



Students' Anxiety in Oral Presentations: Factors and Strategies at UIN Raden Intan Lampung

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the level of speaking anxiety, identifies contributing factors, and explores strategies to address speaking anxiety during oral presentations in speaking classes among fourth-semester students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, involving 55 English Department students. Data were collected using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), was modified and used to assess Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). This 33-item, 5-point Likert scale measures students' language anxiety. Results indicate that speaking anxiety is prevalent among the students, particularly during oral presentations, with an average FLCAS score of 36.218. Interviews with six students, representing both low and high anxiety levels, revealed several factors contributing to speaking anxiety. These include negative thinking, lack of preparation, bad experiences, low ability, low confidence, fear of making mistakes, and physical conditions. To mitigate anxiety, students suggested strategies such as thorough preparation, managing negative thoughts, increasing self-confidence, using relaxation techniques, and improving language skills. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. Educators can create a supportive environment, incorporate activities to build confidence, and teach anxiety management strategies. Institutions should consider workshops on public speaking and anxiety reduction. Additionally, integrating frequent oral practice and personalized feedback into teaching methods can enhance students' speaking performance and reduce anxiety effectively.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking anxiety is a significant challenge for foreign language learners, particularly during oral presentations in speaking classes. According to Kenoh

(2021), this anxiety often stems from the fear of making mistakes, which causes hesitation in public speaking. Psychological factors, such as the fear of being negatively judged, play a crucial role in influencing an individual's ability to communicate, especially in unfamiliar and high-pressure environments like foreign language learning.

Bulca and Safaei (2013) highlight that speaking is the most difficult of the four language skills due to its requirement for quick processing and immediate responses. They argue that an inability to predict the course of a conversation, combined with factors like low confidence and insufficient preparation, often leads to presentation failures. Such failures are often driven by self-doubt, lack of interest in the topic, or poor planning.

Ormrod (2011) describes anxiety as a psychological state characterized by worry and discomfort caused by uncertainty about outcomes. It involves cognitive, emotional, and physical responses. Similarly, Guebba (2021) note that students frequently face anxiety-inducing situations in academic settings, such as presentations and exams. Horwitz et al. (1986) categorize anxiety into internal and external factors, including language proficiency, peer pressure, and stage fright. Oral presentations remain a key method for assessing students' speaking abilities. However, many students experience severe anxiety, which manifests through symptoms like trembling, sweating, and frequent verbal fillers, disrupting their ability to communicate effectively.

Speaking is considered one of the most essential language skills for communication (Suleimenova, 2013). emphasize its foundational role in human interaction. However, speaking anxiety can hinder language acquisition and limit opportunities for engagement in social and academic settings, ultimately affecting students' personal and professional growth. Addressing speaking anxiety is vital for improving students' speaking proficiency in English. This study seeks to examine the prevalence of speaking anxiety, identify its causes, and propose strategies to reduce its impact.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Ability

Speaking is a productive skill used to communicate, share information, convey messages, and express ideas through language. Language teaching typically focuses on four key skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which are categorized as receptive and productive abilities (Guebba, 2021). Speaking is considered a productive skill because it reflects the active creation of information, as students not only receive knowledge but also produce it, making it a challenging skill to teach. However, Sakale (2019) argues that speaking has long been a neglected skill in EFL classrooms. To improve language instruction, a balanced approach that emphasizes both receptive and productive skills, particularly speaking, is essential.

In EFL contexts, speaking is a crucial component of language learning because the primary goal is to enable learners to understand and effectively use the target language. Istiara et al. (2023) note that EFL learners often encounter difficulties with speaking, such as limited vocabulary, pronunciation issues, and interference from their mother tongue. Despite the emphasis on the importance of speaking in language learning, many EFL learners continue to face significant challenges, including insufficient vocabulary and persistent pronunciation difficulties.

Speaking is a vital productive skill for students, as it is central to effective communication. The ability to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions clearly through spoken language is essential (Sari et al., 2023). Mastery of speaking requires not only a solid grasp of grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to adapt communication strategies to various situational contexts.

