English Teaching Journal and Research

SPEAKING ANXIETY ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASS AT HASANUDDIN ISLAMIC INSTITUTE OF PARE

Fatqu Rofiqoh Dewi [1]

fatqurofiqohdewi@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to explore the phenomenon of speaking anxiety among third-semester students enrolled in the Public Speaking course at the English Education Program (Tadris Bahasa Inggris) of the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare). Speaking anxiety is a common challenge faced by students in language learning, particularly in public speaking contexts, and can significantly impact their academic performance, self-esteem, and overall engagement in classroom activities. Using a qualitative research approach, the study investigates the causes, manifestations, and impacts of speaking anxiety among six participants. Data were collected through three instruments: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. The findings revealed that speaking anxiety was influenced by several factors, including fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation, and unfamiliarity with public speaking tasks. Anxiety manifested in physical symptoms such as sweating and trembling, as well as behavioral responses such as avoidance and hesitation. The impact of speaking anxiety was observed in students' reduced participation, lower self-confidence, and decreased motivation. The study highlights the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment, implementing gradual exposure techniques, and fostering peer support to reduce anxiety. These findings contribute to understanding how speaking anxiety affects students in public speaking courses and suggest strategies for educators to address this issue effectively.

*Keywords***:** *Speaking Anxiety, Public Speaking, Language Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an essential skill for students in higher education, as it forms the foundation for effective communication, leadership, and professional success. This skill is particularly critical for students at the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare), where public speaking courses are integrated into the curriculum to prepare students for roles in education, leadership, and community engagement. However, despite its importance, many students encounter significant obstacles in mastering public speaking, primarily due to speaking anxiety.

---

[1] Institut Agama Islam Hasanuddin Pare Kediri

English Teaching Journal and Research

Speaking anxiety, often referred to as communication apprehension or stage fright, is a common phenomenon characterized by feelings of nervousness, fear, or unease when speaking in front of an audience. This condition is prevalent among students and can hinder their ability to articulate thoughts, engage with an audience, and demonstrate confidence. The issue is particularly pronounced in public speaking classes, where students are required to perform in front of peers and instructors, often exacerbating their anxiety.

The ability to communicate effectively is a critical competency in both academic and professional contexts. As Lucas (2014) highlights in *The Art of Public Speaking*, public speaking equips individuals with the tools to inform, persuade, and inspire others. Similarly, Brown (2007) argues that public speaking fosters critical thinking, organizational skills, and self-confidence, all of which are essential for personal and professional growth.

For students at IAIH Pare, public speaking skills are particularly relevant, given the institution's emphasis on producing graduates who are effective communicators and leaders in their communities. Public speaking courses at the institute aim to develop students' abilities to deliver coherent, impactful messages while navigating the challenges of addressing diverse audiences. However, speaking anxiety often undermines these efforts, making it a critical area of concern for educators and students alike.

Speaking anxiety is not a new concept in educational psychology. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) introduced the term "communication apprehension" as part of their broader framework on foreign language classroom anxiety. While their work focused on language learning contexts, subsequent research has demonstrated that speaking anxiety is a pervasive issue across various educational settings. Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999) describe speaking anxiety as a complex interplay of emotional, cognitive, and physiological factors that manifest as fear of judgment, self-doubt, and physical symptoms such as sweating or trembling.

At its core, speaking anxiety stems from a fear of failure or negative evaluation. Young (1990) notes that students often experience heightened anxiety when they perceive their audience as critical or when they lack confidence in their speaking abilities. This fear is

131

compounded in public speaking classes, where students are frequently evaluated based on their performance.

The prevalence of speaking anxiety among students is well-documented in the literature. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) estimate that approximately one-third of students experience significant levels of communication apprehension, while Tseng and Yeh (2018) report that speaking anxiety is among the most commonly cited challenges in public speaking courses.

The impact of speaking anxiety on students is multifaceted. On an academic level, anxiety can impede students' ability to organize and present their ideas effectively, leading to poor performance in presentations and assessments. Foss and Reitzel (1988) argue that speaking anxiety also affects students' willingness to participate in classroom discussions, resulting in missed opportunities for learning and skill development. On a psychological level, prolonged exposure to speaking anxiety can erode self-esteem and contribute to feelings of inadequacy or helplessness (Spielberger, 1972).

