

**PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY DURING ORAL PRESENTATION:
FACTORS AFFECTING AND HOW STUDENTS OVERCOME IT**

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ABSTRACT

The main focus in this research is to investigate the factors affecting public speaking anxiety among students during oral presentation and to explore students' strategies to overcome public speaking anxiety. The participants in this this case study research are 2nd grade of senior high school students at Daruttaqween Islamic Boarding School. This research utilizes observation and interview to explore more deeply about factors causing public speaking anxiety and students' strategies to overcome it during oral presentation. The results of this research found that the students experienced various factors affecting public speaking anxiety such as lack of confidence, language factor, grammar factor, pronunciation factor, and peer factor. Meanwhile, the students' strategies in overcoming public speaking anxiety were think positively, preparation, practice, and deal with audience. Hopefully, the results of this study can be helpful as a reference for students and teachers in order to aware about public speaking anxiety, so the approach for overcoming public speaking anxiety can be found simultaneously.

Keywords: Oral Presentation, Public Speaking, Speaking Anxiety

ABSTRAK

Fokus utama dalam penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki faktor faktor yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara pada saat menyampaikan presentasi lisan. di kalangan siswa selama presentasi lisan dan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi siswa untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara di depan umum. Partisipan dalam penelitian studi kasus ini adalah siswa kelas 2 SMA di Pondok Pesantren Daruttaqween. Penelitian ini menggunakan observasi dan wawancara untuk menggali lebih dalam tentang faktor-faktor penyebab kecemasan berbicara di depan umum dan strategi siswa untuk mengatasinya selama presentasi lisan. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa siswa mengalami berbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi kecemasan berbicara di depan umum seperti kurang percaya diri, faktor bahasa, faktor tata bahasa, faktor pengucapan, dan faktor teman sebaya. Sedangkan strategi mahasiswa dalam mengatasi kecemasan berbicara di depan umum adalah berpikir positif, persiapan, latihan, dan menghadapi audiens. Semoga hasil penelitian ini dapat bermanfaat sebagai referensi bagi siswa dan guru dalam rangka mewaspadaai kecemasan berbicara di depan umum, sehingga dapat ditemukan pendekatan untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara di depan umum bersama sama.

Kata kunci: Presentasi Lisan, Berbicara di Depan Umum, Kecemasan Berbicara

INTRODUCTION

Speaking activity is significant aspect because it related to producing language or communicating in learning process in the classroom. Public speaking is a form of speaking activity that is most commonly found in the classroom. Through public speaking, students can develop their speaking skills because they can practice about receiving, processing and conveying information. In addition, Brown (2001) stated that Speaking is an engaging technique for establishing meaning involving information production, processing, and reception.

In English classes, public speaking has many advantages because it can practice both speaking and English skills. According to Al-Khresheh (2024), Speaking in public has two inherent benefits that can be summed up as follows: it may be used to improve various parts of oral communication and as a means of overcoming issues related to language. Public speaking is Its beneficial not only useful in the classroom, developing speaking skills provide benefits to people's personal, professional, and public life. Effective communication is essential for career advancement, social engagement, and academic development (Schreiber and Hartranft, 2013).

According to McCroskey (Kankam and Boateng, 2017), speaking in public tends to be a significant cause of anxiety for people from different backgrounds. For many students, experiencing public speaking anxiety is a common issue during oral presentation. While public speaking anxiety refers to the students' communication apprehension and students' speaking anxiety. Bodie (Shi et al., 2015) defined speaking anxiety as a situation specific social anxiety that arises from the real or anticipated enactment of an oral presentation. Speaking anxiety, which frequently accompanies public speaking performances, particularly in formal or semi-formal settings, may prevent people from reaching their maximum potential in many kinds of academic and professional contexts (Kankam and Boateng, 2017).

Several previous studies showed that public speaking anxiety is still often experienced by students. According to Kankam and Boateng (2017), the American

Anxiety Survey conducted in 2014 by Chapman University revealed that 25.3% of Americans were frightened of speaking in front of large groups of people. Another study that conducted by Stein et al. (Shi et al., 2015) found that as many one-third of a large community sample from students reported excessive speaking anxiety.