Students' Anxiety

Anxiety is a common emotional response that arises when individuals perceive a situation as threatening or uncertain. Anxiety-provoking circumstances, such as job interviews, oral presentations, or unfamiliar tasks, can lead to feelings of worry, fear, and excessive tension. If left unmanaged, anxiety can severely impact an individual's quality of life. Suleimenova (2013) defines anxiety as a psychological condition marked by excessive worry, fear, and apprehension about future events or situations perceived as threatening. Generalized anxiety disorder, in particular, is characterized by chronic and disproportionate anxiety relative to the actual situation, significantly diminishing quality of life.

Individuals experiencing anxiety often develop avoidance behaviors, refraining from situations they deem threatening. This avoidance can restrict daily activities and negatively affect well-being, even though the perceived threat is often exaggerated. Eysenck (2013) emphasizes that anxiety is primarily driven by cognitive processes, with autonomic physiological responses playing a secondary role. However, evidence indicates that physiological changes can also trigger or intensify anxiety.

Anxiety experienced by English language speakers, particularly in presentation contexts, is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by several factors (Hastomo & Septiyana, 2022). Common symptoms include excessive nervousness, sweating, and tension, occurring before, during, or after a language-related activity. Anxiety, in general, can be described as a psychological condition involving intense and persistent fear about anticipated threats or events. Horwitz et al. (1986) define anxiety as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system."

Oral Presentation

According to Levin and Topping (2006), an oral presentation involves delivering information verbally that has been carefully prepared in advance.

Presenters are expected not merely to memorize or rigidly read from a script but to present their material fluidly and engagingly, creating an impression of direct interaction with the audience. Oral presentations are a fundamental element in many higher education courses, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) programs. These activities serve not only as assessment tools but also as platforms for students to develop their communication skills and present ideas in an organized and collaborative manner.

Assagaf and Azman (2021) argue that oral presentations help students enhance self-confidence, refine soft skills essential for professional contexts, and prepare for various real-world presentation scenarios. Similarly, Al-Nouh et al. (2015) emphasize the significance of oral presentation skills in both academic and professional settings. This skill transcends merely sharing information, functioning as a crucial method for developing English language proficiency. Through oral presentations, students are afforded opportunities to directly apply their knowledge, build self-confidence, and strengthen essential communication abilities that are valuable in numerous facets of life and work.

The Factor Causing Foreign Language Anxiety

According to Asnur (2017), anxiety during presentations can be classified into two categories: internal and external factors. Internal factors are primarily related to personal fears and negative emotions. One of the internal factors is the fear of failure, which stems from uncertainty in social interactions. Speakers often worry about their inability to handle unexpected questions or communicate effectively. Another factor is the fear of criticism, where individuals experience anxiety due to high expectations of audience feedback. The fear of rejection or indifference from the audience can significantly heighten anxiety. Additionally, conflicting emotions often arise when speakers desire to succeed but are preoccupied with the possibility of making mistakes. This internal conflict hinders optimal performance. Those who manage to refocus their thoughts on success targets generally perform better.

Speech anxiety is another common internal factor, often caused by concerns over imperfect mastery of the language, such as vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation. Mistakes, whether real or perceived, exacerbate nervousness, creating a negative cycle that can result in stuttering or forgetting words. Similarly, negative experiences from previous public speaking attempts can reinforce expectations of failure, perpetuating a cycle of anxiety. To overcome this, individuals need to change negative thought patterns and develop strategies to manage anxiety. The fear of losing the thread of material is also a significant source of anxiety, as speakers worry about forgetting or miscommunicating their content. Careful preparation is essential to alleviate this fear. Moreover, the fear of being stopped mid-presentation due to an unconvincing appearance can further undermine confidence. This fear is often fueled by assumptions that physical appearance and nonverbal cues heavily influence

audience perception. Finally, negative thinking can create self-fulfilling prophecies, where individuals' thoughts directly impact their performance. Managing negative thoughts is therefore crucial for successful presentations.

External factors also play a significant role in presentation anxiety. One such factor is the condition of the presentation room, including the presence of diverse audiences, such as peers and mentors, and the unfamiliar layout of the room. These external elements can heighten speakers' anxiety and affect their confidence. Failing to practice is another external factor that leads to heightened speaking anxiety. A lack of preparation and insufficient mastery of presentation techniques can create significant challenges, particularly for inexperienced speakers (Andewi & Hastomo, 2022). Lastly, physical factors such as fatigue, poor physical health, or excessive mental pressure before a presentation can exacerbate anxiety. This combination of physical and mental strain can impair clear thinking and adversely affect presentation quality. Proper preparation, physical well-being, and anxiety management strategies are essential to address these external factors effectively.

