



## THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SPEAKING CLASS ANXIETY AND STUDENTS' ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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### Abstract

Speaking is an essential skill that students should master because it requires oral communication such as, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. This study aims to determine the correlation between speaking class anxiety and their English skills. The participants in this study were sixth semester students majoring in English Education, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia which consisted of 39 students. This research technique uses quantitative research. The research instrument was that students were asked to fill out a questionnaire about speaking anxiety which was distributed via a google form link and then the data would be analyzed with the help of SPSS 15.0 and Ms Excel 2007. The questionnaire was adopted from the Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCA). The questionnaire contains 20 questions related to anxiety problems in speaking class with 5 scale criteria starting from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. From the result of the correlation between speaking anxiety and English proficiency scores, it can be concluded that students with high level of speaking anxiety had lower EPT scores than student with lower speaking anxiety level.

**Keywords:** *anxiety, correlation, English proficiency, speaking*

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### INTRODUCTION

English has become an important foreign language to study in Indonesia, and knowing it is required not only in school but also in a variety of jobs (Plantika & Adnan, 2021). According to Septiyana & Aminatun (2021), English is an international language which is learned by many people to catch up with the development of the world, especially in education, science, and technology. Technology has become an important aspect of language acquisition at all levels of education (Sari & Wahyudin, 2019). In recent years, English has practically become a prominent language. English is one of the most important topics in Indonesian schools. As a result, it has been taught at a variety of educational levels, including primary, junior, and senior high school. In the hopes that students will be better prepared to tackle the globalization period as a result of their formal education. Mandasari & Oktaviani (2018) say that students must have their own motivation or plan during the learning process, in addition to the four basic abilities of English, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing,

which are considered tough to acquire. In English language learning, speaking skill is important to be taught (Mandasari & Aminatun, 2020).

Speaking is an essential skill that students should master because it requires oral communication such as, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension (Brown 2003). Pratiwi & Ayu (2020) said that to educate students to speak English, various strategies can be used, the first thing that can encourage children to learn English is to use interesting materials, media, and strategies in the classroom. According to Putri (2019) Speaking is one of the most significant components of language skills, every language has two types of abilities: the receptive skill, which includes two aspects of comprehension and reading, and the product skill, which includes writing and speaking. Furthermore, according to Thornbury (2005) speaking is so much a part of everyday life that we take it for granted. The average person produces tens of thousands of words per day, though some people, such as auctioneers and politicians, may produce even more. We forget how hard we worked to develop this skill until we have to do it all over again in a foreign language. That is to say, speaking is very vital in life, and it necessitates performance, expression, intonation, emphasizing, pronunciation, grammar, and confidence in order to explore an idea or a viewpoint.

Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) stated that speaking anxiety is a person's hesitation to engage in discussion using specific words. This is related to a lack of motivation and a low level of performance. When studying English as a second language, speaking anxiety is a regular occurrence. Because they lack the competence and practice speaking English in class, English students are more apprehensive about speaking a foreign language. Cohen and Norst (1999) investigated how English-speaking students learn a foreign language and discovered that students voiced their concerns and anxieties when they were placed in situations where they had to appear in front of their peers and teachers. Fear and anxiety are expressed not only through words like humiliation, trauma, dreadful, scary, grudge, frustrated, and so on, but also through physical responses.

According to Mayer (2008) anxiety is a normal part of existence and being human, and it also has a beneficial side. Batumlu & Erden (2007) found that learners with a lower proficiency level tended to show a higher level of foreign language anxiety. He stated that the learners' achievement in the language learning process is directly related to their proficiency levels because proficiency level indicates how much progress learners have made throughout the process. In terms of the relationship between foreign or second language speaking anxiety and proficiency level, there is some evidence to suggest that anxiety level tends to decrease as the proficiency level increases.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between students' English-speaking anxiety and their English proficiency. Rogland (2017) states that students need prerequisites, experiences, and thoughts that can strengthen each student's self-confidence and willingness and ability to learn. More importantly, this study will also investigate how teachers cope with speaking anxiety in class, and their thoughts about working with anxiety.

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**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses quantitative approach. The correlation design was used to examine the correlation between students' speaking anxiety and their English scores. Survey method was used to collect data and regression correlation was used to analyze the data. This study aims to determine the extent to which they are related to each other. The Correlation occurs when the independent variable (X) increases and the dependent variable (Y) also increases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

The population in this study was the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program, Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia. There were 39 students as samples to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 20 items with 5 scales started from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher calculated it using Ms. Excel and then analyzed it using SPSS (Version 15).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Analysis of the Data**

This data was analyzed using the SPSS 15.0 application and the Ms. Excel 2007 program to analyze the collected data. Participants in this study were 39 students who came from the English Education. The purpose of this study was to determine between speaking class anxiety and their English proficiency score. This data collection comes from a questionnaire consisting of 20 items. Table 1.1 below describes the characteristics of respondents based on gender.

