

**ANALYZING INTERNAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO
SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG FINAL-SEMESTER STUDENTS
AT PGRI DELTA SIDOARJO UNIVERSITY**

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Abstrak

Kecemasan berbicara merupakan salah satu hambatan utama yang sering dialami oleh mahasiswa dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam keterampilan berbicara (speaking). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor internal yang berkontribusi terhadap kecemasan berbicara pada mahasiswa semester akhir di Universitas PGRI Delta Sidoarjo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan instrumen berupa angket dengan pertanyaan close-ended (mengacu pada FLCAS oleh Horwitz et al.) dan wawancara menggunakan pertanyaan open-ended. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah 13 mahasiswa semester akhir program studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat empat faktor internal utama yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara, yaitu: ketakutan akan membuat kesalahan, rasa malu, kurangnya percaya diri, dan kurangnya motivasi. Faktor internal yang paling dominan dalam kecemasan berbicara siswa adalah ketakutan membuat kesalahan, diikuti oleh rasa malu, kurang percaya diri, dan terakhir adalah kurangnya motivasi adalah faktor yang paling rendah. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa pengalaman masa lalu dan cara berpikir mahasiswa turut memengaruhi tingkat kepercayaan diri mereka saat berbicara dalam Bahasa Inggris. Strategi seperti persiapan yang matang, relaksasi, dan berpikir positif terbukti dapat membantu mahasiswa dalam mengelola kecemasan berbicara mereka. Temuan ini juga diharapkan dapat menjadi acuan bagi pendidik untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar

yang lebih suportif dan kondusif bagi perkembangan kemampuan berbicara mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci: *faktor internal, kecemasan berbicara, mahasiswa semester akhir, strategi.*

Abstract

Speaking anxiety is one of the main obstacles often experienced by students in learning English, especially in speaking skills. This study aims to analyze the internal factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among final semester students at PGRI Delta Sidoarjo University. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with instruments in the form of a closed questionnaire (referring to the FLCAS by Horwitz et al.) and open-ended interviews. The subjects in this study were 13 final semester students of English Education study program. The results showed that there are four main internal factors that cause speaking anxiety, namely: fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. The most dominant factor is the fear of making mistakes, followed by shyness, lack of confidence, and finally the lack of motivation was the lowest factor. The study also found that students past experiences and way of thinking also affected their confidence level when speaking in English. Strategies such as thorough preparation, relaxation, and positive thinking were found to help students manage their anxiety. It is hoped that these findings can serve as a reference for educators to create a more supportive and conducive learning environment for the development of students' speaking skills.

Keywords: *internal factors, speaking anxiety, final-semester students, strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is an emotion characterized by an unpleasant state of internal anxiety, accompanied by feelings of fear about anticipated events. In line with Brown (2000 : 151) in Masthurah et al. (2021), anxiety is associated with feelings of restlessness, frustration, self-doubt, anxiety, and worry. Based on Putra (2018) in Rahayu (2023), anxiety is a complex response including physiological, behavioral, and psychological components. Biological responses such as a rapid

heartbeat, muscle tension, sweating, nausea, and dry mouth are some of the effects of anxiety. As a result, students who experience anxiety have difficulty when speaking or giving their opinions. Based on Na (2007) in Damayanti & Listyani (2020), anxiety has been regarded as one of the most important affective factors that influence second language acquisition. Anxiety can be categorized into trait anxiety (long-term personality-based), state anxiety (temporary and situation-dependent), and situation-specific anxiety

(triggered by specific contexts like public speaking). The increased anxiety students feel in foreign language classes often prevents them from learning English, especially speaking skills. Speaking anxiety is a type of social phobia, which is characterized by the thought that one will be criticized or judged badly by other people. Based on Wahyudi et al. (2015) in Fuadiyah et al. (2022), one of the factors of speaking anxiety is that students are afraid of making mistakes. Students feel anxious when they have to speak or write a particular language even though they are not native speakers of that language. Therefore, teachers have an important role in helping students reduce their anxiety, by approaching students to support and appreciate them.

