1,2)</sup>

## **E-mail:**

[coysmart@yahoo.co.id](mailto:coysmart@yahoo.co.id)<sup>1)</sup>  
[jenisolita75@gmail.com](mailto:jenisolita75@gmail.com)<sup>2)</sup>

## **ABSTRACT**

*The lecturer dominant proportion and students' passivity in the classroom caused by many reason, students' speaking anxiety is one of the main reason. Feeling ashamed to speak out their mind is a matter of the most of English learners' problems from time to time. Finding out the factors contributes to students reluctantly talking in English is worth searching in order to create a successful English speaking learning in the future. This present study aimed at investigating the speaking anxiety reasons of english department students of University of Darma Agung. To do so, the researcher asked 30 students to be participated in this qualitative study. They were required to fill out questionnaire and to be participated in an interview. This study revealed that the anxiety experienced by the students are due to three main reasons: 1) being afraid of bad respond; 2) feeling nervous and not dare to talk and 3) feeling afraid of making mistake, which are followed by other minor reasons for each main reason. The most occurred minor reason is students' lack of vocabularies.*

**Keywords:** *English, speaking, anxiety*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Dominasi dosen dan kepasifan mahasiswa dalam kelas disebabkan oleh banyak factor, salah satu factor kunci penghambat partisipasi mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran berbicara bahasa Inggris dalam proses belajar mengajar adalah ketakutan mahasiswa dalam berbicara menggunakan bahasa Inggris. Tidak berani mengungkapkan pemikirannya dalam bahasa target merupakan permasalahan bagi pembelajar berbicara dari waktu ke waktu. Menemukan factor-faktor yang berkontribusi mengakibatkan mahasiswa takut berkata-kata dalam bahasa Inggris merupakan hal yang penting untuk dilakukan guna merancang pembelajaran berbicara yang berhasil. Penelitian kualitatif yang bertujuan untuk menyelidiki alasan yang menyebabkan ketakutan mahasiswa jurusan sastra Inggris Universitas Darma Agung dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris ini melibatkan 30 ( tiga puluh ) mahasiswa. Proses pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan kuesioner dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat 3 alasan yang dapat*

dikelompokkan sebagai alasan mayor yang mengakibatkan mahasiswa takut berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris yakni ketakutan akan respon yang buruk, perasaan gugup dan tidak berani berbicara dalam bahasa target, dan ketakutan akan membuat kesalahan, dimana setiap alasan mayor memiliki alasan minor yang menyertainya. Alasan minor terbanyak adalah kurangnya kosakata.

**Kata Kunci:** gugup, berbicara, Bahasa Inggris

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Being dared to speak their target language is the dream of every English language learner. Unfortunately, feeling shy to talk in English still become a reality not only in the informal event but also happened in a formal activity such as in the classroom interaction, in an international forum or even in an English speaking forum activity. Feeling ashamed to speak out their mind is a matter of the most of English learners' problems from time to time.

Speaking reluctantly happened to the students of English Department in University of Darma Agung, Medan, Indonesia. Instead of the students, the lecturer plays the main role of the classroom interaction. The students are almost keep silent and preferred quietly sit down and listen to the lecturer's talk. It can be concluded that there is no adequate and normal interaction between the lecturer and the students and the students among themselves. The students just produce one or two utterances in the target language and then talk in the native languages because of some reasons, and speaking anxiety is also the factor contributed to the students speaking

reluctantly. That is why the lecturer talked much in the class room and consumed mostly the time provided in their subject. It makes this condition is interesting to be studied, to fulfill the aim of this research is to investigate why the students are look nervous when taking the exam and most of them are still stumbling when they have to speak English spontaneously. The performance of the majority of the subjects revealed that they never use English out of the classroom, even when they did their speaking' tasks, they tended to speak in their mother tongue. The reasons of the students to do so are that they can not produce correct sentences due to their lack of English vocabularies. The procedure implemented in the classroom was also very controlled by lecturer. The communication in the classroom was dominated by the lecturer and two up to three students. On the observation, the percentages of teacher talk, student talk and silent time were very much different.