At IAIH Pare, public speaking classes are designed to provide students with practical experience in delivering speeches, presentations, and other forms of oral communication. These classes emphasize critical aspects of public speaking, such as audience analysis, speech organization, and delivery techniques. However, anecdotal evidence from instructors and students suggests that speaking anxiety remains a significant barrier to success in these courses.

Many students at IAIH Pare come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which can influence their perceptions of public speaking and exacerbate feelings of anxiety. For instance, students who lack prior exposure to formal speaking environments may feel ill-equipped to meet the demands of the course. Additionally, cultural norms that discourage assertiveness or self-expression can contribute to students' reluctance to speak in public (Cutrone, 2009).

Recognizing the prevalence and impact of speaking anxiety, educators and researchers have proposed various strategies to address the issue. Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) suggest that structured practice sessions, where students gradually build their speaking skills in a supportive environment, can help reduce anxiety. Similarly, Arnold

(1999) advocates for the use of affective strategies, such as relaxation techniques and positive self-talk, to help students manage their emotions.

In the context of IAIH Pare, incorporating culturally responsive teaching methods may also be effective in alleviating speaking anxiety. By acknowledging and addressing the unique linguistic and cultural challenges faced by students, instructors can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. This approach aligns with Dörnyei's (2005) emphasis on the importance of motivational strategies in language learning and communication education.

While the literature provides valuable insights into the causes and effects of speaking anxiety, there is a need for context-specific research to understand how this phenomenon manifests in public speaking classes at IAIH Pare. Existing studies, such as those by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Young (1990), primarily focus on general communication apprehension or language learning anxiety, leaving a gap in understanding the unique challenges faced by students in this institution.

This research aims to fill that gap by investigating the prevalence, causes, and impact of speaking anxiety among students at IAIH Pare. The study also seeks to identify effective strategies for reducing anxiety and improving students' public speaking skills. By addressing these issues, the research aims to contribute to the development of more effective teaching practices and enhance the overall learning experience for students.

Understanding and addressing speaking anxiety is crucial not only for improving academic outcomes but also for fostering students' personal and professional growth. As Brown (2007) notes, overcoming speaking anxiety can lead to increased confidence, better interpersonal skills, and greater career opportunities. For students at IAIH Pare, these benefits are particularly relevant, given the institution's mission to produce graduates who can serve as effective communicators and leaders in their communities. By shedding light on the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety and exploring practical solutions, this research aims to empower students to overcome their fears and realize their full potential in public speaking.

Speaking anxiety is a prevalent issue among students in public speaking classes at the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare). This anxiety significantly impacts students' ability to express themselves confidently, diminishing their

participation and overall performance in classroom activities. The anxiety often stems from various factors such as fear of judgment, lack of preparation, and limited exposure to formal speaking situations.

The objectives of this study are: 1) to identify the primary causes of speaking anxiety among students in public speaking classes at IAIH Pare; 2) to evaluate the impact of speaking anxiety on students' academic performance and classroom engagement; 3) to propose practical and effective strategies for reducing speaking anxiety and enhancing students' public speaking abilities. This study on speaking anxiety in public speaking classes at the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare) holds significant value for students, educators, and the broader academic community.

METHOD

This study explores the phenomenon of speaking anxiety in public speaking classes among third-semester students of the English Education Program (Tadris Bahasa Inggris) at the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare) for the academic year 2024/2025. To achieve a comprehensive understanding, a qualitative research design is employed, emphasizing participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and coping mechanisms. This section outlines the research design, participants, instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods.

The study adopts a qualitative case study approach, which is appropriate for exploring complex phenomena within a specific context (Creswell, 2014). This design allows the researcher to gain detailed insights into the factors contributing to speaking anxiety and how it manifests in the public speaking classroom. A case study is particularly effective in capturing individual and contextual nuances, providing depth to the understanding of students' experiences.

Six students from the third semester of the English Education Program at IAIH Pare were selected as participants. Purposive sampling was used to ensure the inclusion of students who exhibit varying levels of speaking anxiety, as identified by their instructors and self-reports. This small, focused sample size facilitates an in-depth exploration of each participant's experiences, enabling the researcher to uncover common patterns and individual differences.

