



SPEAKING ANXIETY: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS IN LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Overcoming speaking anxiety in learning needs to be instilled in students through awareness of the importance of speaking skills. So that students can know how to overcome speaking anxiety, it is necessary first to understand the factors and characteristics of speaking anxiety. This research aims to determine the factors of speaking anxiety and how to overcome it. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method with a literature study approach, data sources are obtained from analysis results and conclusions are obtained from journals. The results of this research analysis are several theoretical descriptions of speaking anxiety, characteristics of speaking anxiety, factors of speaking anxiety, and ways to overcome speaking anxiety.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the competencies that learners must have is the ability to speak in public, speaking skills can support various activities in learning, such as presentations, discussions, and questions and answers. However, a big challenge in speaking is anxiety. Anxiety is a form of obstacle in speaking activities felt by individuals when speaking in public, usually characterized by feelings influenced by tension, fear, nervousness, and worry (Spielberger 1983). In learning, anxiety is a situation that is often experienced by individuals during speaking activities. Rosyidah (2020) states that anxiety is often correlated with language learning because it is a major factor in language learning, one of which is in speaking learning activities.

Hamandia (2022) states that anxiety occurs when learners feel fear and worry about something that is felt to be harmful or threatening to them so that their physiological functions work and changes occur in their physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavior. This shows that feelings of anxiety can arise from internal factors of each learner when ordered to speak in learning such as conveying ideas and opinions. Utami (2019) adds that the feeling of anxiety felt by learners is an emotional response involving behavioral, affective, and cognitive aspects to their perception of a situation that is considered dangerous, the response is seen as a normal condition that develops from childhood in learning.

Learners' negative response to speaking anxiety is in the form of avoidance behavior, feelings of discomfort, feelings arising from the perception of danger, and excessive fantasies about something that has not happened, which is usually created by perceptions that have not necessarily happened (Bukhori, 2017). Morreale, Spitzberg, and Barge (2007) suggest that public speaking anxiety refers to the fear or anxiety experienced by learners when facing real public speaking situations or even when just imagining them. It shows that speaking anxiety occurs in the condition of learners in learning either before speaking or when speaking.

Speaking anxiety is often experienced by learners during speaking activities such as class discussions, presentations, and questions and answers with educators. Speaking anxiety can arise due to various factors, such as lack of confidence, uncertainty in expressing opinions, or fear of other people's judgment. According to McCroskey (1977), speaking anxiety can affect the quality of an individual's communication and make it difficult to convey ideas or opinions clearly and effectively.

This can harm an individual's relationships with others and their environment. Therefore, it is important to understand the causative factors and characteristics of speaking anxiety so that strategies to overcome it can be understood.

The negative impact of speaking anxiety on learners' learning achievement is that learners will be less engaged in classroom activities and will have less knowledge. As a result, there will be a decline in learning achievement due to difficulties in conveying their ideas effectively. The long-term negative impact is that learners' speaking anxiety can affect their overall speaking development and communication skills, whether speaking in class or speaking outside of class, which is an important skill in everyday life in both education and career.

Departing from some of the literature above research on anxiety to speak is important to learn because anxiety to speak is a fear that is almost experienced by learners, anxiety to speak can inhibit effective communication and affect learners in learning such as during presentations and other speaking activities. Anxiety that is not trained to be overcome can cause them to withdraw from social interactions in the classroom, which can then affect their involvement in the learning process.

Research on speaking anxiety has been conducted previously by Rosyidah (2020) with the research title *Underlying Factors of Speaking Anxiety across Learning Styles*, the study aims to investigate the underlying factors of speaking anxiety. The results showed that fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication anxiety were the underlying factors of speaking anxiety in all learning styles. Nisaa (2018) with the title *Factors Causing Anxiety in Delivering Speeches in Students Participating in Public Speaking Courses at the Department of Communication Sciences, Diponegoro University*. The results of the study are the factors of speaking anxiety including, bad thoughts, not feeling confident with yourself, communication tool interference, past bad experiences, lack of confidence, lack of experience, and outdoor presentations.