This study seeks to complement previous research that has revealed numerous factors contributing to students' public speaking anxiety. In addition to focusing on these factors, this research also aims to explore the strategies employed by students to overcome public speaking anxiety, addressing the existing gap. Thus, this study intends to enrich the current literature on the causes of public speaking anxiety and offer strategies applied by students to manage it. This research provides valuable insights into the factors that contribute to public speaking anxiety during oral presentations among students and explores the unique methods students use to cope with this anxiety. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a guide for other students, offering strategies that can be adopted to help manage and overcome public speaking anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative descriptive approach and fits into a case-study design to investigate students' public speaking anxiety during oral presentation at boarding school. This research conducted in Daruttaqwien Islamic Boarding School where students do public speaking activities frequently and meet each other almost every time. This research wants to know whether students still experience public speaking apprehension and then investigate more deeply about the factors affecting public speaking anxiety and what are the students' strategies in overcoming public speaking anxiety. The participants are 2nd grade of senior high school students and involved 6 students selected as follows: 4 students from 1 oral presentation group and 2 students are chosen on a voluntary basis from the audience.

To gain data, this research implemented classroom observation and conducting semi-structured interview as the instruments to gain the deeper

information about the factors affecting public speaking anxiety among students and how students' strategies in overcoming public speaking anxiety. The interview guidelines gained from recent expert research provided ensure the reliability and authenticity of the data collecting techniques. In analyzing the data, the researcher applied three phases of thematic analysis defined by Miles and Huberman (1994). First, the process of data reduction is crucial in selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and adjusting the data found in field notes and interview transcriptions. The second phase is data display. The last, conclusion drawing is the finale phase of analyzing data in this research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The observational data found that in Daruttaqwien Islamic Boarding School had highly varied, especially outside of class or extracurricular activities. There are various public speaking activities within the classroom such as oral presentation, storytelling, group discussion, and more. Additionally, extracurricular activities of public speaking include Muhadhoroh (religious sermons), Kultum (short religious lectures), speech competition, learning to be an MC or presenter, Mufrodat (vocabulary) practice in both Arabic and English in front of peer, drama performing, and more. However, this research focuses to investigate the public speaking anxiety specifically on oral presentation only. Since the participants in this research are only students, the research examines public speaking anxiety solely from the students' perspectives. This research was conducted during a single meeting session.

Based on the finding of this research, a number of 2nd grade of senior high school students in Daruttakwien Islamic Boarding School still experienced speaking anxiety when delivering public speaking especially during oral presentations. It turned out that even though they have done it often and also used to it, the anxiety among students still occurred occasionally. The findings of observation found that the students exhibited the various sign and symptoms of

public speaking anxiety during English presentation. The interview results indicated that the factors causing public speaking anxiety among students were different each other and students had their own strategies to overcome the anxiety.

1. Factors Affecting Students' Public Speaking Anxiety during Oral Presentation.

The first point discussed in the findings was the factor causes students' public speaking anxiety during Oral presentation. The researcher categorized the causal factors into traitlike factor, low language ability, students' experience, lack of preparation, and peer factor.

a. Traitlike Factor

Traitlike factor is a factor that causes communication anxiety which is associated with personality, character, mindset, self-esteem and self-acceptance. The personality and character of students are certainly different, some are shy, brave, and confident. Some of them are also more afraid in facing certain situations but more confident in other communication situations.

Several studies have examined the relationship of traitlike factor or personality variable to speaking anxiety. Lustig (McCroskey, 1977) found a correlation between speaking anxiety and self-esteem, and a correlation between speaking anxiety and self-acceptance. McCroskey (1977) discovered correlations between communication anxiety and self-esteem in a comprehensive series of investigations which includes a wide range of subject populations.

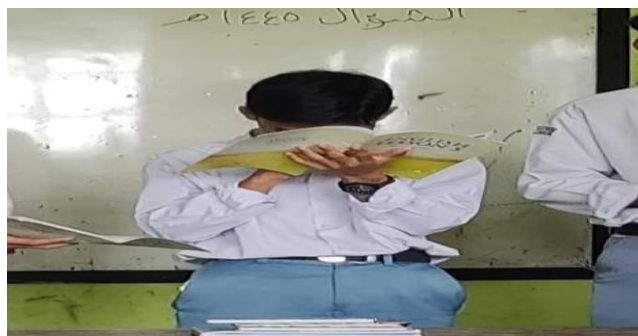


Figure 1. A Presenter Covered His Face with a Book

during Oral Presentation

The Figure 1 above showed that when a presenter covers his face during an oral presentation, it could be for any number of reasons, such as shyness or lack of confidence. Furthermore, another student also admitted that he lacked confidence when being stared at by people somewhere without even having speak during an oral presentation, as one student revealed “Even when we are walking when people are looking at us, we can feel nervous”. In addition, several students admitted that mindset also greatly influences the quality of their performance during oral presentations, as they explained: “In my opinion, the most fundamental thing when speaking in public is mentality”, “Usually because my mentality is not good”.

b. Low Language Ability

Oral presentation is closely related to students’ ability to use language in creating and communicating. English proficiency is known as students’ ability to use English to create and communicate meaning in spoken context. Low ability are related to foreign language anxiety theory according to Horwitz et al. (1986), a particular complicated of student’ perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and measures associated to language acquisition in the classroom that result from the unique characteristics of the language process of acquisition is known as foreign language anxiety (FLA).

