

# ***AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY: A CASE STUDY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITAS RIAU***

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***Abstract:*** *The objectives of this research are to find out the level of speaking anxiety experience by the first year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau and the factors contributing to it. This is mixed-method research; a research combines both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Using cluster random sampling, 30 students were taken as the sample of this research. The data were collected through questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was adapted from FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) designed by Horwitz et al (1986). The result of the questionnaire shows that the students' speaking anxiety is overall in the mildly anxious level. There were six students (20%) in the level of very anxious, seven students (23%) in the level of anxious, 14 students (47%) in the mildly anxious level, one student (3%) in the relaxed level, and two students (7%) in the very relaxed level. It happened because of several factors from either individual or social factors. From individual factors such as fear of making mistake, feeling under pressure dealing with people, and students still lack of English ability. While from the social factors such as afraid of being laugh by other students and afraid of negative evaluation by teachers. Furthermore, to overcome students' speaking anxiety several recommendations were given such as students need to find out the factors contribute to their speaking anxiety and try to find the best way to cope with their anxiety. Students also need to do more practice in speaking English. In line with that, teacher should create a comfortable situation for a speaking class. It is because such situation will help students to feel more relaxed to express their idea through speaking activity.*

***Key Words:*** *Speaking, Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety*

# **ANALISIS KECEMASAN BERBICARA PADA SISWA: STUDI KASUS PADA MAHASISWA TAHUN PERTAMA PROGRAM STUDI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS FKIP UNIVERSITAS RIAU**

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan berbicara yang dialami oleh mahasiswa tahun pertama Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Riau dan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkannya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian campuran yang menggabungkan kedua penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Dengan menggunakan teknik cluster random sampling, dipilih 30 orang mahasiswa sebagai peserta. Data didapatkan melalui kuesioner dan wawancara semi struktur. Kuesioner diadaptasi dari FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) yang didesain oleh Horwitz dkk (1986). Hasil dari kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa kecemasan berbicara mahasiswa umumnya berada pada tingkat mildly anxious. Enam mahasiswa (20%) berada pada tingkat very anxious, tujuh mahasiswa (23%) pada tingkat anxious, 14 mahasiswa (47%) pada tingkat mildly anxious, satu mahasiswa (3%) pada tingkat relaxed, dan dua mahasiswa (7%) berada pada tingkat very relaxed. Ini terjadi karena beberapa faktor baik dari faktor individu maupun sosial. Dari faktor individu seperti takut akan membuat kesalahan, merasa tertekan ketika berhadapan dengan orang lain, dan masih kurangnya kemampuan bahasa Inggris mahasiswa. Sedangkan dari faktor sosial seperti takut ditertawai oleh mahasiswa lain dan takut akan evaluasi negatif dari dosen. Lebih jauh, untuk mengurangi kecemasan berbicara pada mahasiswa, diberikan beberapa rekomendasi seperti mahasiswa harus menemukan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara dan menemukan cara terbaik untuk mengatasinya. Mahasiswa juga harus melakukan lebih banyak latihan berbicara bahasa Inggris. Sejalan dengan itu, dosen juga harus mampu menciptakan suasana yang nyaman untuk kelas Speaking. Karena suasana yang nyaman akan membantu mahasiswa merasa lebih rileks untuk menyampaikan idenya secara lisan.

**Kata Kunci:** Berbicara, Kecemasan, Kecemasan Berbicara

## INTRODUCTION

There are four basic skills that should be mastered by students in learning English, they are reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Speaking is one of the most important skills as it plays an important role in human life and it is the most vital tool of communication in order to share meaning through the use of words. Ur (1996) stated that of all the four skills, speaking seems to be the most important so that people who know a language are called as “speakers” of that language.