### The Problem of the Research

Based on the previous elaboration and explanation, the problem of this study is: Why are the students of English department experienced the speaking anxiety?

### The Objectives of the Research

In referring the above research problem, the objective of

this research is to find out the reasons of the English Department students' speaking anxiety.

### **The Scope of the Research**

Due to limitation of resources and for the sake of accuracy and reliability of research results, this research focused on the student's speaking performances in the classroom.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **SPEAKING**

#### **Definition of Speaking**

Slamet and Saddhono (2012) says that listening and speaking are complementary and they are contributed to oral communication such as talks, questions and answers, discussion, interview, and so on. In doing those activities, the one who speak and the one who listen can change the role easily and smoothly, from the listener to be a speaker and vice versa.

#### **Factors Affecting the Students in English Speaking Skills Learning**

##### **Teachers-Related Factors**

It is worth mentioning that teachers-related factors affect students' English speaking ability apart from many factors that contribute to teaching and learning speaking skills. Chot (2015) believes that the teachers are not quite aware of the desire of their students in improving the students' English pronunciation and the challenges that

the students confront with in communication.

##### **Students-Related Factors**

Though students know the significance of involving themselves in the class based activities, however they rely heavily on the teacher for creating communication opportunities so that they get chance to use target language in the class (Ramirez, 2010). Students feel hesitated to speak inside or outside of the class in their target language. They feel anxiety while it comes to using English out of class room, and in other way, they are supposed to involve in teaching and learning activities in various ways.

##### **Learning-Environment Related Factors**

The place for learning the language are the multiple physical venues, cultures, and contexts in which students learn. It is also incorporates the particular culture of class or school. How the students treat each other and the way teachers design and organize educational facilities to assist learning that is contributed to the positive environment are the most important characteristics that involved in students' interaction. If the learning environment is conducive, the students will elaborate their ideas, views, concepts and feelings without being afraid of committing mistakes. The environment managed by the lecturer should be a place while the students could also keep on carrying out tasks effectively. Developing a natural environment for learning with less stress and incorporating

language for practical and real situations are recommended by Chot (2015) in order to help the development of meaningful discourse and the learners have a possible opportunity to acquire discourse skills.

### **English Speaking Anxiety**

Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, (1986) described English speaking as a discrete compound of self-acuity, attitudes, beliefs, viewpoints, outlooks, feelings, approaches, thoughts, behaviors, sentiments and emotions concerning classroom English learning which is cropping up from the individuality and eccentricity of the process of English learning as foreign language.

Elkhafaifi (2005) established through his research that nervous beginners have a propensity to stay away from intentional replies and input in verbal and spoken activities and behaviors while shunning communicating in English within the classrooms. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) believe that English learning and speaking nervousness is the sensation of worry, stress and uneasiness particularly linked with L2 (Second language) backgrounds, which include writing, listening and speaking. Ying (2008) defined that English speaking unease causes due to the following six main factors which include (i) Personal and interpersonal factor, (ii) Speaker viewpoint regarding English language learning, (iii) Instructor or tutor conviction regarding English speaking anxiety, (iv) Tutor-beginner connections, (v) Procedures of classroom procedures, and (vi) English language testing factor.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Method**

To get deep understanding about the problem being discussed and valid and reliable data, in this research, the writer uses qualitative method. There are two different techniques for collecting data for this research. They were questionnaire, and deep interview.

### **Questionnaires**

The researcher asked the students to fill in the prepared questionnaires which aim to identify their situation and collect their opinion about speaking in front of the classroom in order to find the reason that caused the students of English department of University of Darma Agung (UDA)'s speaking anxiety.

### **Interview**

The researcher carries out an informal conversation interview, which is spontaneous and loosely structured interview. Besides, she also does a guided interview that is when the interviewer enters the session, she brought a plan to explore topics about students speaking skills and performances and to ask specific open-ended questions to the interviewers.