The Strategies to Overcome Anxiety

Kondo and Yang (2004) identified five categories of strategies to overcome language anxiety based on their study findings. The first category is preparation, which involves proactive efforts to enhance readiness for learning tasks. This includes activities such as intensive studying, creating comprehensive summaries of lecture notes, and other methods aimed at improving students' perception of their mastery of the material. By feeling more prepared, students are less likely to experience anxiety during academic tasks.

The second category is relaxation, which focuses on alleviating the physical symptoms of anxiety. Techniques such as deep breathing and consciously calming oneself are central to this approach. These methods help reduce physical tension and promote a state of relaxation. The third category, positive thinking, involves cognitive strategies aimed at diverting attention from negative thoughts that contribute to anxiety. This may include visualizing success or reframing anxiety-inducing situations as enjoyable challenges. Such strategies help students develop a more optimistic outlook, reducing their overall anxiety levels.

The fourth category is peer seeking, which is based on the idea that sharing experiences with classmates who face similar challenges can foster a sense of comfort and reduce feelings of isolation. This social approach encourages collaboration and mutual support among students, creating a more positive and less stressful learning environment. The final category is labeled resignation, which reflects an apathetic response to language anxiety. Students exhibiting this behavior often engage in avoidance strategies, such as giving up or disengaging entirely by sleeping in class. This passive approach minimizes the psychological impact of anxiety by avoiding direct confrontation with the problem, though it does not address the root cause of

the anxiety. These strategies highlight the diverse ways students cope with language anxiety, ranging from proactive preparation to complete avoidance.

METHOD

According to Creswell (2015), qualitative research is a method used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups assign to social or human problems. The research process involves developing questions and procedures, collecting data in the participant's natural setting, and analyzing data inductively to build general themes from specific details. Researchers interpret the meaning of the data, and the final report typically follows a flexible structure. This approach emphasizes an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the complexity of the situation being studied.

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to provide a comprehensive interpretation of data in a descriptive format. It aims to analyze the level of speaking anxiety among students and identify the factors causing anxiety, as well as the strategies to overcome it during oral presentations in speaking classes at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. The study uses purposive sampling to select participants, a method emphasizing the selection of individuals with unique characteristics relevant to the phenomenon being studied. This approach enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives and experiences. Creswell (2015) notes that researchers "intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon." The population of the study consists of fourth-semester English education students, with the sample drawn from those enrolled in the speaking course during the 2024/2025 academic year. The primary data source is the fourth-semester students, while secondary data sources include scientific articles and journals relevant to the research topic.

Data collection methods include questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire is used to analyze the presence of speaking anxiety, while the interviews provide a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to speaking anxiety and strategies to mitigate it during oral presentations. A modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), a 33-item, 5-point Likert-scale instrument measuring language anxiety, was utilized for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the main data collection method. Wilson (2013) explains that "semi-structured interviews are used when there is some knowledge about the topics or issues under investigation, but further details are still needed."

In qualitative research, data processing involves systematic data analysis that begins during data collection and continues through the final stages of analysis. Rijali (2019) describes data analysis as "the process of systematically searching and organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials to improve

understanding and enable the presentation of findings.” Similarly, Miles and Huberman (1994) explain that data reduction involves selecting, focusing, abstracting, and transforming data. Validity in qualitative research is achieved by ensuring alignment between the researcher’s report and the actual condition of the research object. This study used two strategies to validate data: testing the credibility of the data with reference materials and member checking to confirm the accuracy of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Speaking Anxiety Findings

Table 1. Speaking Anxiety Findings

Finding	Percentage
Confidence in speaking abilities (low to moderate)	78%
Confidence in speaking abilities (moderate to high)	22%
Nervousness during oral presentations	85%
Anxiety causing forgetfulness of vocabulary	76%
Reluctance to volunteer for speaking tasks	76%
Worry about making mistakes	64%
Fear of being laughed at by peers	76%
Panic when presenting without preparation	94%
Negative thinking affecting performance	76%
Physical symptoms during presentations (e.g., heart palpitations)	82%
Perception of classmates having better English skills	93%
Anxiety before presenting despite preparation	64%
Lack of confidence during presentations	84%
Discomfort with oral participation in class	84%
Common anxiety symptoms: nervousness	89%
Common anxiety symptoms: worry	60%
Common anxiety symptoms: trembling	24%

According to Table 1, the study involved 55 fourth-semester English Education Department students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung using purposive sampling. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire was utilized to assess speaking anxiety during oral presentations. The mean score of the questionnaire was 36.218, placing the students' speaking anxiety in the "Exist" category, indicating that anxiety was prevalent among participants.