Bashir (2011) said that speaking is a productive skill in oral mode. It is a process that involves two or more people of sending and receiving message or information in oral communication to express their feeling, emotion, and idea to others. Some experts defined that speaking is a complicated skill because it involves the process of constructing meaning more than just pronouncing words. Burn and Joyce (1997) insisted that speaking involves producing, receiving, and processing information as the process of interactive meaning construction. In line with them, Chaney and Burke (1998) explained speaking as the process of constructing and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbol in a variety of contexts. Indeed speaking is a process of exchanging words or information between an individual. Similarly, Harmer (2007) said that speaking is the way to construct words and phrases with individual sounds, using pitch change, stress and intonation to express different meaning. In short, speaking is the way the speakers state their ideas orally in order to make the listeners understand the message.

Nevertheless, speaking is a difficult skill to be mastered by EFL learners because speaking combines the parts of writing and listening. It requires much more knowledge of grammar, and it requires us to use this knowledge in real-time. Also, we have to get the correct pronunciation, since English is not our first language. The difficulty in speaking is also faced by the writer. I often experience nervousness, sweating, and palpitation when I have to deliver a speaking presentation in front of class even before the presentation is begun. This situation is also faced by first year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau. This is called speaking anxiety. Anxiety is defined as someone’s fears in facing something that can be a serious problem for him/ her. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that anxiety is the feeling of apprehension, tension, worry, and nervousness dealing with an arousal of the automatic nervous system. In addition, Ormrod (2011) also said that anxiety can be defined as apprehensions and uneasiness feeling toward an uncertain result of a given condition. In conclusion, anxiety is every feeling of worry that happened because of the unsure result of a particular attempt.

Speaking anxiety is the fear that faced by students when delivering or preparing a speech in front of people or the public. It usually happened because the students are not confident with their English ability, they were afraid and shy to practice with the target language, in this case, English, also they were scared about making mistake. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that the students who have a problem in speaking will have bigger difficulty in speaking in a foreign language class.

Based on the case above, it is necessary to conduct a study to find out the levels and factors that contribute to students’ anxiety in speaking English. These issues was discussed in the paper entitled “An Analysis of Students’ Speaking Anxiety: A Case Study of the First Year Students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau”

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used a Sequential Explanatory mixed method, a method combines both quantitative and qualitative method. It is called as a sequential explanatory because this study applied a two phase design where the quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection. The purpose is to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase (Ivankova, et al, 2006). This study is also called as a case study. According to Yin (2009), case study is an empirical investigation that investigate contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear.

To determine the sample of the research, cluster random sampling technique was used and 30 students out of 113 population were chosen. The research was conducted from May - July 2019 at English Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Universitas Riau.

To obtain the quantitative data, the questionnaires were adapted from FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) suggested by Horwitz et al (1986) were distributed to the students to find out the level of students' speaking anxiety, and to obtain the qualitative data, semi-structured interview were conducted to find out the factors contributed to it. To get the levels of students' speaking anxiety, there are several steps done by the writer:

### 1) Scoring Items

The filled-questionnaires were collected to be checked and scored for each items. There are 33 items with different scores based on Likert's Scale.

**Table 1. Likert's Scoring Table Adopted From Horwitz et al. (1986)**

Statement	Scoring				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive	1	2	3	4	5
Negative	5	4	3	2	1

### 2) Calculating the Scores

The next step was calculating the score of the questionnaires' items. To get the levels of students' speaking anxiety, the scores were calculated by using the following formula:

$$N = \sum x$$

Where:

N = total score

$\sum x$  = the sum of each item's score

3) Categorizing the levels of students speaking anxiety

After the total score from the students' result of FLCAS gained, it was categorized into some levels of anxiety based on Oetting's scale (1983).

**Table 2. FLCAS Adopted From Oetting's Scale (1983)**

<b>Range</b>	<b>Level</b>
124-165	Very Anxious
108-123	Anxious
87-107	Mildly Anxious
66-86	Relaxed
33-65	Very Relaxed

After knowing the levels of the anxiety, the results were converted into a percent. The students with the highest level of anxiety were invited to do the interview to find out the factors contributed to it. Finally, based on the results of the research, the writer wrote a conclusion and gave several recommendations.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **The Result of the Questionnaire**

The result of the questionnaire is presented below. The result shows that the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by the students varied ranging from very relaxed to very anxious.