Tabel 1.1 Characteristic of respondents based on gender.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	12	28%
Female	27	72%
Total	39	100%

Based on the table above (Table 1.1) 12 participants or 28% of respondents were male and 27 participants or 72% of respondents were female. This data was taken from a questionnaire distributed to English Education students.

## 2. The Reliability of Instrument

Tabel 1.2 The Reliability of Instrument.

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,869	20

Based on table 1.2 shows that the reliability of the questionnaire with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.869, which means it is very reliable. In this study the grade average score and the English proficiency score were measured.

## 3. The Result of Students GPA and EPT

In this study, the data for the students' English proficiency scores and the final mean score of achievement were measured, the data collected would later be used to correlate the findings between student proficiency scores and student achievement on related topics (speaking anxiety).

Tabel 1.3 The Result of Student GPA and EPT

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>							
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
GPA	37	2,00	2,00	4,00	3,4814	,46861	,220
EPT	38	236,00	317,00	553,00	456,3684	47,48281	2254,617
Valid N (listwise)	37						

Table 1.3 shows that the results of student achievement (GPA) with a minimum score of 2.00 and a maximum score of 4.00 with an average mean score of 3.48. As for the EPT value, the minimum value is 317 and the maximum value is 553.

## 4. Findings related speaking anxiety class in positive statement

In the part of the questionnaire focused on positive statements on speaking class anxiety, there were 3 statements related to self-confidence, enjoying speaking class. Data can be seen in table below:

Tabel 1.4 Reports of the possitive statement in speaking anxiety class

<b>Statement</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Q5	I feel confident while I am speaking class	39	3,56	0,67
Q11	I enjoy the experience of speaking class	39	3,63	0,82
Q20	I feel relaxed while speaking class	39	3,43	0,83
<b>Total</b>		39	3,17	0,88

Table 1.4 shows the value of the positive statement of the speaking class obtained from the questionnaire that has been filled in. The highest score obtained is 3.63 in Q11 with a standard deviation of 0.82 with the statement "I enjoy the experience of speaking class" and in Q5 which states "I feel confident while I am speaking English" with a standard deviation of 0.67. Then the score in Q20 with a standard deviation of 0.83 which shows that the English Education students really enjoy speaking class.

### 5. Findings related speaking anxiety class in negative statement

The table below is presented with statements that lead to student anxiety during class speaking, there are 17 statements about doubt, anxiety when the class talks without preparation. The data is presented and analyzed to measure the score about anxiety in the speaking class.

Tabel 1.5 Reports of the negative statement in speaking anxiety class

Statement		N	Mean	SD
Q1	I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking English	39	3,21	0,98
Q2	I tremble when knowing that I am going to be called on to speak English	39	3,04	0,89
Q3	I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance	39	3,29	1,10
Q4	In a speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know	39	3,29	0,92
Q6	I feel very self-conscious while speaking English in front of other students	39	3,24	0,73
Q7	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking english	37	3	0,83
Q8	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English	39	2,80	0,95
Q9	I get so nervous when the language teacher asks me to speak English which I have prepared in advance	39	2,92	0,93
Q10	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on	39	3,26	0,92
Q12	The more speaking test I have, the more confused I get	39	3,02	0,98
Q13	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking English	39	3,04	0,97
Q14	I feel anxious while waiting to speak English	39	3,26	0,89
Q15	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do	39	3,36	0,94
Q16	I find it hard to look the audience in my eyes while speaking English	39	2,78	0,72

Q17	Even if I am very well-prepared, I feel anxious about speaking English	39	3,12	0,69
Q18	I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English	37	2,95	0,70
Q19	I keep thinking that other students are better at speaking English than I	37	2,46	0,77
<b>Total</b>		37	2,86	0,73

In the data in the table, there are 17 statements about students' anxiety in the speaking class. In Q3 the statement "I start to panic when I have to speak English without a preparation advance" with a standard deviation of 1.10. Q1 statement "I never feel quite sure of myself while I am speaking english" with a standard deviation of 0.98 and Q2 statement "The more speaking test I have, the more confused I get". Of the three statements, the Q3 statement is the most dominant, it means that anxiety occurs when the speaking class is without preparation.

The table below shows the correlation between the English proficiency score (EPT) and the anxiety in speaking class (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6 The Results of Correlation Analysis between EPT and Speaking Anxiety

		EPT	studentanxiety
EPT	Pearson Correlation	1	,107
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,612
	N	38	25
studentanxiety	Pearson Correlation	,107	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,612	
	N	25	38

Based on this table, the results of the Correlation Analysis show that there is a relationship between speaking class anxiety and students' EPT scores. This is evidenced by the results of the Pearson Correlation which shows a positive result of 0.107, which means that anxiety affects the speaking class.

