BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN SPEKING ENGLISH: TEACHER-BASED STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH SPEAKING ANXIETY IN SMKN 5 KERINCI

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Abstract

One of the biggest challenges students have while trying to improve their language abilite is speaking anxiety in English, particularly for EFL Learners like those at SMKN 5 Kerinci The purpose of this study is to determine the reasons behind students' speaking fear as well as the methods teachers employ to help students become more comfortable speaking English. This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology, gathering data through questionnaires, interviews, and observation. According to the results, the primary causes of student anxiety include things like poor language skills, a fear of making errors, low self-esteem, and a lack of environmental support, particularly from family. Gradual speaking practice is one of the best teaching techniques for lowering nervousness. fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom and motivating pupils to practice more at home. Parental engagement is still low, though, therefore the school plays a critical role in fostering students' growth. To assist kids grow more comfortable speaking English, this study suggests improving interactive teaching strategies, encouraging parental participation, and establishing a secure and encouraging learning environment

Keywords: speaking,self-confidence, instructor techniques, and speaking anxiety

Introduction

Speaking is the most important aspect of mastering English. One way to the goal of learning to speak is 1 by speaking in class. Speaking is an essential part of spoken language because it conveys messages differently from written language. Various aspects such as signals, pitch, articulation, stress, rhythm, pauses, voice potential, and facial expressions can be used in speaking. In reality, speaking English is not easy for beginners, especially for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners like Indonesian students (Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020). Most people believe that speaking is an essential skill that students need to possess to determine their level of language comprehension. This increases the standard for success in developing English-speaking skills and causes some students to compare their speaking abilities with others (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018). As a result, many students worry that they will not be able to acquire this language skill. They often push themselves to achieve unrealistic goals, even beyond their reach. This is the cause of their anxiety in developing English-speaking skills.

Anxiety is a major issue for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially when it comes to mastering speaking skills. Fear, also known as anxiety, has become one of the factors that contribute to communication problems. When a person cannot communicate and demonstrate that they truly understand English well, anxiety often leads to failure (Husna, 2021). Anxiety is a state of restlessness and difficulty in thinking that arises due to

the fear of danger, misfortune, or failure. Students will experience anxiety regardless of how well they have prepared. Even those who have thoroughly prepared everything can still experience anxiety (Suleimenova, 2013). The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected many countries, is one of the causes of increased fear among students, especially in acquiring speaking skills.

The traditional method of education has changed due to the pandemic. According to a report by the United Nations (UN), COVID-19 has forced school closures, depriving 1.6 billion children in 190 countries of normal educational opportunities (Husna, 2021). Online learning can cause anxiety and even depression for some students. Excessive workloads from teachers force students to work on assignments from morning until night (Oktawirawan, 2020).Another factor contributing to increased anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic is the pressure and workload placed on teachers (P. Sari et al., 2020). Stress and a large amount of homework are the main causes of students' anxiety.Several previous studies have highlighted this anxiety issue.

For some students, English can feel like a daunting challenge. This is completely understandable since it is not our native language. One of the biggest difficulties lies in pronunciation, as English words are spoken very differently from Indonesian.

Many students lack motivation to learn English for various reasons. However, mastering the language requires consistent practice in listening, reading, writing, and speaking. These skills cannot be developed overnight success in learning English depends on dedication and regular practice. In schools, teachers sometimes focus only on delivering material they consider important while overlooking what their students actually need.

One of the key factors contributing to students' anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic is the heavy workload assigned by teachers, along with external pressures from their environment (P. Sari et al., 2020). The combination of academic demands and external stressors has led to heightened anxiety among students.

Several studies have explored this issue of anxiety. Research by Saputra (2020) on panic and anxiety symptoms caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Yogyakarta and Aceh found that students' resilience played a crucial role in managing their anxiety. The ability to remain calm, think rationally when making decisions, and approach challenges with a positive mindset were identified as effective strategies for overcoming speaking anxiety (Saputra, 2020).