Speaking has several segments and functions. Many attempts have been made to classify the functions of speaking in human interaction. Based on Richards (2008) in Murti P (2022), there are three functions of speaking: speaking as interaction, speaking as transaction, and speaking as performance. Firstly, speaking as interaction, refers to social conversation, which two or more people interact to exchange ideas or opinions. The social function of speaking as interaction is to

build relationship with other people to share meaning with each other. For example, chatting with others or telling a friend about an interesting thing. Secondly, speaking as transaction, plays a role to ensure that an individual comprehends the message we are conveying. The function of speaking as transaction is to provide information and obtain goods or services. For example, group discussions in the classroom, talking on the phone with friends, and ordering food from restaurants. Lastly, speaking as performance, is the type of speaking to convey information to an audience, which generally incorporates public speaking. This type of speaking is focus on sequencing, organization, and accuracy of speaking. For examples, debate, political speeches, and lectures.

Speaking anxiety is the feeling of nervousness, fear, discomfort, and lack of confidence that people often experience when speaking in a foreign language, especially in front of others. This is a frequently problem for language learners and is considered a significant challenge to achieving effective spoken communication. Speaking anxiety manifests physically and emotionally, with symptoms such as trembling, mind going

blank, panic attacks, fast heartbeat, sweating, dry mouth, and voice stuttering. This anxiety is not only experienced by low-achieving students but also by high achievers due to the pressure of speaking in a foreign language. (Yulia & Akhiriyah, 2023). Public speaking anxiety, a related concept, is recognized as a social anxiety disorder and is considered one of the most common fears worldwide (Gallego et al. 2021). Students' physical and emotional health are affected by it, and their academic and professional development can be hindered. It has been shown in studies that severe difficulties with public speaking are reported by a significant number of students, highlighting the importance of addressing speaking anxiety in educational settings. Research shows that speaking anxiety is one of the most common obstacles faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Fuadiyah et al., (2022) stated:

Heightened anxiety levels are contributed to by factors such as fear of making mistakes, low language proficiency, and negative feedback. Avoidance behaviors, reduced participation, and decreased self-confidence can be led to by these internal factors. As speaking is a crucial skill for academic and professional success, addressing anxiety in language learning becomes a critical priority.

Speaking anxiety is a common problem that affects many people, especially students who are required to give presentations or speeches as a part of their academic requirements. Suparlan (2021) argue that students feel anxiety when speaking English due to fear of negative consequences from the teacher and feelings of being less capable compared to their peers.

The aims of this study are to identify the internal factors are associated with speaking anxiety among final semester students at PGRI Delta University and to analyze how do internal factors and past experiences form final semester students' confidence in speaking English.

The urgency of this research stems from the fact that speaking anxiety can hinder students' academic performance and real-world communication skills, especially in their final semester when they must be more active in presentations, thesis writing, and preparing for the workforce. Understanding the internal factors causing anxiety, teachers and lecturers can design more empathetic and effective learning strategies.

Previous studies have shown various findings. First is from Yulia R and Akhiriyah (2023) have conducted that

study on the exploring students' speaking anxiety: in case of high achiever students. The aims of her study are to identify the factors related to speaking anxiety in academic performers and examine how speaking English influences the level of speech ability among high-achieving students. The second study was from Suparlan (2021). The aims of his study are to investigate factors that contribute to speaking anxiety in middle school students. Last to mention, it is a study by Amalia N & Ma'mun N (2020). The aims of the study are to explore the reasons and causes behind students' reluctance to speak during presentations.

This study is expected to provide information and increase knowledge in public speaking and can also be used as reference material and information material to obtain an overview in further research. In practice, it is hoped that this study will be useful for every EFL student in motivating themselves to have good self-efficacy and learning achievement so that they have lower anxiety when speaking in public. Moreover, it is also hoped that this study can help teachers to care more about students in providing motivation that encourages students to have strong self-confidence and reduce their anxiety during

classroom presentation or speaking in public.