Lack of English skill is able to be a barrier during oral presentation. Students believe that English with all its components are the factor causing them to experience public speaking anxiety during oral presentations, as they stated: “I think English is a bit hard for me”, “I don't know how to speak English in public, because I don't speak English fluently”, “Sometimes like if there is new vocabulary, it is also difficult for me”, “Maybe the pronunciation is more difficult than grammar”, “Considering that pronunciation is a bit difficult”, “Pronunciation and grammar are hard”, “It is difficult to organize the wording”.

c. Students' Experience.

Students' experience in public speaking greatly influences their performance during oral presentation. For students, they find public speaking is difficult when they first try it and need time to get used to it. Based on research conducted by Kho and Ting (2023), it was found that there is a significant relationship between communication anxiety and public speaking experience among students, showing the usefulness of practice in lowering anxiety. This is in accordance with the results of the interview above that students had difficulty in delivering public speaking when first time they tried it. As time went, through lots of experience, learning from another people public speaking performance, learning from mistakes, the level of anxiety will also decrease.

The following are students' responses about their experiences in public speaking: "The first-time public speaking was definitely difficult, I still felt scared and nervous, but since I got used to it, I can do it", "Public speaking is not easy, it takes practice, in fact it took me around 2 or 3 years to become fluent", "I think it is hard because we don't used to it, like if we were suddenly asked to do public speaking it would be shocked, I mean it would still feel unfamiliar". According to them, at first public speaking was difficult, but the more often they appear in public, the more they get used to it. Public speaking requires a lot of experience to get used to it and then become fluent.

d. Lack of Preparation

Students have to prepare the material properly before oral presentation held. Well preparation also make students feel more relax and can control their performance during oral presentation. Lack of preparation increases anxiety and stress levels, which can disrupt speaking ability and make someone appear less competent (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Without well-preparation, a presenter not only lacks confidence but also struggles to deliver the message in an engaging and persuasive manner. In line with that, lack of preparation leads to

poor organization in delivering information, making it difficult for the audience to follow and understand the message (Sweller et al., 2011). Therefore, the success or effective presentation is determined based on the planning and preparation. Preparation is equipment or supplies for proficiency in learning activities, students need to be prepared both in physical and psychological (Sudjana and Rifai, 2011).



Figure 2. Several Students Read the Book for a Long Time during Oral Presentation

From the Figure 2 above, it is noticeably that several students read the book for a long time during oral presentation. Lack of preparation is able to make student feeling anxious because they will forget or not even know what to deliver during oral presentation. It also found in the interview results that some students admitted that lack of preparation had responsibility to their anxious during oral presentation, as they expressed: “What's the reason I'm nervous? That's because of my lack of preparation”, “Usually, when I forget the material and didn't be prepared”.

e. Peer Factor

The inner thoughts and fear of being judged by classmates or peers would encourage students to feel anxious constantly. This factor is related to social anxiety theory developed by Clark and Wells (1995), which highlights how the

fear of negative evaluation and humiliation contributes to social anxiety. According to this theory, individuals who experience social anxiety, especially during oral presentation, are preoccupied with the possibility of being judged harshly or laughed at.

Furthermore, anxiety levels can vary depending on the context and the familiarity of the audience. According to Mattick and Clarke (1998), students often experience heightened anxiety when interacting with strangers because they are uncertain about how they will be evaluated and how to manage their impressions. When speaking in front of familiar individuals, students might have a clearer understanding of their audience's expectations and reactions, which can reduce anxiety, as explained in the finding of this research before.

Students would always feel anxious because of the fear of being evaluated by peers. Students is afraid of making mistakes during oral presentation that can cause them to get laughed or commented by their classmate. Afterward, being laughed at and commented by their peers can distract their focus during oral presentation which can make them feel nervous, as the interview results showed that: "When I being ridiculed", "If someone in the audience suddenly disproves, it makes me less focused", "Usually because of being teased and laughed at by other students", "Sometimes there are students who interrupt and disprove me, I get nervous and forget what I want to say".