**Table 3. The Levels of Students' Speaking Anxiety**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Level of Anxiety</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Very Anxious	6	20%
2.	Anxious	7	23%
3.	Mildly Anxious	14	47%
4.	Relaxed	1	3%
5.	Very Relaxed	2	7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>

It can be seen from the table that the students get different levels of anxiety in speaking. Out of 30 students, six students (20%) are in a very anxious level. Seven students (23%) are in the anxious level. The other 14 students (47%) are in the mildly anxious level. There is only one student (3%) in the relaxed level and two students (7%) who are at the level of very relaxed. It can be concluded that the students' speaking anxiety is overall in the mildly anxious level with the average score 95.5.

Each anxiety level is described as follows:

**1. Very Anxious Level**

Very anxious is the highest level of anxiety. There were six students (20%) on this level. The students at this level felt to be the most nervous than the other students when they asked to do a presentation in front of the class. Based on Oetting's Scale (1983), the range for this level is from 124-165. All the students at this level were interviewed for farther information about the factors that have contributed to their speaking anxiety.

**2. Anxious Level**

This is the second high level of speaking anxiety. The range for this level is from 108-123. There were seven students (23%) on this level. The students at this level also experienced anxiety when they were asked to deliver a speech in front of the class but not as much as the students at a very anxious level did.

**3. Mildly Anxious**

This is the middle level of speaking anxiety. The range for this level is from 87-107. Most of the students who participated as a sample in this research were at this level, which were 14 students (47%). The students at this level might also felt nervous when they asked to do the presentation in front of the class but they can handle it and can overcome the feeling of anxiety.

**4. Relaxed**

The range for this level is from 66-86. There was only one student (3%) at this level. The students at this level felt relaxed and calm when they have to deliver a speech in front of the class.

**5. Very Relaxed**

This is the lowest rank of speaking anxiety level. The range for this level is from 33-65. There were two students (7%) at this level. They felt very relaxed and calm when they have to do a presentation in front of the class. The students at this level were usually confident with their speaking English ability.

## **The Results of Semi-Structured Interviews**

Semi-structured interview was conducted to find out the factors contributing to students speaking anxiety. One of the questions asked during the interview was "What makes you feel anxious while speaking English in the classroom?" This question was intentionally asked to explore the factors that have made students feel anxious when they have to speak in English.

When asked about the question, the students gave relatively similar answers. Generally, the factors can be classified into some main issues: (1) fear of making mistake, (2) feeling under pressure when dealing with people, (3) lack of English ability, (4) social factors. Details of the findings can be seen in the following sections:

## 1. Fear of Making Mistakes.

Speaking is one of the most important elements in learning English. By mastering the knowledge of speaking English, people can communicate with anyone since English is one of the global languages that will be definitely used by people all around the world. But unfortunately, in this learning process, there are a lot of reasons that prevent students from speaking English well. One of the reasons is the fear felt by students. Most of the students that have been interviewed said that they were afraid about making a mistake when they have to speak English.

“The first thing is because I’m afraid of making a mistake. Afraid of being wrong..”

(RR)

Meanwhile, ND and AA similarly said that they were not confident because they were scared to mispronounce something.

“The first thing is I am not that confident. Eee, afraid when I am talking, I mispronounce something, people might see that’s as the common things to do, but I feel like someone will judge me.”

(ND)

“e, it is, because I usually nervous in front of other people, then, e, because I feel like, e, my pronunciation is not good yet, so I am afraid to make mistake”

(AA)

The other students said that they were afraid to use the wrong form of tenses. In order to do good writing, we need to consider about grammatical rules, and these students wonder whether we also need it in speaking or not.

“The factor is.. what if I will say something wrong, it is like, when the language learner learn about grammar, there are V1, V2, and V3, so, “do this also need the use of verb or not?” while my friends already knew about that, that’s why I am so scared, especially speaking, I am really scared about that.”