Relevant research that has been done before has focused on analyzing the factors of speaking anxiety in each learning style. This article, it is more focused on conceptual analysis research on public speaking anxiety, in addition to the presentation of speaking anxiety, the characteristics and factors of speaking anxiety will also be described strategies to overcome speaking anxiety which is a novelty in this research. Conceptual analysis research is research used to collect data from various reading sources, books, journals or articles (Safitri, 2020). By doing research

in this article, it is hoped that every reader can understand about speaking anxiety, the characteristics and factors that can cause speaking anxiety, and how strategies can be used to overcome it, as well as additional literature or references for future research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Speaking Anxiety

The most common fear that learners feel during learning is anxiety. According to Sutejo (2018), anxiety is a feeling of fear that something threatening will happen. Anxiety is a complex feeling that involves a mixture of fear and worry about the future. Unlike fear that arises because of real danger, anxiety is present for no apparent reason. It can make the sufferer feel uncomfortable and restless. One common form of anxiety is public speaking anxiety.

According to Saputri (2017), public speaking anxiety is a common communication barrier experienced by every learner. This anxiety can arise in various situations, one of which is during speaking activities. Aguila & Harjanto (2016) state that speaking anxiety is a factor that results in the inability of learners to communicate effectively, learners who feel anxious will have difficulty carrying out conversations smoothly and naturally, even they are sometimes unable to remember what they have prepared.

Public speaking anxiety can hinder the learning process and reduce the quality of learners' learning. Learners who experience speaking anxiety will find it difficult to participate in learning, such as answering questions, or expressing their ideas and opinions. They prefer to suppress their opinions or avoid questions, which can make them fall behind in the subject matter.

Regarding speaking anxiety, Fitri (2017) also said that speaking anxiety is a common occurrence for learners when they have to do speaking activities in front of the class such as during individual presentations or group presentations, during question and answer discussion activities, or ordinary communication with the teacher. The emergence of anxiety felt by learners is often triggered by negative thoughts that haunt them, which then lead to physical and psychological symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, trembling, cold sweat, and muscle tension. In addition, anxiety also often affects learners' behavior, where learners are more likely to avoid opportunities to speak in public, the fear created by their minds causing learners to

lose opportunities to develop and express themselves confidently.

Although public speaking anxiety is normal for learners, especially during classroom learning, uncontrollable anxiety will become a significant obstacle to achieving learning. This is because learners always avoid the opportunity to speak in public, the act of avoiding the opportunity to speak can hinder their career, and mature educational achievement, and even have a big impact on their social life with others.

Shadows or negative perceptions generated by the mind on the ability to speak at the time of learning will have an impact on the emergence of anxiety to speak, although anxiety to speak is a fear or anxiety that is commonly experienced by learners, not many realize that anxiety can arise when still imagine speaking in front of people, or even when already in front of people. This is supported by the opinion of Wahyuni (2015), which states that public speaking anxiety that occurs during learning is an uncomfortable condition that is often unstable in the feelings of learners, the condition is good when they only imagine or when speaking in front of many people. Anxiety that arises from the perception of learners will be felt in various circumstances such as nervousness, trembling, and cold sweats, to avoid speaking activities.

Similarly, Atkinson (1996) states that speaking anxiety is an unpleasant feeling accompanied by psychological and physical reactions, reactions to these feelings arise due to individual concerns in adjusting to or facing public speaking situations. Atkinson further specifies that speaking anxiety can arise without a clear cause and occurs before or during the public communication process.

Another opinion regarding public speaking anxiety is also defined by Amali (2020) who states that public speaking anxiety is a state or unpleasant condition experienced by students when they have to perform in front of the class during learning. The discomfort felt triggers physical reactions such as avoidance behavior, physiological reactions, such as nervousness, anxiety, heart palpitations, and sweaty palms and psychological reactions such as individuals experiencing negative thoughts, such as fear of being judged, laughed at, or failing to deliver their material.

Speaking anxiety experienced by students in classroom learning on speaking activities must be overcome, either using learning strategies used by teachers or from independent efforts made by students to overcome speaking anxiety. The more often students experience anxiety speaking during learning, the more difficult it is

for students to understand the material presented (Amali, 2020), this is because anxiety can interfere with students' focus and concentration, so they cannot process information properly. In addition, anxiety about speaking in front of the class can also lower self-confidence. When feeling anxious, learners will hesitate to express opinions or answer questions in front of the class. This can hinder their learning process and make them feel unable to follow the lessons.

McCroskey, Richmond, Dali, & Falcione (2006) state that individuals who have public speaking anxiety have a greater tendency to worry, are ineffective in interacting with others, and some even withdraw from other individuals. From the description of some of the theories above, it can be concluded that speaking anxiety is an obstacle to the unpleasant feelings felt by students when faced with speaking activities, these obstacles can manifest in the form of behavior and feelings of anxiety.