2. Students' Strategies to Overcome Public Speaking Anxiety During Oral Presentation

a. Thinking positively

As explained above, students' doubts make them feel that they are less capable during oral presentations. Therefore, students must form positive thoughts in their heads, must be able to stay calm and not think negatively. Thinking positively related to Self-Efficacy theory developed by Bandura (1977), that focused on an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully. Bandura (1977) stated that high self-efficacy can lead to reduced

anxiety and improved performance. In addition, adopting a positive mindset and focusing on constructive thoughts rather than fearing negative outcomes can help anxious and improve performance.

Several students agreed that positive thinking could help them in overcoming their public speaking anxiety during oral presentation, as expressed in the following interview results: “It depends on us, if we feel difficult it will be difficult, if we feel easy, it will be easy”, “No matter what, I have to show them if I can”.

b. Preparation

Preparation is equipment or supplies for proficiency in learning activities, students need to be prepared both in physical and psychological (Sudjana and Rifai, 2011). For a proper oral presentation, students must prepare the whole thing related to oral presentation because preparation is the key to effective oral presentation. In the other hand, lack of preparation leads to poor organization in delivering information, making it difficult for the audience to follow and understand the message (Sweller et al., 2011). In order to be prepared, students should understand as much as they can about the audience, the content of their speech, the delivery method, and the location of the speech. Apart from that, students should also have mental forwardness. As revealed from the previous observation results, lack of preparation can make students less able to control their performance during oral presentation. Therefore, the students revealed their strategy before their oral presentation that they must prepare, as revealed from the interview results: “We prepare the material then note it in a book then it will be assessed and corrected by the teacher or senior”, “I must prepare the material that related to my performance later”, “Before we speak in public, we definitely doing preparation to speak”, “The second one is about preparing the material. It's useless to have a good mentality but lack material things it will not be systematic”.

c. Practice

Practice makes perfect in every situation, especially in public speaking. Practice is the main key in developing effective public speaking skills. According to Pelias (Smith and Fymier, 2006), practice is recommended as one of the most successful techniques for coping for speech anxiety in the majority of public speaking textbooks that discuss the issue. Practice allows students to refine their delivery, improve their timing, and anticipate potential issues, making them feel more prepared and in control. In addition, the amount of period practice spent by the students before giving an oral presentation is one the aspect that affects his or her anxiety (Goberman et al., 2011). By practicing oral presentation multiple times, students can become more familiar with their material, which helps reduce nervousness and build confidence.

Each student had a special and unique way of practicing for the success of their public speaking, especially during oral presentations, as stated in the interview results below: “Usually I practice in class with body language”, “here, before public speaking, we will practice together like simulation of public speaking from start to finish to our friends”, “For me, I speak in front of the mirror, then when I am fluent enough, I call my friend to practice speaking and if there are any mistakes I ask for corrections. After that I am ready for public speaking”, “I usually practice speaking, practice by talking to myself in class, in the room, or even in the bathroom. Another way is to practice by listening to preaching or speeches from another people or religious teachers. When at home I listen to speeches with a headset”.

d. Dealing with Audience

The last strategy known based on the interview results was dealing with the audience. Although, the results of previous data show that peer or audience factors can interfere with their focus, but on the other hand it can also entertain and reduce their anxious feelings during oral presentations.

Ezeukwu (Eke, 2021) suggested that to be proficient in public speaking, student should be aware of the audience because the main responsibility when delivering a speech is to either enlighten, inspire, convince, or entertaining them. The main aspect that students often miss during oral presentations is the audience because dealing with the audience is just as important as other strategies to overcome public speaking anxiety.

During the presentation, most of them had a conversation with their peers or teased with the audience, as an ice breaker or an attempt to reduce their sense of anxiety. Here are the results of the interview: “By attracting the audience's attention, joking around to break the ice”, “We invite the audience to joke around, it's okay”, “I love challenges so I when I am in front of the class, I stare at each my classmate”.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of interview results, this research found that numerous factors played a role in causing students to experience anxiety during delivering English presentation: Traitlike factor, low language ability, students' experience, lack of preparation, and peer factor. From the interview result, this research also found that students adjusted several strategies among students in overcoming the anxiety during and before they delivered English presentation. The strategies were thinking positively, preparation, practice, and dealing with audience. This research has several limitations. It does not examine the extent or level of public speaking anxiety experienced by students during oral presentations. Additionally, the study was conducted over a short period, limited to a single oral presentation session, due to time constraints and other considerations. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the specific levels of public speaking anxiety that students experience. Moreover, it is recommended that future studies explore effective solutions or methods that can be applied over a longer period to address these anxiety levels, and then compare the results before and after the implementation of such methods.

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