Three primary Data were utilized to gather comprehensive data:

1. **Interviews**

   Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six participants to explore their experiences and perceptions of speaking anxiety. The interview questions addressed the causes of their anxiety, its effects on their performance, and the strategies they use to cope. This flexible format allowed for follow-up questions and deeper exploration of issues raised by participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for detailed analysis.

2. **Observations**

   Classroom observations were conducted during public speaking sessions to capture real-time manifestations of speaking anxiety. The researcher documented behaviors such as hesitation, stuttering, and avoidance of eye contact. Observations also included participants' interactions with peers and instructors, their participation levels, and their responses to feedback. Observation notes provided contextual data that complemented self-reported information from interviews and questionnaires.

3. **Questionnaires**

   A questionnaire combining quantitative and qualitative elements was distributed to the participants. The quantitative component included items from the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) scale (McCroskey, 1970) to measure the severity of speaking anxiety. The qualitative component featured open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate on their personal triggers and coping strategies. The questionnaire provided both numerical data for comparison and descriptive data for deeper analysis.

   Data collection was conducted over a period of six weeks, with the following steps:

1. **Preliminary Stage**: Initial meetings with instructors and students to explain the purpose of the study, obtain consent, and identify participants.

2. **Interviews**: Individual interviews were scheduled and conducted in a quiet setting to ensure comfort and confidentiality. Each session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes.

English Teaching Journal and Research

3. **Observations**: The researcher attended four public speaking classes, observing participants during their presentations and class activities. Observation protocols were used to ensure systematic documentation of relevant behaviors.

4. **Questionnaires**: Participants completed the questionnaire in a supervised setting to clarify any questions about the items.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the collected data, following the process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. **Familiarization**: The researcher transcribed interviews, reviewed observation notes, and examined questionnaire responses to become familiar with the data.

2. **Coding**: Recurrent words, phrases, and behaviors related to speaking anxiety were coded. For example, phrases like "fear of making mistakes" and observed behaviors like "trembling hands" were categorized under specific codes.

3. **Theme Identification**: Codes were grouped into broader themes, such as "fear of negative evaluation," "lack of confidence," and "impact of classroom dynamics."

4. **Analysis and Interpretation**: Themes were interpreted in relation to the research questions and existing literature, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical protocols were observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Written consent was obtained, and pseudonyms were used to protect participants' identities. The data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was employed by comparing data from interviews, observations, and questionnaires. Member checking was also conducted, where participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of their transcribed responses and the researcher's interpretations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the causes, manifestations, and impacts of speaking anxiety in public speaking classes among third-semester students

English Teaching Journal and Research

of the English Education Program (Tadris Bahasa Inggris) at the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare). The data were gathered using three instruments: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. This section presents the findings and discusses their implications in relation to the research questions.

FINDINGS

Causes of Speaking Anxiety

The study found that multiple factors contributed to speaking anxiety among students in the public speaking classes. These factors can be grouped into personal, situational, and environmental categories.

1. **Personal Factors**

   One of the most significant causes of speaking anxiety was the **fear of negative evaluation**. The majority of participants reported feeling nervous about being judged by their peers and instructors. This fear of failure was particularly pronounced among students who lacked confidence in their language skills. Participant D, for instance, mentioned, "I am always afraid that my classmates will laugh at me or think I am not good enough."

   Another personal factor contributing to anxiety was **lack of preparation**. Several students admitted feeling unprepared for public speaking tasks, which led to heightened nervousness. Participant B stated, "When I feel unprepared, my anxiety increases. I worry I'll forget what I want to say."

2. **Situational Factors**

   Unfamiliarity with public speaking was identified as a significant source of anxiety. Many participants expressed that they had limited exposure to formal speaking environments prior to enrolling in the course, leading to discomfort and unease. Participant A shared, "I have never been asked to speak in front of an audience before, so I feel out of my element."

3. **Environmental Factors**

   The **classroom dynamics** and the instructor's approach also influenced students' anxiety levels. A few participants mentioned that the class atmosphere, especially when it was perceived as judgmental or overly critical, heightened their stress.

Participant F commented, "When the class is silent and everyone watches me, I feel like all eyes are on me, which makes me even more nervous."