The results revealed several patterns. The majority of students (78%) lacked confidence in their speaking abilities, with only 22% reporting moderate or high

confidence. Additionally, 85% experienced varying degrees of nervousness during oral presentations, while 76% agreed that anxiety led to forgetfulness of vocabulary during presentations. Similarly, 76% of respondents reported reluctance to volunteer for speaking tasks, largely due to fear of embarrassment, often exacerbated by negative peer reactions.

A significant portion (64%) of participants worried about making mistakes, with many displaying a fear of being laughed at, further contributing to their anxiety. Interestingly, 94% admitted feeling panic when asked to present without preparation, underscoring the role of preparation in alleviating anxiety. Furthermore, 76% reported negative thinking as a key psychological factor affecting their performance, and 82% noted physical symptoms such as heart palpitations during presentations. Comparatively, 93% perceived their classmates to have better English skills, affecting their confidence.

Despite preparation, 64% still felt anxious before presenting, and 84% lacked confidence when delivering presentations. The data also highlighted discomfort during oral participation, with 84% expressing dissatisfaction with speaking in class. Common symptoms of anxiety included nervousness (89%), worry (60%), and trembling (24%), among others. To further explore these findings, six students were selected for in-depth interviews: three with high anxiety levels and three with low anxiety levels. The interviews provided insights into the students' experiences, factors contributing to their anxiety, and the strategies they employed to manage it during oral presentations. These findings offer a comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety and its impact on students' performance in speaking classes.

Factor of Students Speaking Anxiety

The findings from interviews with two categories of informants reveal that oral presentation anxiety is primarily driven by cognitive factors such as negative thinking and inadequate preparation. Anxiety is often exacerbated by a tendency to imagine worst-case scenarios and focus excessively on negative thoughts, creating cognitive distortions that heighten stress and hinder concentration during presentations. A lack of preparation for presentation materials also plays a significant role, leading to feelings of nervousness before standing in front of the class. Common symptoms include a racing heartbeat, sweating palms, and intrusive thoughts, particularly in anticipation of challenging questions from peers or lecturers. Poor preparation leaves individuals feeling unprepared and lacking the confidence to answer questions effectively.

Additionally, past negative experiences with public speaking can perpetuate a recurring cycle of anxiety. Memories of such experiences contribute to a heightened state of stress whenever individuals face similar situations. Environmental factors, such as the physical setup of the presentation room or discomfort caused by temperature or seating arrangements, can further intensify anxiety levels.

Linguistic challenges, including difficulties with pronunciation, particularly in English, also amplify anxiety. The fear of making mistakes and receiving negative judgments from others creates significant barriers to confident speaking. Low self-confidence, both in general and in relation to language proficiency, is another critical factor. Individuals with low self-confidence tend to compare themselves to others, often feeling inadequate or unworthy, which further undermines their ability to present effectively. This lack of confidence reinforces anxiety during oral presentations.

Strategies for Overcoming Student Speaking Anxiety

Interviews with two categories of informants revealed that public speaking anxiety is often caused by factors such as negative thinking, insufficient preparation, past negative experiences, and psychological issues like low confidence. Addressing this anxiety requires a holistic approach. First, thorough preparation is key. Detailed planning, consistent practice, and a solid understanding of the material can reduce anxiety by alleviating uncertainties. Second, managing negative thoughts is essential. Replacing negative self-perceptions with positive affirmations can strengthen mental resilience and ease pressure.