### **Location and Place**

This research is conducted at Faculty of Letters in University of

Darma Agung. It took a year starting from January up to December 2019.

### Targeted Clients

The targeted clients of this research are the second students of English Department of Faculty of Letters at University of Darma Agung.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### FINDINGS

There are some factors affecting the students' anxiousness. Based on the interview and the questioners conducted, the researcher found that the students' English speaking hindered by : 1) interlocutor's unwillingness to speak English due to their lack of vocabularies, 2) feeling afraid of having insufficient vocabularies, 3) stage fright or feeling nervous to talk in front of other students 4) a sense of shame of being called as showing off students, 5) inability to comprehend the lecturer's and other

interlocutor's talk because of their lack of vocabularies 6) fear of having errors in pronunciation, grammar and vocabularies 7) the absence of speaking partners, 8) insufficient exposure to practice speaking in variety of contexts, 9) feeling ashamed to be corrected in front of others because of their burden as an English department student who should have been able to compile words well.( see table 2 below)

It is revealed that there are three main reasons which are the reasons that can be grouped as the leading reasons for students' English speaking anxiety. It is followed by kinds of reasons which in this study called minor reasons that contributed for each main reason. The prime and the latter are the group of reasons which caused the students handicaps in speaking the target language. This study also found that the main reasons of students' speaking anxiety could be categorized with the sub category of anxiousness of speaking.

**Table 1.** Students' Speaking Anxiety

STUDENT'S SPEAKING ANXIETY			
Student's speaking anxiety Main Reasons (Sub Category Student's speaking anxiety )	Feeling afraid of bad responds	Feeling nervous or not being dare to talk	Feeling Afraid of making error
Minor Reasons Sub Category's reasons	Being teased as a show of students	The introvert character	Lack of vocabularies
	Being shamed for having a correction before the peers	Insufficient / lack of vocabularies	Afraid of making mispronounce word
	Afraid of being misunderstood	Low Exposure to be dare to speak English	Afraid of making incorrect sentence/ grammar
		Not joining a trusted speaking community	
		Limited time in	

		exposing life to speaking English	
		No partner to speak	
		Feeling out of the member of exclusive fluent students group	

From this study it can be revealed that the reasons of the English Department students speaking anxiety are grouped mainly as follows:

#### **Feeling afraid of bad response**

It is revealed that the students felt intimidated by the listener(s) and this fearful of lecturer and audience bad responds caused the students' anxiety to across their messages. Felling afraid teased by others if they found their inability to comprehend the lecturer's and other interlocutor's talk due to their lack of vocabularies is also another factor contributed to their fear. In line with that, feeling ashamed to be corrected in front of

others because of their burden as the English department students who should have been able to compile words well and a sense of shame; fear of being called as showing off students prevents the students dare to speak. They also feel afraid because they feel ashamed to be laughed at by friends if they are wrong. They are not afraid of their lecturer to be angry if they got wrong because their lecturer always give supportive feedback, but they are afraid of bad responds of their friends after they got the corrective feedback from their lecturer in front of their friends.

#### **Feeling Nervous and not being dare to talk**

**Table.2** English Speaking Anxiety Symptoms done by the students

<b>Students reactions before and while having speaking test/ class performance</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Se</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>NA</b>
Do not enjoy speaking in front of others	2	0	5	20	3
Feeling nervous before and / or while speaking	2	1	15	10	2
Feeling afraid of committing the wrong words/tenses	1	2	13	14	
Fear of lecturer and audience bad responds	1	2	10	17	
Suddenly forget what to say	2	1	10	17	
Feeling stressful before and at the day of speaking test	1	1	9	19	
Knees began shaking	6	2	8	12	2
Prevent eye contact with the audience	4	2	9	15	