(RK)

“... I am afraid of using tenses wrongly”

(MN)

## 2. Feeling Under Pressure when Dealing with People

The ability to speak in public is very necessary. Having this ability will help students to deliver the ideas that they have. But in reality, not everyone can speak well in public. When students are talking in front of people they might feel their palm sweat, stiff, and feel nervous to talk. This is very natural, especially when they rarely speak in front of many people. The reason, whether because they are not used to speaking in public, or not ready to perform. As said by some students that have been interviewed,



they usually felt relaxed when they practiced speaking alone at home, but when they have to deliver the speech in front of many people they immediately got nervous and anxious.

“I don’t know why it’s like that. Like when we talk in front of public, it is like, even though it has run smoothly at home, but in front of public, I just getting nervous. Immediately blank.”

(AM)

“It might be because there are a lot of people, maybe. Crowd factor. Usually, it runs smoothly when we practice speaking alone at home. Then, when the day is coming, there are many people. That’s why I got nervous”

(ND)

“E, it’s, because I usually get nervous when I have to talk in front of public..”

(AA)

### **3. Lack of English Ability**

Another factor contributed to speaking anxiety according to students’ perspective is because they are still lack of English ability. A lot of students still feel like they are lack of grammar or structure, and they feel like they still have limited vocabulary.

“E, it’s, I’m afraid when I want to speak, then, the structure is not correct”

(AM)

“Sometimes, e, I’m afraid, e, when I’m talking in English, people will not understand what I said. Maybe because I am still lack of vocabulary.”

(MN)

“then, e, I’m also still lack of vocabulary”

(AA)

Lack of English ability has been a serious problem for students to speak in English. Especially for students who learn English as a foreign language.

### **4. Social factors**

Some other factors that caused anxiety in speaking were because of social condition. This factor relates to how they interact with some people in their life such as their parents, friends, and their teachers. One of the respondents, for instance, clearly said that she is actually not interested in English, but her family asked her to join the English study program at FKIP Universitas Riau. Because this was not what she wanted to do, so she has low motivation in the study, she was not interested in it, and she felt like she has no basic knowledge at all about English.

“... e, so, I have no intention to join English study program in the first place, but my family asked me to.. so I feel like I have no basic knowledge in English. I accept that I’m not interested in English”

(RK)



Some students were afraid of their friends' reaction regarding their performance. The students were afraid if they made a mistake, their friends will laugh or judge them.

"e, a lot, e, Indonesian people like to scorn, did a little mistake, scorned. That was made me more afraid"

(RR)

"yes, what is it, I felt insecure. I'm afraid my friend will judge me."

(RK)

In addition, for some students, teacher also contributed to their speaking anxiety. They were afraid of negative judgment from teacher as well.

"yes, it depends, if the teacher is like, kinda tough, when they come into the class, we immediately scared. But, when the teacher enjoys, we also enjoy the lesson, even though we were not good at that course."

(AM)

"oh for the presentation it depends on the teacher. If the teacher is humble, the fear can be overcome, but if the teacher fierce, there is also a sense of nervousness."

(ND)

Social condition contributed a great impact on students speaking anxiety. The findings of this research found out problems regarding the social condition. Through separated interviews, each student expressed the problems they face because of social condition that can increase their anxiety in speaking.

## DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to find out the levels of students' speaking anxiety and the factors contributed to it. The sample of this research was the first year students of English study program of Universitas Riau. Questionnaire adapted from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) suggested by Horwitz et al (1986) were used to find out the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by the students. A semi-structured interview was also conducted to further investigate the factors contributing to it.

Based on 33 statements in FLCAS questionnaire, the writer found out that students had a different level of anxiety in speaking English that classified into very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, relaxed, and very relaxed according to Oetting's Scale (1983). Out of 30 students, there were six students (20%) in the level of very anxious, seven students (23%) in the level of anxious, 14 students (47%) in the mildly anxious level, one student (3%) in the relaxed level, and two students (7%) in the very relaxed level. It can be concluded that the students' speaking anxiety is overall in the mildly anxious level. There were still many students who have a problem in reducing anxiety. Only three students were at a low level of anxiety (relaxed and very relaxed), these students can cope with the anxiety when they have to perform something in English.