Building self-confidence is another crucial step. This can be achieved through regular public speaking practice, creating a supportive network, and gradually stepping out of one's comfort zone. Additionally, relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation, or yoga, can help alleviate physical symptoms of anxiety, such as a racing heartbeat or cold sweats. Improving language skills, particularly in English, is also vital for reducing anxiety linked to linguistic challenges. Regular practice, including both oral and written exercises, can enhance pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, thus minimizing the fear of making mistakes. Setting realistic presentation goals and celebrating small achievements can further boost self-confidence. Techniques like positive self-talk and visualization can also foster a sense of assurance. Lastly, individuals should focus on their message and aim to connect with their audience rather than dwelling on self-doubt. It is important to accept imperfections and remember that mistakes are a natural part of growth. By integrating these strategies, individuals can overcome public speaking anxiety and develop into more confident communicators.

DISCUSSION

This study investigates the level of student speaking anxiety, its causes, and strategies to reduce it during oral presentations in speaking classes. The findings indicate that most fourth-semester students in the English Education Department at UIN Raden Intan Lampung fall into the "Exist" category of speaking anxiety, signifying a significant presence of anxiety. A minority of students were identified as having low anxiety levels. Among the respondents, the highest recorded anxiety score was 54, the lowest was 22, and the average score was 36.218. Interviews also revealed that even students with low anxiety levels occasionally experience nervousness when speaking,

indicating that speaking anxiety is a common experience regardless of the anxiety level.

The analysis further identified several factors contributing to speaking anxiety during oral presentations. These include negative thinking, lack of preparation, previous negative experiences, low speaking ability, and low self-confidence. Additional contributors are the fear of making mistakes and physical conditions such as nervousness or a racing heartbeat. These factors demonstrate how psychological, cognitive, and situational elements interact to heighten speaking anxiety, creating barriers to effective communication in a classroom setting (Daud et al., 2019).

To address these challenges, the study also explored strategies that students can use to overcome speaking anxiety. The findings suggest that thorough preparation is a critical step, as it helps students build confidence and minimize uncertainty. Managing negative thoughts is equally important, as it allows students to shift their focus from fear to success. Increasing self-confidence through practice and supportive environments, applying relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, and improving language skills through consistent practice were also identified as effective strategies (Nouh et al., 2015).

Therefore, the study highlights the prevalence of speaking anxiety and its impact on student performance during oral presentations. By understanding the factors that contribute to anxiety and adopting targeted strategies, students can reduce their anxiety levels and improve their speaking abilities. Educators can play a vital role by fostering a supportive environment and encouraging the implementation of these strategies to help students build confidence and excel in speaking tasks.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon among students learning a foreign language, particularly during oral presentations in speaking classes. This anxiety significantly impacts students' ability to convey their ideas effectively and confidently. The research findings indicate that most fourth-semester English Education students at UIN Raden Intan Lampung experience moderate to high levels of speaking anxiety. Factors such as negative thinking, lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes, and past negative experiences contribute to this anxiety. Furthermore, physical symptoms like nervousness and a racing heartbeat exacerbate the issue. The study also identifies effective strategies for reducing anxiety, including thorough preparation, managing negative thoughts, increasing self-confidence, using relaxation techniques, and improving language skills.

The findings of this study carry important implications for both students and lecturers. For students, understanding the sources of their speaking anxiety is a critical first step toward overcoming it. By identifying their triggers, students can adopt strategies that help them build confidence and reduce nervousness during oral presentations. For lecturers, the role as facilitators becomes pivotal in creating

a supportive and encouraging learning environment. Providing opportunities for students to practice speaking in low-pressure settings, offering constructive feedback, and fostering a classroom culture that reduces fear of judgment can significantly help students manage their anxiety and improve their speaking abilities.

While the study offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The sample size was restricted to 55 fourth-semester students from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or institutions. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from questionnaires and interviews, which may be influenced by personal biases or inaccuracies in reporting. Future research could benefit from a larger, more diverse sample and incorporate observational methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety in different contexts.

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be made. Lecturers should focus on creating a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment to help students feel less intimidated when presenting. Incorporating regular, low-stakes speaking activities can help students gradually build their confidence. Students should also be encouraged to practice self-regulation techniques, such as deep breathing and positive self-talk, to manage anxiety. Additionally, workshops or training sessions on public speaking and anxiety management could be offered to help students develop the skills needed to overcome their fears. Future studies should explore the long-term effectiveness of these strategies and examine how cultural and institutional factors influence speaking anxiety in EFL contexts.

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