English is an adaptive subject that plays a crucial role in supporting the teaching and learning process in schools. It helps students develop the necessary skills and competencies required by their study programs.At higher levels, English learning focuses on helping students practice their language skills, both in spoken conversations and written forms, at an intermediate level.Ultimately, all efforts aim to maximize vocational high school (SMK) students' competencies to meet government standards. With these skills, students will be able to communicate effectively and apply their knowledge in both business and industry settings.

English education prepares students to engage in everyday communication in line with global expectations while also enhancing their overall communication abilities. Competence is a key personal attribute, and successfully developing it can be a significant achievement, even on a

global scale. Strong verbal and written communication skills are essential for success.At the vocational high school (SMK) level, English is designed to equip students with the foundational knowledge and language skills relevant to their respective study programs, ensuring they can apply them effectively in their chosen fields.

The research conducted at SMKN 5 Kerinci aims to examine the strategies implemented by teachers to support students in developing their English-speaking skills. By analyzing teaching methods in real classroom settings, this study seeks to understand how educators address students' nervousness and anxiety when required to speak in English. Identifying effective instructional approaches is essential for minimizing students' fear and fostering a more supportive and encouraging language-learning environment.

By exploring both the challenges students face and the strategies employed by teachers, this research aims to contribute to the enhancement of English language instruction. Developing students' confidence in speaking English is crucial for their academic and professional success. Therefore, this study seeks to provide valuable insights and recommendations for both educators and students to improve English-speaking skills in vocational education.

Many previous studies have investigated speaking anxiety, also known as speaking anxiety, in english as a foreign language (EFL) learners. However, most of these studies only address common causes of anxiety, such as fear of making mistakes, lack of understanding, or lack of self-cofindence. However, not much research has studies how external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the change from face to face learning to online learning have increased students'

speaking anxiety. This is especially true for EFL learning in indonesia.

In addition, current research focuses more on college students, while high school students or beginners, who are still in the initial stages of mastering speking skills, have not received much attention. One of the gaps in the literature is the lack of research that studied students' personal experiences and emotional respomses during online english speaking anxiety, and how students cope wiht anxiety in real life is still limited.

This study has novel elements because:

1. Examining EFL learnners' speaking anxiety in online or post pandemic learning contexts, which is rarely discussed thoroughly.
2. Centers on indonesian students to provide culturally relevent insight into how local students experience and interpret speaking anxiety.
3. Combine pedagogical and psychological perspectives by looking at how teaching methods, workload, and emotional factors influence students' speaking abilities.
4. Demonstrate students' self perceptions and their coping approaches, and provide practical suggestions for teachers to help reduce anxiety and grow students' cofidence in speaking english.

Research Methodology
1. Research Type and Approach

This study uses a case study design and a qualitative methodology. This method was chosen in order to obtain a thorough grasp of the phenomena that takes place in the field, specifically with regard to students' fear when speaking English and the attempts made by educators and the school to boost students' self-esteem. A case study gives the researcher the opportunity to investigate participant experiences and viewpoints in an authentic and contextual environment.

2. Study Location

SMK Negeri 5 Kerinci, situated in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia, was the site of the study. This school was chosen because the researcher found problems that were pertinent to the study's objective, specifically children who get nervous when they had to speak in English. Additionally, the school has an English instructor that actively guides pupils and is willing to use a variety of teaching methods to help students improve their speaking abilities.

3. Participants in the Research

In this study, three students and one English teacher participated. Purposive sampling was used by the school to choose the participants based on predetermined standards that matched the goals of the study. Students who displayed symptoms of anxiousness during class activities involving the use of English were chosen. In contrast, the instructor was picked because of her background and hands-on experience helping pupils during English classes.

4. Research Tools

The primary tool in qualitative research is the researcher. However, a number of auxiliary tools were also employed to aid in the data collecting process, such as:

Open-ended questions that might be created during the interview process were included in the interview guide.
To obtain more precise statistics, the interviews are recorded using a voice recorder.

Field notes are used to document nonverbal cues, the mood of the interviews, and other significant information that the audio recorder missed.