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design to analyze internal factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among final-year students. A qualitative approach is a method used to explore and comprehend the meanings that individuals or groups perceive as social or human problems (Creswell 2018). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore students' emotional and psychological experiences when speaking English in public. The subjects of this study were final-year students of the English Language Education Program at PGRI Delta Sidoarjo University, specifically the 2021 cohort, with a total of 13 participants. Data collection techniques used two main instruments, namely a questionnaire (open-ended) adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. (1986), using a Likert scale to measure the level of agreement, and interviews with open-ended questions to explore students' experiences and perceptions of speaking anxiety in greater depth. Data analysis in this study was conducted through three stages: first, data reduction, which involves simplifying and grouping data based on themes such as fear

of making mistakes, lack of confidence, shyness, and lack of motivation. Second, data display, in the form of narratives and simple descriptive statistics. Last, drawing conclusions and interpretations, which were linked to relevant theories and literature to answer the research questions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the data analysis based on the information gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The researcher explained all of the data that have been collected about the internal factors that contributing to speaking anxiety and classified them into four main indicators reflecting internal factors, such as lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness, and lack of motivation. The researcher in this study feels the need to provide a concrete description of the findings to identify the highest and lowest factors that cause speaking anxiety among students, which is presented in the table below:

Table 4. 1 Internal Factors o Students' Speaking Anxiety

No.	Indicator Component	Score
1.	Fear of making mistakes	73.84%
2.	Shyness	69.23%
3.	Lack of self-confidence	58.46%
4.	Lack of motivation	53.84%

Based on the data presented in table 4.1 above, it was found that there are four internal factors that significantly contribute to students' speaking anxiety. The most prominent factor is the fear of making mistakes, followed by shyness and lack of self-confidence, while lack of motivation is the lowest factor causing anxiety in speaking among students.

1. Fear of Making Mistakes

In the table above, fear of making mistakes has the highest score than other internal factors. This shows that fear of making mistakes is the internal factor that most affect students' anxiety in speaking English. This factor is reflected in students' concerns about the possibility of using incorrect grammar, wrong pronunciation, or inappropriate vocabulary selection when speaking in English.

Adamson (2022) state that fear of making mistakes is a dominant emotional factor that contributes to students' speaking anxiety. Students often avoid to speaking not because of a lack of understanding, but because they are afraid of being laughed, criticized, or ridiculed for their vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical error. This fear is often

related to feeling of embarrassment and low self-esteem, which hinder students from participating in speaking activities.

2. Shyness

The second highest score is shyness. Many students show a tendency to withdraw or remain silent when asked to speak in front of others. This attitude generally stems from a sense of discomfort at being the center of attention or a fear of negative judgment from peers and lecturers. Therefore, high feeling of shyness can be a significant emotional obstacle in students' participation to speak English in classroom activities.

Horwitz et al. (1986) state that speaking anxiety influenced by shyness is not only caused by a lack of linguistic ability, but also the psychological pressure that students feel when they have to present themselves in a foreign language. Students feel anxious if their speech sounds "weird", not fluent, or not as expected.

3. Lack of Self-Confidence

Lack of confidence was also identified as one of the significant internal factors. Students who experience this generally feel unsure of

their ability to speak English. They often compare their speaking skills with their classmates and feel less competent than others, which triggers anxiety and decreases their participation in speaking activities. Lack of self-confidence can also be influenced by previous negative experiences, such as being ridiculed, corrected directly in front of a large audience, or being laughed by friends when practicing speaking in English. These past experiences can cause social trauma that inhibits their courage to try again.

Yaikhong & Usaha (2012) stated that self-confidence plays an important role in students' ability to actively participate in speaking activities. When students feel uncertain about their abilities, they tend to avoid speaking, even when they have understanding of the material. This feeling is often caused by limitations in vocabulary, uncertainty in sentence structure and a lack of experience in speaking English.

4. Lack of Motivation

Lack of motivation was the lowest of internal factor that contributing speaking anxiety. Although this factor seems less dominant than the other

internal factors, it still plays a role in shaping students' speaking anxiety. Some students showed limited interest in improving their speaking skills or lacked clear personal goals regarding communication in English, which ultimately affected their willingness to engage in speaking tasks. In the view of some students, speaking in English is not a skill that needs to be honed continuously, but rather just an academic requirement, so that the practice of speaking English becomes inconsistent and is done without enthusiasm. In addition, some students consider that English vocabulary is difficult to pronounce. Sometimes if the pronunciation is wrong, it can have a different meaning, which can cause hesitation in students to convey their ideas or opinions orally.