Having voiced quivered	10	5	10	5	
Uncontrol eyelid movement	14	3	9	3	1
Trembling legs	26	0	2	2	
cold hands in a sudden time	10	2	6	12	
Racing heartbeat	4	3	6	17	

**N:never; Se:seldom; S:sometimes; A: always; NA: Not Answering**

From the table 2 shown there are at least 25 students who are not being brave to speak ( being nervous before and while speaking), not being confident to speak or not enjoy speaking in front of others (25 students), 'not used to talking in class' (25 students), 'being afraid of speaking'(27 students), being afraid of making errors (27 students difficult to express words or sentences'). Racing heartbeat(23 students), cold hands in a sudden time(18 students), Trembling legs (4 students), Uncontrol eyelid movement (12 students), Having voiced quivered(15 students), prevent eye contact with the audience (24 students), Knees began shaking (20 students), Feeling stressful before and at the day of speaking test (28 students). It can be concluded that the students speaking performance influenced by their speaking anxiety such as being afraid of making error and feeling nervous. Some of them said that they already had the answer in their mind but then because of being nervous, suddenly they forgot what to say and what to answer. Others said that they didn't know the grammar and the vocabularies used to talk or to answer the questions given or to respond the topic discussed. The lack of linguistic competence especially

vocabularies and grammar are the students problems and English language speaking anxiety is one of the causes of the lack of students' speaking performances.

Other nervousness or anxiety symptoms as a reaction to a stressful condition are also experienced by some students such as having voice quivered, knees began shaking, one eyelid began to twitch uncontrollably, the legs felt like soft rubber, the memory apparently left some of them in a sudden, feeling their heartbeat are racing and their hands suddenly cold and preventing eye contact with audience. Some of them said that they feel afraid to talk when they have speaking performances because, naturally they are always being nervous when talking with other people in a marked setting It is found that most of the students face the nervousness to talk in English. For English department students, who struggle to utter sentences in English, speaking on different situations and tasks for a duration of only five minutes could be a nightmare for them. Some of them agreed that they forget what to say because they cannot control and conquer their fears so they even cannot finish their speaking as the total talking time allotted for them. Some of them agreed that they forget what to say

because they cannot control and conquer their fears so they even cannot finish their speaking as the total talking time allotted for them. They are feeling nervous to talk in front of others moreover if it is unknown audience or even trusted friends. Feeling more hesitant and less confident caused the students avoid speaking whenever it is possible. They cannot deal effectively with their stress related to speaking in front of others, so it is crystal clear that it will make them speak incoherently under stressful feeling before and at the day of the speaking test but the level of the stress will fall after they passed the speaking test's schedule. They just felt that they cannot make it and cannot overcome their trauma of speaking in front of public. Some of them felt insecure and alienated and they do not have space in an exclusive speaking community (the image of the speaking time is only for the good speaking ability students) in the classroom which lead to their limited participation. The students haven't gained their confident and trust that everybody will respect their view and performance and there is a guarantee that nobody will tease them.

Another minor reason promotes students nervousness or not being dare to speak is the low exposure to speaking English. It is revealed that the students got silence in period of time. Though the students are given speaking tasks to do, their talk still remain low, meaning that the students are not active. It is happened because the lecturer didn't make the English talking as the prerequisite for the

students to join the class. The students are not feel the atmosphere of talking English is one and only way in joining the class meeting. The lecturer didn't force or sufficiently facilitated them to talk, hence, they prefer keeping silent or speaking their mother tongue (Indonesian language) than English. In addition, feeling less confident because of most of their friends are not speaking in English inside and outside their classroom prevents them to speak the situation on their target language. The absence of speaking partners is a sign of insufficient exposure to practice speaking in variety of contexts. Moreover, the use of their mother tongue after they cannot convey their messages in English affect them to be not being enforced to speak English in front of the classroom or when they are talking in pairs. It means the lack of involvement in English real life situations are not occurring.