Features of Speaking Anxiety

The features of speaking anxiety are manifestations or markers of excessive anxiety when learners are faced with public speaking situations. Anxiety in public speaking is not only characterized by nervousness. The symptoms can be observed from various other aspects. Shahfutra (2019) states that the features of someone who experiences anxiety speaking in public can show various signs, in terms of emotional, mental, physical, and movement. Negative thoughts such as fear of being humiliated, judged, or failing, also often appear. The anxiety of speaking that is felt will appear against physical reactions. Symptoms can include shaking, cold sweats, racing heart, nausea, and muscle tension. This can interfere with speech fluency, such as trembling, stammering, or even stuttering.

In agreement with the above opinion Schachter and Singer (in McCroskey & Richmond, 1982) state that public speaking anxiety is an experience that involves various aspects, namely Affective, Behavioral, physiological, and cognitive features. the four aspects are interrelated and cannot stand alone. affective features in speaking anxiety refer to the feelings experienced by the individual, such as a sense of anxiety, fear, panic, to shame. Feelings can trigger behavioral traits, such as restlessness, trembling, and sweating, to avoid eye contact with the audience. Along with it, physiological aspects also appear, such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, and faster breathing. This is the body's response to perceived stress. On

the other hand, the cognitive aspect indicates the presence of negative thoughts that arise, such as self-doubt, fear of the judgment of others, to the fear of making mistakes.

Understanding of the characteristics of public speaking anxiety must be well understood, it aims to provide knowledge to learners about self-awareness to make efforts to overcome speaking anxiety. There are various characteristics that students can feel when experiencing anxiety about speaking, such as a statement from Mustika (2023) that there are several physical characteristics that can indicate students experiencing anxiety when speaking in public. Physical characteristics such as symptoms such as trembling in the hands, trembling voices, and cold sweaty palms.

This opinion is also added again by a statement from Fatwa (2021) which states that the characteristics of speaking anxiety do not only occur in the physical aspects of learners but can also occur in its supply aspects related to the mind and mentality of learners, such as tension, confusion, worry, and difficulty concentrating in learning.

The above opinion is added by the Fatwa statement (2021), which affirms that the characteristics of anxiety are not only manifested in the physical aspect but also in the psychological aspect related to the mind and mentality. Such conditions such as tension, confusion, worry, difficulty concentrating, anxiety traits speaking nature psychological aspects can significantly affect the learning process. When learners feel emotional and mental discomfort, they tend to find it difficult to focus on the material taught in the classroom.

According to the opinion of Djayanti & Rahmatika (2015), public speaking anxiety involves various aspects that include physical symptoms, behavioral symptoms, and cognitive symptoms.

- 1) Physical symptoms, physical symptoms of anxiety that occur in individuals can vary usually characterized by body shaking, cold sweat, increased heart rate, irregular breathing, dizziness sensation, fingers that feel cold, increased sensitivity, a sense of not calmness, restlessness.

- 2) Behavioral symptoms, behavioral symptoms in anxiety that occur in individuals usually include a significant sense of anxiety that causes the individual to make unusual changes in their behavior, such as avoiding situations that trigger anxiety, relying on certain behaviors as an excuse, or even experiencing severe

emotional instability, which ultimately chooses to avoid all situations that trigger anxiety.

3) The cognitive symptoms of anxiety that occur are usually marked by excessive worry about things that may not have happened yet, the belief that bad things will happen for no apparent reason, feelings of insecurity towards other people or certain situations, confusion, and fear associated with being alone.

In contrast to some of the above statements Burgoon and Ruffner (1978) classify the Traits of public speaking anxiety into three types, unwillingness, avoidance, and control.

1) Unwillingness is a symptom of unwillingness to communicate appears when individuals feel uncomfortable, restless, and have unstable emotions in communication situations. This can generate anxiety and interfere with adjusting in various situations, such as discussions in front of a large number of people. Individuals who experience these symptoms tend to choose to be silent and close themselves rather than actively communicate and convey their ideas.

2) Communication avoidance occurs when the individual has an unpleasant communication experience, characterized by anxiety and a lack of understanding of the communication situation. This can interfere with closeness between individuals and make it difficult for individuals to feel and understand the feelings of others in communication situations.

3) Control or low self-control of the communication situation, arises when the individual is influenced by environmental factors, difficulty in adjusting to other individuals and the reaction of the interlocutor. This can cause the individual to feel difficulty in controlling the communication situation

Based on some of the theories that have been presented above, it can be concluded that the characteristics of public speaking anxiety manifested from the impact of anxiety experienced by learners can vary depending on each individual, in general, the characteristics of speaking anxiety include physical symptoms, behavioral symptoms, and cognitive symptoms that are characterized by certain circumstances in each symptom. In addition to these three characteristics, other characteristics such as unwillingness to communicate, avoidance of communication, and low self-control can also be aspects in the realization of speech anxiety.