According to Masthurah et al. (2021), students with lack of motivation tend to show reluctance to speak in English because they lack a strong desire to practice or participate actively in class. This can be caused by a lack of interest in English due to uncertainty about the practical benefits or unpleasant learning experiences.

In addition to these four factors, this study also explains that past experiences have a significant role and a close relationship with the development of students' confidence in speaking English. The interview results show that a number of students still carry emotional baggage from negative experiences they have had in the past. For example, some students recounted being teased by classmates for improper pronunciation, being reprimanded by the teacher in front of the class when mispronouncing a word, or experiencing severe nervousness when having to speak in public. These events not only affected their perception of their language skills, but also lowered their confidence and triggered anxiety whenever they were asked to speak in English. This study also noted that not all past experiences were inhibiting. Some students revealed that the experience of speaking in public or in challenging situations became a turning point that encouraged them to continue learning and improving. With support from teachers, friends and a developmental environment, they were able to reflect positively on these negative experiences and use them as motivation to grow. This shows that past experiences, both positive and negative, play an

important role in shaping students' mental and emotional readiness to face the challenge of speaking language.

In addressing speaking anxiety, it is crucial to explore strategies that can assist EFL students in managing and reducing their anxiety. This study highlights three effective strategies adapted from Kondo and Yin-Ling (2004) in Nugroho and Hapsari (2024), namely preparation, relaxation, and positive thinking.

1. Preparation

Preparation includes understanding the topic, organizing ideas logically, writing a script or key points, and practicing pronunciation and intonation repeatedly. In the results of interview, students said that thorough preparation can build their confidence because they feel more prepared and understand the material to be delivered. When students know what to say and how to say it, their anxiety levels tend to decrease. Furthermore, lots of practice can also help reduce the possibility of speaking errors, which is one of the main factors of anxiety in foreign language.

2. Relaxation

Relaxation is a strategy used to calm the mind and body both before and during speaking English in public.

This strategy aims to reduce the physical and mental tension that often arises in response to stressful situations when speaking English. In the results of interview, students said that when the body is in a relaxed state, the mind becomes clearer and more focused, so the students can speak confidently and more fluently. Commonly used relaxation techniques include deep breathing, light meditation, and muscle stretching.

3. Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is a psychological strategy that focuses on replacing negative thoughts (such as fear of making mistakes, concern about others' judgement, and doubts about own abilities) with more constructive and supportive thoughts, such as the belief that making mistakes are part of the learning process and that abilities will improve over time. In the results of interview, student said that when students are able to manage their thoughts and emotions positively, they are more likely to appear confident and reduce nervousness when speaking English in public or in class discussions.

Based on the results obtained, this study showed that psychological aspects significantly influenced students' speaking ability. Therefore, it was crucial for educators to understand these internal factors, in order to help the students reducing their speaking anxiety by creating a more comfortable and supportive learning environment. So that, students are more enthusiastic about learning English and their participation in speaking activities will increase.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it could be concluded that there were four internal factors contributing to speaking anxiety among final-semester students at PGRI Delta Sidoarjo University. These factors were fear of making mistakes, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation. Among these factors, fear of making mistakes was the most influenced in students' speaking anxiety. The second highest score of internal factors that cause speaking anxiety is shyness, followed by lack of self-confidence, while lack of motivation was the less and the lowest of internal factor that contributing to speaking anxiety.

Furthermore, this study found that internal factors and past experiences significantly influence the development of students' self-confidence in speaking English. Negative experiences, such as being laughed or corrected publicly, often heightened anxiety and reduced confidence. However, this study also mentioned that these experiences can contribute to personal growth when students are able to reflect on them positively. Some students said that consistent preparation, relaxation techniques, and positive thinking helped them manage their anxiety and build their confidence over time. Therefore, even though internal factors may initially hinder speaking performance, they also have the potential to form students' confidence when addressed through appropriate strategies and a supportive learning environment.

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