### **Feeling afraid of making Error**

It is also revealed that feeling afraid of making error provokes the students to choose silence during the class discussion except they are forcing to speak. The students are afraid of making mistakes while speaking with other English users. Some of the students feel afraid to speak in English because they are afraid of making errors. If they made mistakes in English, they thought that some other will tease them, misunderstood their points, etc. Fear of having errors in pronunciation, grammar and vocabularies are the reasons which hinder the students to talk in English. They are also



sometimes afraid of being wrongly interpreted. Most of times, feeling afraid to produce wrong pronunciation occurs, because the students often confused by different pronunciation some lecturers made. Thus, students choose to speak their mother tongue in order to make a successful communication. The students mostly said that they really wanted to talk in English but they didn't know how to say it, whether it is about diction or vocabularies or the grammatical form to structure the sentence orderly. Hence, The students are tend to speak in Indonesian language in the classroom interaction. They feel embarrassed and afraid that others will not understand what they said and they feel reluctant to speak the words because they thought that they can not generate words as good as them should be managed. For English department students, who struggle to utter sentences in English, speaking on different situations and tasks for a duration of only five minutes could be a nightmare for them. Some students also said that due to lack of vocabulary, they do not understand what is being said by the lecturer so that they would freeze up when they unexpectedly asked to speak by the lecturer in a running discussion. In line with that, feeling afraid of being wrongly interpreted by the other English user as an English department student who should have been able to compile sufficient word to word in a correct order of pronunciation force them to keep silent.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

As revealed in the findings, in general, there are three provoking factors of the students' speaking anxiety. They are feeling afraid of bad response, feeling nervous to talk, and feeling afraid of making Error. Those are the main reasons which are followed by each minor reason such as being teased as a show off student, being ashamed for having a correction before the peers, afraid of being misinterpreted, the introvert character, insufficient /lack of vocabularies, low exposure to be dare to speak English, not joining a trusted speaking community, limited time in exposing life to speaking English, no partner to speak, feeling out of the member of exclusive fluent students group, afraid of making mispronounce word, afraid of making incorrect sentence/ grammar. The most minor reason occurred in this study is the student's lack of vocabularies. These findings have similar point of view with Ahmad Al-Khotaba, et. all who reveals different language anxiety: personal and interpersonal anxiety, classroom anxiety, and learners' perceptions about foreign language anxiety which are significantly affected the speaking performance of the students when he made a research on the speaking achievement of the students in Saudi Arabia. The solution of the students to overcome their anxieties are by shedding their inhibition and shyness, and try to mingle with their peers from English medium so that it will enable them to acquire the language faster. Those activities also recommended to do in this study in order to overcome the students nervousness to talk and their feeling

afraid of having bad responds. Moreover, it has a similar views with this study findings that the student's anxiety occurred not only inside the students themselves but also happened when they made communication with peers.

Horwitz concludes that the anxious learners report feeling apprehension, worry and even dread of their language class. Moreover, the speakers also experiencing difficulties in having concentrations become forgetful, sweating and having palpitations. They also tend to great length to miss class, postpone homework and avoid studying. (Horwitz and young in Bowen, 2004: 32). In equal states, some points of these study findings also revealed in this present study as it can be seen in the students speaking anxiety symptoms ( see. table 2) as the students' component reasons for feeling nervous to talk and not dare to speak. Adding to the similar findings, Liu (2007:119) says that there are three aspects that contributed to speaking anxiety or students' anxiety in the class, they are: lack of vocabularies, low English proficiency and memory dissociation. This study revealed same factors, they are lack of vocabularies and low students' English proficiency and has the same symptoms for the aspect of dissociation of memory such as when the students displayed a lack of confidence or froze up in participating in many activities or when they forget previously learned vocabulary and grammar in evaluative situation as they avoided conveying complex messages in English as the signals of the students

shown when they are feeling nervous to talk or insecure for being dare to speak English. Though Puspita(2012) found that anxiety and vocabulary mastery are important variables and have significant contribution in speaking skill but she also states that speaking skill doesn't completely depend on those two variables. In a light with this, Amengual (2018) studied about Foreign Language Anxiety finally revealed that the provoking factors are the communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation which are stands on the same points revealed in this study. It is shown as the main and the minor reasons caused the speaking anxiety in this research, which provoked by fear of negative evaluation such as fear of talking in front of others, feeling ashamed of others' negative perspective, and feeling afraid of making mistakes. The diferent is, in this research the fearness is happened in every lecture not only is the speaking test.