The anxiety in speaking experienced by students was caused by several factors that happened in their learning process. In this research, it was found that the most influential factors contributed to students speaking anxiety are fear of making mistakes and feeling under pressure when dealing with people. Some students were afraid of their friends' reaction regarding their performance. The students were afraid if they made a mistake, their friends will laugh or judge them.

“yes, what is it, I felt insecure. I’m afraid my friend will judge me.”

(RK)

Some students were afraid because they are still lack of vocabulary.

“sometimes, e, I’m afraid, e, when I’m talking in English, people will not understand what I said. Maybe because I’m still lack of vocabulary.”

(MN)

Students also feel anxious because they were afraid to talk in front of other people. The reason, whether because they were not used to speak in public, or not ready to perform.

“I don’t know why it’s like that. Like when I talk in front of the public, it’s like, even though it has run smoothly at home, but in front of the public, I just getting nervous. Immediately get blank.”

(AM)

The anxiety in speaking can also be caused by individual and social factor. Horwitz et al. (1986) categorized the factors into three major factors, such as from students, teachers, and from the materials. Social factors from the teachers involve classroom speaking activity and inappropriate way of teaching.

“oh for the presentation it depends on the teacher. If the teacher is humble, the fear can be overcome, but if the teacher fierce, there is also a sense of nervousness.”

(ND)

A similar study conducted by Wahyudi et al. (2015). He found that one of the factors is because the students afraid of making mistakes. They feel anxious to speak English because when they make mistakes, other students will laugh at them. As stated by Jones (2004), a classroom is always a problem, you find people watching you, and try to correct you, blamed you for any mistakes, laugh at you, and you have to be correct because it is a class”. Furthermore, the students fear of making mistakes in speaking English because they are leaked of vocabulary and do not know how to pronounce the word. Another factor is the students feel afraid when they have to do a presentation in front of the class. They feel anxious because when they speak English in front of the class they will lose confidence and forget the materials.

In conclusion, it can be said that there are still a lot of students who feel anxious when they have to speak in English. It happened because of either individual or social factors. While, in fact, speaking is one of the most important skills that should be master by students since speaking plays an important role in human communication.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion

In learning English, speaking is one of the most important skills that should be mastered by students because speaking plays an important role in communication. However, speaking is a difficult skill to be mastered by EFL learners because speaking combines the parts of writing and listening. It requires much more knowledge of grammar, and it requires us to use this knowledge in real-time. Also, the pronunciation

should be correct, since English is not our first language. The difficulty in speaking is also faced by the first year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau. One of the factors is speaking anxiety. This study was conducted to find out the levels of students speaking anxiety and the factors contributed to it.

Based on the data provided, it can be concluded that the first year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau still felt anxious when they have to speak in English. The students' speaking anxiety is overall in the mildly anxious level. There were still many students who have a problem in reducing anxiety. Out of 30 students, there were six students (20%) in the level of very anxious, seven students (23%) in the level of anxious, 14 students (47%) in the mildly anxious level, one student (3%) in the relaxed level, and two students (7%) in the very relaxed level. It happened because of several factors from either individual or social factors. From individual factors such as fear of making mistake, feeling under pressure dealing with people, and students still lack of English ability. While from the social factors such as afraid of being laugh by other students and afraid of negative evaluation by teachers.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results found in this research, several recommendations were proposed in order to reduce students' speaking anxiety, first, teachers should apply an interesting method in teaching speaking. The interesting method will stimulate students to reduce their anxiety in speaking. Second, teacher should create a comfortable situation for a speaking class. It is because the comfortable situation will help students to feel more relaxed to express their idea through speaking. Third, teacher should be more aware of the factors that can increase students' anxiety in speaking and try to find the best strategy to overcome them. In line with it, students also need to find out the factors contribute to speaking anxiety and find the best way to cope with them. Students need to do more practice in speaking English.

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