5. Data Collection Method

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used to get the data. While giving participants the opportunity to freely share their thoughts and experiences, the researcher developed a series of leading questions. To give the participants a relaxed and open setting, the interviews were held right at the school.

Indicatorsof inerview

1. Signs of student speaking anxiety

Indicators of fear the teacher calls out fear to speak.
- Fear of making mistakes when speaking engkish.
- Afraid of being teased or laughed at by school freinds.
- Fear of failing in english.
- I'm afraid i will lose vocabulary or garmmar when i speak.
- Fear of being seen as showing off your abilities or being too smart.
- Afraid to speak without preparation.

Self esteem and self confidence indicators.

- Cofidence level when speaking english.
- Feelings of nervousness or panic during speaking activities.
- Awareness of language limitations.
- A person's reaction to correction given by an educator or criticsm from classmates.

Language ability indicator

- Understand english comprehension and grammar.
- Fluency in pronunciation and articulation of words.
- Ability to compose sentence fluently when speaking .

Classroom environment indicators

- Classroom atmosphere during english lessons .
- The teacher's methods and perspective when students make mistakes.
- Classmate support and cooperation during speaking activities.

2. **Indicators related to anxiety coping strategies**
   Strategies for behavior

- Avoidant behavior, such as remaining silent or avoiding eye contact.
- Efforts to prepare yourself before speaking, such as meorizing words.
- Despite feeling anxious, participate in class discussions.

Psychological and emotional approach

- Before speaking, use relaxion or breating techniques.
- Self motivated and optimistic.

- Overcome anxiety with practice or repetition.

Learning approach

- Practice communicating with others in english outside of class.
- Ask the teacher's opinion to improve yor abilities.
- Focus on grammatical accuracy rather than understanding the message.

Signs that shows teacher support

- Teacher's efforts to grow students' self confidence.
- The way teachers provide feed back, whether it is crucial or constructive.
- Teacher strategies for creating a calm and supportive classroom atmosphere.

To maintain confidentiality and promote transparency, each kid was questioned separately. To learn more about the teacher's methods for helping children who struggle with speaking, a separate interview was conducted. Every interview was videotaped, logged, and then verbatim transcribed for additional analysis in line with the study's objectives.

Study objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the English-speaking anxiety of SMK Negeri 5 Kerinci students. The goal of the study is to determine the root reasons of students' nervousness when speaking English as well as the coping mechanisms they employ.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and questionnaires conducted with students and teachers at SMKN 5 Kerinci, it was found that speaking anxiety in English remains a significant barrier in the language learning process, particularly in speaking skills. Most students reported feeling uncomfortable or even anxious when required to speak in front of the class using English. The main causes of this anxiety include fear of making mistakes, embarrassment about incorrect pronunciation, and worry about being laughed at by their peers. One student quote that illustrates this situation is, " fear of ridicule, fear of making a mistake, and fear of feeling anxious if you don't prepare...", highlighting how social reactions from peers greatly influence students' confidence.

Despite having a fundamental comprehension of the subject matter, students nevertheless found it difficult to articulate their thoughts or responses in English verbally, according to observations made throughout the learning activities. The instructor understood that these challenges were psychological as well as academic. The instructor addressed this by putting in place a number of techniques meant to boost the kids' self-esteem. These included progressive speaking activities, beginning with easy assignments like recording their own English-language speech, making quick presentations, and participating in impromptu group conversations.

The instructor did concede, though, that school-based initiatives are insufficient. The absence of parental support for their children's English language education was one new problem. In actuality, parental support is crucial for creating a positive learning environment at home as well as for offering emotional support and inspiration. According to the teacher, homework that incorporates family involvement or school programs that involve parents in language-related activities are two examples of how active parental participation may enhance the effectiveness of English language learning.

Another strategy developed by the teacher was integrating environmentally friendly school principles into English learning. For instance, through speaking projects on environmental themes that encouraged students to discuss, present ideas, and engage in dialogue with peers in English. This approach not only fostered environmental awareness but also helped students connect with the topic more personally, which reduced their nervousness when speaking.