Causes of Anxiety Speaking

Several factors can affect the occurrence of anxiety to speak in public, the factor in question is a state or event that causes the realization of anxiety to speak which will later be revealed as the characteristics of anxiety to speak. According to Nisaa (2018), several factors can cause anxiety when speaking in public. These factors can be categorized into two, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from within the individual or object in question, these factors cannot be controlled by external factors. Internal factors include negative thoughts, distraction of AIDS, bad experiences in the past, lack of self-confidence, and lack of experience in public speaking. In addition, the fear of being evaluated, being the center of attention, and the number of audiences can also influence the occurrence of anxiety.

External factors are factors that come from outside the individual, these factors can come from the environment, situation, or other external conditions. External factors that can trigger anxiety to speak such as lack of preparation and mastery of the material to be discussed. This can make individuals feel unprepared and hesitant when delivering their material. Sudarta (2022) is more specific about internal and external factors that cause anxiety to speak, according to him, external factors are among the factors caused by the influence of friends, family, and the environment. As for the internal factors caused by the feelings of learners such as nervousness, embarrassment, fear of being wrong, and a sense of laziness to speak.

Another factor that can influence the occurrence of speech anxiety is the fear factor and lack of preparation (Nafila, 2022). Fear is a common factor that most often affects learners in learning. In the ability to speak fear can be a fear of failure, wanting to always be successful, not confident, and not ready to be the center of attention. This fear can arise from various bad experiences in the past, such as having been ridiculed or criticized while speaking in public. The next factor is lack of preparation which is also an important factor that can hinder a person from speaking in public. This lack of preparation can take the form of not mastering the material, not having a clear presentation structure, and not practicing enough. Lack of preparation can be a significant factor in causing anxiety when speaking. When learners make preparations before speaking, it can reduce the level of speaking anxiety that may arise. On the contrary, when not preparing well before speaking, the chances of experiencing anxiety are greater.

Alfian (2022) States the anxiety factor of public speaking from his point of

view of internal factors and external factors, according to him, internal factors that come from within the individual include feelings of lack of confidence, excessive shyness, and the individual's conception of learning ability. Self-distrust can hinder motivation and learning performance, affecting their belief in their abilities. While external factors include the influence of teachers and classroom conditions, unsupportive or uncomfortable classroom conditions can create anxiety and discomfort for learners.

Three other factors that can factor into anxiety speaking are the individual's experience, self-image, and negative perspective. These three factors greatly affect their confidence (Hasanah, 2021). The individual experiences in question refer to various events or situations that the student has encountered during his childhood, both positive and negative. Traumatic experiences, failures or harsh criticism can imprint in memories and trigger anxiety when faced with similar situations. A negative self-image is also a motivating factor for anxiety speaking. Learners who have a low self-image tend to doubt their own abilities and feel unable to achieve set targets or expectations. A negative perspective towards yourself, others or the environment can also affect speech anxiety. Always thinking negatively and pessimistically tend to see everything from the bad side, so it is easy to feel anxious and worried.

It can be concluded from the various theoretical descriptions above that the factors that cause anxiety to speak include internal factors and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from within the individual learners are usually created by his own mind. While external factors come from the circumstances around the learners can be from the environment and conditions of the class or strategies given at the time of learning.

Coping Strategies for Speaking Anxiety

Public speaking anxiety is one of the common obstacles faced by students in the learning process in the classroom. As the description of some of the theories above that anxiety to speak can trigger self-confidence, as well as fear in speaking activities, thereby inhibiting the ability of learners to convey ideas, ideas, and knowledge effectively. Therefore, the strategy to overcome the anxiety of speaking is needed to answer the anxiety of speaking that occurs to learners, the strategy is expected to make learners more confident in expressing opinions, increasing active

participation in learning, and achieving optimal learning outcomes.

The findings regarding anxiety coping strategies of speaking can be classified into two, namely external and internal strategies. External strategies refer to strategies that involve supporting factors from outside the learner, such as the use of learning strategies and the role of educators in helping learners overcome speech anxiety. While the internal strategy focuses on supporting factors from the students themselves or sourced directly from the habits of learners in overcoming anxiety to speak.