Manifestations of Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety manifested in both **physical** and **behavioral** forms.

1. **Physical Manifestations**

   Many students reported physical symptoms such as **sweating**, **trembling hands**, **dry mouth**, and **increased heart rate**. These physical reactions were observed by the researcher during class presentations. For example, Participant C exhibited trembling hands while holding the presentation notes, and Participant E struggled with dry mouth, which led to difficulty speaking clearly.

2. **Behavioral Manifestations**

   The behavioral manifestations of anxiety included **hesitation**, **pauses**, and **fumbling over words**. Students often avoided making eye contact with their audience, a common coping mechanism. Participant B admitted, "I can't look at people when I speak. It makes me more nervous. I prefer to stare at the floor."

   Additionally, some students showed a tendency to **avoid participation** in class discussions or presentations. During observations, it was noted that certain students, such as Participant D, often hesitated to volunteer answers or speak in front of the class, preferring to stay silent rather than face the possibility of public failure.

Impact of Speaking Anxiety

The anxiety experienced by students had significant implications for their performance in public speaking activities.

1. **Decreased Performance**

   Most participants indicated that their speaking anxiety negatively affected their performance during presentations. Many reported feeling unable to convey their ideas effectively, despite having prepared their speeches. Participant E noted, "I know my material well, but when I stand in front of the class, I freeze, and I can't explain things clearly." This struggle to communicate led to **lower self-esteem** and a **sense of inadequacy** after the performance.

2. **Reduced Participation**

Students with high levels of speaking anxiety were less likely to participate actively in classroom activities. The researcher observed that these students often sat at the back of the classroom, avoiding opportunities to speak or present. As a result, their **academic engagement** and **classroom involvement** were limited. Participant C explained, "I try to avoid presenting because I feel like I'll mess up, and people will judge me."

3. **Impact on Motivation**

   Another consequence of speaking anxiety was its **detrimental impact on motivation**. A few students reported that anxiety made them dread public speaking tasks, which resulted in lower motivation to improve their skills. Participant A remarked, "Every time I have to speak, I just wish I could skip the class. It's draining."

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on speaking anxiety, particularly in the context of second language learning (Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). The anxiety experienced by students in public speaking classes at IAIH Pare was influenced by a variety of **personal, situational, and environmental factors**. The most prominent of these was the fear of negative evaluation, which aligns with McCroskey's (1970) concept of **communication apprehension**. Many students feared judgment from their peers and instructors, leading to stress and avoidance behaviors. This is consistent with studies by Scovel (1978) and Young (1991), who found that fear of evaluation is a significant predictor of anxiety in public speaking situations.

The **physical and behavioral manifestations** observed in this study support findings from previous studies that have identified physical symptoms like sweating, trembling, and dry mouth as common reactions to speaking anxiety (Foss & Reitzel, 1988). These manifestations not only hinder students' ability to speak clearly but also contribute to a cycle of **negative reinforcement**, where the anxiety worsens with each speaking experience (Kondo & Ying-Ling, 2004).

The **negative impact on performance and participation** observed in this study is also consistent with the findings of Dörnyei (2005) and Young (1991), who noted that speaking anxiety can lead to reduced participation and academic disengagement. Students

139

who are anxious about speaking often choose to avoid situations that require verbal communication, which limits their opportunities to develop their skills and confidence. Moreover, the findings emphasize the importance of **classroom dynamics** in shaping students' anxiety levels. Participants in this study reported feeling more anxious in classrooms where the atmosphere was perceived as judgmental or critical. This highlights the role of **teacher-student interaction** and the overall classroom climate in reducing or exacerbating anxiety. As suggested by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), creating a supportive and non-threatening environment is crucial for mitigating anxiety in language learners.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research investigated speaking anxiety among third-semester students in the Public Speaking course at the English Education Program (Tadris Bahasa Inggris) of the Hasanuddin Islamic Institute of Pare (IAIH Pare). The findings highlight the complex nature of speaking anxiety, emphasizing its causes, manifestations, impacts, and potential strategies for addressing it in the classroom. By analyzing data from six participants using semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires, the study provides valuable insights into how speaking anxiety affects students in this particular academic context.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **Causes of Speaking Anxiety:**

   The study identified several factors contributing to speaking anxiety in public speaking classes. Personal factors such as the **fear of negative evaluation** were prominent, with students expressing concern about being judged by their peers and instructors. Additionally, a **lack of preparation** and **unfamiliarity with public speaking** were significant stressors. Students felt overwhelmed when asked to speak in front of others, often lacking the confidence or experience to perform well in these settings. Environmental factors, such as a perceived judgmental classroom atmosphere, also exacerbated anxiety levels.