During the interviews, the teacher also revealed that one of the biggest challenges in building students' confidence today is the advancement of technology, which leads students to rely heavily on tools like Google Translate or AI-based applications to complete English assignments. As a result, they are less accustomed to thinking or speaking in English spontaneously. This dependence on technology weakens their critical thinking in the foreign language and turns the learning process into a passive one. When faced with real-life situations requiring direct speaking, students become stiff and unprepared, which further increases their anxiety.

Student progress was evaluated regularly through oral exams, observation of classroom participation during presentations, and student self-reflection on their personal improvement. The teacher noted that while some students showed significant improvement after receiving the right practice and motivation, others remained stagnant or even regressed due to a lack of internal motivation or environmental

support. Therefore, the teacher emphasized the need to continuously evaluate and adjust teaching strategies to suit students' individual needs and characteristics.

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students become stiff and unprepared, which further increases their anxiety.

Oral tests, classroom involvement during presentations, and student self-reflection on personal growth were all used to routinely assess student development. Due to a lack of personal desire or environmental support, some pupils remained stationary or even regressed, while others demonstrated notable improvement after obtaining the appropriate practice and incentive, according to the teacher. In order to meet the unique requirements and features of each student, the instructor underlined the importance of regularly assessing and modifying teaching methods.

Students acknowledged that a number of the teacher's techniques, including providing thorough explanations of the topic prior to speaking practice, making learning fun, and maintaining a relaxed classroom environment, assisted them in managing their fear. Some students also created their own coping mechanisms for speaking fear, which included recording their voices, practicing with close friends, or practicing in front of a mirror. Additionally, they recommended that educators and other students refrain from making fun of those who are attempting to communicate in English and instead be more encouraging.

According to the study's findings, speaking anxiety is one of the main obstacles to learning English as a foreign language (EFL), as suggested by Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) and Husna (2021). This fear is caused by psychological and social reasons in addition to a lack of language proficiency. Additionally, the study demonstrates that anxiety levels may be lowered by using learning strategies that are fun, helpful, and contextually relevant. This supports Suleimenova's (2013) claim that students may

overcome their speaking fear only in a supportive learning setting.

The result of in depth interviews conducted with teachers and students at SMK Negeri 5 Kerinci shows that speaking anxiety, also known as speaking anxiety, is still one of main obtacles in the english learning process. When asked to speak english in front of the class, most students said that they were often afraid, and not confident. Some students said that they were often afraid of pronouncing or constructing sentence incorrectly. "i'm afraid of saying something wrong and being laughed at by my friends, so i prefer to remain silent," said one student. Another student. Another student said, "if i'm asked to speak suddenly, I immediately go blank even though I've studied before." This statement shows that social pressure and fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers cause their anxiety.

These results are in line with the theory of foreign language anxiety (FLA). According to horwitz, horwitz, and cope (1986), foreign language anxiety consists of there main components: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The interview results shows all three: students were worried about failing their english lessons, worried about having to speak in public, and worrid about other people's jugment. Interviews showed that teachers were aware of students' psychological difficulties. According to the english teacher, "some students actually understand the material, but they don't dare to speak beacause they are afraid of making mistakes or are not confident." Psychological factors such as shyness and lack of motivation are the main causes of students not engaging in speaking activities.

This supports liu and jackson's (2008) opinion that speaking anxiety is more caused by a lack of self confidence and fear of failed communication than a lack of language skills. Gradual learning strategies are used by teachers to reduce anxiety. For example, students are asked to record themselves speaking english at home before practing in small gruops before performing in front of the class. "I want them to get used to hearing their own voices in english before appearing in front of their friends," said the educator. Affective filter theory (Krahen, 1982) states that a positive emotional etmosphere will reduce learning barriers and increase language acquisition. This strategy is in line with this theory.

Additionally, some students say that this technique makes them more confident. "If i practice first with a group of friends, I won't be as nervous when I'm asked to come forward," said one student. This shows how important social support can significantly reduce speaking anxiety. Interviews shows show that, apart from psychological factors, family and environmental support are very important in building students' self confidence. The teacher said, "Most students do not get encouragement from their parents to practice family support makes students unmotivated to carry out extracurricular activities.