## DISCUSSION

From the findings above, it can be concluded that there are 17 data statements about students' anxiety in speaking class. In Q3 the statement "I start to panic when I have to speak English without any preparation" with a standard deviation of 1.10. Statement Q1 "I never feel confident in my self when I speak English" with a standard deviation of 0.98 and statement Q2 "The more speaking tests I have, the more confused I am". Of the three statements, the Q3 statement is the most dominant, meaning that anxiety occurs when the class speaks without preparation. As a results of the correlation analysis show that there is a relationship between speaking class anxiety and students' EPT scores.

This is evidenced by the results of the Pearson Correlation which shows a positive result of 0.107, which means that anxiety affects the speaking class.

Woodrow (2006) says the relationship between students' oral appearance and their speaking anxiety in ESL context results reveal that learners with higher second language speaking skills tend to be less successful in spoken communication. Higher language anxiety was associated with lower success rates. Liu (2006) examined the causes of anxiety among 98 students of different levels of proficiency (34 low proficiency, 32 intermediate proficiency and 32 high proficiency). The findings indicated that the factors that caused them anxious were lack of practice, lack of vocabulary and low English proficiency. Many of the students in Liu's study reported that they did not practice speaking at schools so they were nervous at university when they have to speak English. Another study conducted by Sadighi and Mehdi (2017) among 154 Iranian EFL students found that most significant causes of students' anxiety were "fear of committing mistakes", "fear of being negatively evaluated", and limited knowledge of vocabulary" respectively.

In the speaking class of the sixth semester students, it was found that the cause of speaking anxiety in class was the lack of student practicing when they were going to take speaking classes. Besides that, other factors that appeared in speaking anxiety in class was the lack of speaking skills, preparation, excessive anxiety, and lack of confidence that affect their performance. Students have anxiety that appears intensively and lasts a long time. Speech anxiety can affect students' speaking performance. This can affect students' fluency and accuracy in speak. So, the teacher must provide appropriate speaking teaching strategies to help students in overcoming their speaking anxiety.

Especially the teachers, they need to consider the types of anxiety students face in choosing the right strategy appropriate to overcome students' speaking anxiety. The teachers give a different strategy to overcome every type of speaking anxiety faced by students, such as; role playing, presentation, and strategy show and tell. These strategies are considered as strategies that can help teachers in overcoming students' speaking anxiety. Teachers also realize that students need a lot of motivation and feedback to address their speaking anxiety.

Role play strategies can help students such as practice time, examples of how to pronounce, vocabulary new rules and grammar rules, as well as practice to overcome nervousness when talking to others, so this strategy can overcome the anxiety of speaking the situation students who are afraid to speak in front of the class. Teacher too using presentations as a strategy to deal with anxiety in the speaking class. Presentation is perhaps the most difficult task to perform. However, it is very challenging. Presentations provide an opportunity to appear confident and cool speaking English. This strategy is efficient to use because they get a lot of vocabulary that they did not know before.

In addition, show and tell strategies are also used to show students all kinds of vocabulary in English and the teacher tells the students how to pronounce the vocabulary. This strategy used by teachers to learn a lot of vocabulary, knowing the description and form of the vocabulary itself and how to recite it. So, it can be said that this strategy can overcome students' speaking anxiety, namely lack of confidence self.

## CONCLUSION

Speaking is an essential skill that students should master because it requires oral communication such as, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. With a situation, it will have a negative impact, but it will have a positive influence if they can transform their fear into positive feelings. As a result, it is linked to their capacity to speak because when they are anxious, they will speak tentatively and become overly concerned about speaking in English, causing their discussion to be slow and repetitive. Various factors contribute to language anxiety during the learning process.

From the questionnaire, it can be seen that as many as 36% of students never feel confident when speaking English, 24.4% of students start to panic when they have to speak English without prior preparation, 34.1% of students continue to think that other students are better at speaking the language English than them. So it can be concluded that the anxiety in the speaking class in this class is average, while the other are confident in the speaking class. The conclusion of the analysis shows that 39 respondents' answers to 20 questions related to class anxiety speak quite averagely. Each question was asked to find out and see how anxious the students in the class spoke. This is indicated by a positive score of 0.107, which means that students with low EPT scores are associated with anxiety in the speaking class. From these data, anxiety in the speaking class is due to lack of preparation in speaking, students always think that they are not better than other students. With conclusion to the discussion of the correlation between speaking anxiety and English proficiency scores, students with the high speaking anxiety had lower EPT scores than student with lower speaking anxiety levels.

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