Price (1991) in the study of worried French students discovered that the students have four aspects of their unease foundation : 1) Fright of talking the target tongue before the peers 2) Fright of committing blunders or shortcomings, 3)Fright of being chuckled or ridiculed at by their fellows, and 4) Students' misperceptions regarding having lesser skills of the French tongue than their other counterparts. Regarding the first and second point, it has the same points of view of the students are not being dare to speak and the their fright of making error. While the third and the fourth points are in the equal state with the minor

reasons for the students nervousness and fright of bad responds.

## **CONCLUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclussions**

Speaking anxiety is one of problematic condition faced by the English department students in University of Darma Agung. Most of the students experienced problems of fear to speak English in the classroom or in front of public. The main reasons of this speaking anxiety are feeling afraid of bad response, feeling nervous to talk, and feeling afraid of making error. The minor reasons that caused of the main reasons happened are : firstly, being teased as a show of students, being shamed for having a correction before the peers, afraid of being misunderstood as the reasons for the students feeling afraid of bad responds. Secondly, the introvert character, insufficient /lack of vocabularies, low exposure to be dare to speak English, not joining a trusted speaking community, and liimited time in exposing life to speaking English, no partner to speak, feeling out of the member of exclusive fluent students group contributes to the reasons of the students' Feeling nervous or not being dare to talk, and thirdly, lack of vocabularies, afraid of making mispronounce word, and afraid of making incorrect sentence/ grammar are the reasons of the students' feeling afraid of making error.

### **Suggestions**

It is suggested that the lecturer should manage a strategy to make the students convenient to talk in the classroom and motivated to talk outside the classroom. The lecturer should gain the students trust by giving them courage to try to bravely speaking in the classroom. The lecturer should encourage the students to speak out in an accepted way to all of the stage of the students ability in speaking English. A comfortable feedback not only from the lecturer but also from the students will also bring the students courage to speak their mind by not worry to much of making error while speaking. They should try different methods of teaching that can engage the students to overcome their feeling of anxiety.

## REFERENCES

- Amengual, M. (2018). *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Students*. *International Journal of English Studies*, 18(2), 145-159
- Chot, P. (2015). *Factors Affecting Students Learning English Speaking Skills.: A Case of Second Year Students of English Department in Gambella College of Teacher Education* (MA Dissertation, Adis Ababa University).
- Elkhafaifi, H. (2005). Listening comprehension anxiety in the Arabic language classroom. *The Modern Language Journal*, 89 (2), 206-220.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. A. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.
- Hosni, S. A. (2015). *Speaking Difficulties Encountered by Young EFL Learners*. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 22-30
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The effects of induced anxiety on three stages of cognitive processing in computerized vocabulary learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16, 1-17.
- Price, M. L. (1991). The subjective experience of foreign language anxiety: Interview with highly anxious students. *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*. In E. K. Horwitz, & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall*: 101-108.
- Sari, Yunita Puspita, (2012). *Thesis. A Correlational Study Between Students' Anxiety, Vocabulary Mastery, And Speaking Skill Of The Eleventh Grade Students Of SMA Negeri 1 Kartasura In Academic Year Of 2011/2012*.
- Yahya, M. (2013). *Measuring speaking anxiety among speech communication course students at the Arab American University of Jenin (AAUJ)*. *European Social Sciences Research Journal*, 1(3), 229-248.
- Ying, Z. (2008). Anxiety and second/foreign language learning revisited. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, 1(1), 1-12