This is in accordance with gardner's (1985) social education model, which emphasizes that motivation to learn a second language is strongly influenced by social environmental factors. In addition, teachers stated in interviews that they tried to connect english language learning with environmental themes in accordance with the adiwijaya school program. For example, students are asked to talk about the school enviroment, they are more enthusiastic and less afraid because the material is close to their lives," said the teacher.

This method supports the contextual teaching and learning (CTL) theory developed by johnson (2002), which states that learning will be more affective if it is linked to students' real life contexts. However, teachers face new problems in the digital era. Many students rely on AI applicatins or google translate to complete speaking assigments. "If they are asked to speak spontaneously in class, they are confused, because usually they just copy from google translate," said the teacher. This suggests that too much technology can interfere with natural speaking abilities, even though it helps. This result is in line with pratiwi (2021), who said taht dependence on digital translators can reduce language spontaneity and critical thinking skills. During the lerning process, teachers asses student development through reflection and observation. Some students shows increased self cofidence after receving constant guidance and motivation. "Teachers always say it's okay if you make mistakes, the important thing is to tri first," said one student. Students feel more confident and less anxious when speaking because of this kind of support. This is in accordance with Bandura's theory of self reliance (1997), which states that belief in one's abilities can increase effort and perseverance to achieve academic goals.

Overall, the intervieew results show that various factors influence the speaking anxiety of EFL student at SMK Negeri 5 Kerinci. These factors include dependence on technology, social pressure, lack of family support, and supportive learning approach reduce student's anxiety and increases their participation in speaking activities. These results are in line with research by suleimenova (2013) and and hamzah (2021), who concluded that students can increases their courage and confidence when speaking english through a

positive and process focused learning environment. Therefore, atmosphere, encoraging students, and making learning activities relevant to students' real lives to reduce speaking anxiety.

Conclusion

Speaking anxiety in English is a significant obstacle for students in improving their speaking abilities, according to the research done at SMKN 5 Kerinci. Numerous things contribute to this anxiety, including low self-esteem, a fear of ridicule, an excessive dependence on technology, and a lack of support from family and other social networks.

The teacher's tactics to deal with this problem included encouraging pupils to practice more athome, fostering a supportive learning environment in the classroom, and offering incremental speaking practice. Some pupils found that these methods helped them feel more confident. Significant obstacles still exist, though, especially in relation to parents' lack of commitment and students' propensity to rely excessively on technology to do their homework.

This instance makes it very obvious how crucial the teacher's function as a mentor and facilitator is to the learning process. In addition to imparting knowledge, teachers also need to be able to comprehend the psychological states of their pupils and offer them the emotional support they require. Building students' confidence in speaking English requires a welcoming, nonjudgmental, and upbeat learning atmosphere.

Suggestions

In light of these findings, the following suggestions are put up to improve methods for fostering students'self-assurance when speaking English:
1. Expand the range of instructional strategies, Teachers are urged to constantly experiment with innovative and applicable

teaching strategies that are pertinent to students' everyday life, such as debates, role-playing, project-based learning, and theme presentations

2. Promote parental involvement, To help parents actively support their children's speaking practice at home, schools can provide parent engagement events, such as brief lectures or group projects involving students and their families.

3. Establish a secure andencouraging learning environment, In order to create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable making errors without worrying about criticism or mockery, teachers and students should collaborate. Establishing a culture of respect in the classroom is essential to this process.

4. Uutilize technology wisely, Rather of shunning it, educators should help students utilize it to practice speaking by setting up video speaking challenges, voice recording applications, or AI tools as speaking partners.

5. Perform routine assessments and promote introspection Regularly assessing students' cognitive and emotional speaking development is crucial for educators. Giving students constructive criticism and promoting introspection can go a long way toward improving their speaking skills.

It is believed that by combining these techniques, students would not only be able to get over their nervousness but also develop into self-assured, self-sufficient learners who are prepared to take on the difficulties of communicating in English in both academic and professional contexts.

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