External Strategy

Methods Expressive Writing Therapy

Expressive writing therapy or expressive writing therapy is a therapeutic approach that utilizes writing activities as a tool to explore and reflect on the deepest thoughts and feelings of the individual, especially related to traumatic events, writing therapy also reflects the subject's reflection and expression due to his initiative or suggestion from a therapist (Rohmadani, 2017). Through expressive writing therapy, individuals reflect on their innermost thoughts and feelings towards unpleasant or traumatic events (Amali, 2020). This therapy method can be applied in groups, making it the main intervention to help participants build a more resilient mentality in dealing with themselves and situations in public.

The expressive writing therapy method helps learners to understand themselves better and deal with depression, distress, anxiety, addiction, fear of illness, loss, and changes in their lives, expressive writing techniques are part of expressive therapy that focuses on emotions (Anggraini, 2019) so that in overcoming anxiety speaking the use of this method can be done.

Through the expressive writing process used by teachers, learners are encouraged to express their various emotions and experiences freely, without restrictions or barriers. It allows them to connect with themselves on a deeper level, understand the root causes underlying speech anxiety, and process complex emotions more constructively.

The Role of Educators

The role of educators in overcoming anxiety to speak is very important, their job is not only as a presenter of the material but also to help learners feel

comfortable and confident in expressing their opinions. Basuki et al., (2021) state that changes in learners' behavior are influenced by their interactions with educators. The success of learning by educators is supported by several factors, one of which is the ability to interact socially (Nurzafira et al., 2020). Therefore, the learning atmosphere must be created and conditioned in such a way, since this factor helps to facilitate the learning process. Sudarta (2022) classifies strategies that educators can use to create a conducive and supportive learning atmosphere and can help reduce learner anxiety such as.

- 1) Encouragement and motivation. Teachers continue to encourage and motivate students to dare to be active in speaking activities, besides that teachers also combine ice-breaking and daily gift giving such as stationery so that students compete with each other in expressing their opinions in learning.
- 2) Teachers need to provide continuous practice and regular evaluations to students who have speech impairments. When the student expresses his opinion with his limitations, the teacher should help to direct positively and constructively.
- 3) Build interactive and collaborative classroom dynamics. Teachers have an important role in creating a dynamic and interactive learning environment in the classroom. One strategy is to hold a rotation of seats periodically and in collaboration with parents.

Holding a seating rotation of learners helps to get acquainted and interact with new friends from different backgrounds and abilities, develop their communication and interpersonal skills, and acquire different perspectives in the teaching and learning process. And increase the sense of togetherness and cooperation in the classroom. Working with parents of students helps to provide information to parents about how they can support the child's learning process at home, as well as open communication with parents to discuss the anxiety experienced by students.

Internal Strategy

Nisa (2021) in her research classifies the ways or efforts of learners in overcoming public speaking anxiety, these efforts are efforts made by learners and have nothing to do with the teacher's strategy or treatment in the classroom. Efforts

are made as follows.

- 1) Trying to calm down or relax: Efforts to calm down or relax can be made with relaxation techniques such as meditation and breathing before speaking. Listen to soothing music to help relieve tension. Visualize yourself with confidence.
- 2) Make small notes: Small notes that contain bullet points about what you want to talk about. These notes can help learners stay focused and not forget what to say.
- 3) Practice in front of the Mirror: Practicing in front of a mirror can train the gestures and expressions of learners in speaking activities and see the response of other learners to the way the conversation is conducted.
- 4) Practice talking to others: Talking to others before doing speaking activities can give learners better input and advice in doing speaking activities, practicing in front of others can help learners build confidence and get used to speaking in public.

It can be concluded that how to overcome public speaking anxiety following some of the theories presented above can be done by internal and external means, namely involving teachers in the use of learning strategies in the classroom, or efforts made by students themselves. Between the two efforts there is a very close relationship that both support each other to overcome the anxiety of speaking in public at the time of learning.

CONCLUSIONS

Anxiety when speaking in public is a discomfort that arises due to the presence of fears, worries and unpleasant feelings that arise before or when speaking in the presence of a large number of people, or even just when imagining it. The characteristics of such anxiety include physical, behavioral, emotional and thought reactions. Various factors can cause this anxiety, such as fear of being the center of attention, lack of preparation, fear of being ridiculed by listeners, distrust of the relevance of the conversation. As for how to overcome anxiety to speak can be with the help of teachers such as the use of learning strategies and teacher treatment, also in a way that can be done by learners as an effort to support the treatment of teachers.

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