2. **Manifestations of Speaking Anxiety:**

Speaking anxiety manifested in both **physical** and **behavioral** ways. Common physical symptoms included **sweating**, **trembling**, and **dry mouth**, which made it difficult for students to communicate effectively. Behaviorally, students exhibited signs of **avoidance**, **hesitation**, and **difficulty making eye contact**. Some students avoided participating in public speaking tasks altogether, fearing that their anxiety would negatively affect their performance. This behavioral response is consistent with the findings of previous studies on communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1970; Scovel, 1978).

3. **Impact of Speaking Anxiety on Performance and Motivation:**

Speaking anxiety had a noticeable impact on students' performance. Many participants reported that their anxiety hindered their ability to convey ideas clearly and confidently during presentations. As a result, they often felt a sense of inadequacy, leading to a **reduced sense of self-esteem**. Furthermore, anxiety negatively affected students' **motivation** and **participation** in class activities. The fear of failure prevented some students from engaging fully in classroom discussions or volunteering to present, which limited their opportunities to practice and improve their speaking skills.

Implications for Public Speaking Education

The findings from this study emphasize the need for instructors to recognize the impact of speaking anxiety on students' performance and engagement in public speaking classes. To create a more supportive environment, it is crucial for educators to implement strategies that alleviate anxiety and build students' confidence. For example, fostering a **non-threatening classroom climate** is essential. Instructors should focus on encouraging a culture of **peer support**, where students can offer positive feedback and constructive criticism to one another. By cultivating a more collaborative and empathetic classroom environment, students may feel less isolated in their struggles with speaking anxiety.

Additionally, **gradual exposure** to public speaking tasks is a useful approach. Students should be given opportunities to practice speaking in low-pressure situations before moving on to more complex tasks. This could involve smaller group discussions or

informal presentations, where students can build their confidence in a supportive setting. Over time, as students gain more experience and competence in public speaking, their anxiety levels may decrease.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into speaking anxiety in the context of public speaking classes, future research could explore the long-term effects of speaking anxiety on students' overall academic performance and professional development. Investigating the effectiveness of different intervention strategies, such as **cognitive-behavioral techniques**, **mindfulness training**, or **relaxation exercises**, would also be useful in identifying practical methods for reducing speaking anxiety.

Furthermore, future studies could expand the sample size to include a more diverse range of participants, including students from different semesters and academic programs, to explore whether speaking anxiety differs across various demographic groups. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to anxiety in public speaking contexts.

Conclusion and Educational Implications

In conclusion, speaking anxiety is a significant issue faced by many students in public speaking classes at IAIH Pare, with a variety of causes and manifestations that hinder their academic performance and overall motivation. The findings suggest that addressing this anxiety requires a multifaceted approach, including supportive teaching practices, gradual exposure to public speaking tasks, and a positive classroom environment. By acknowledging the challenges posed by speaking anxiety and implementing effective strategies, educators can better support students in developing their public speaking skills and enhancing their confidence in communicative situations.

Ultimately, this study highlights the importance of fostering a safe and supportive space for students to practice and overcome their speaking anxiety. With the right interventions and educational strategies, students can build the skills and resilience necessary to become effective communicators in both academic and professional contexts.

English Teaching Journal and Research

REFERENCES

Arnold, J. (1999). *Affect in Language Learning*.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*.

Cheng, Y.-S., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D. L. (1999). *Language Anxiety: Differentiating Writing and Speaking Components*.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Cutrone, P. (2009). *Overcoming Japanese EFL Learners' Anxiety about Speaking English*.

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Routledge.

Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*.

Foss, K. A., & Reitzel, A. C. (1988). A relational model for managing second language anxiety. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22(3), 437-454.

Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.

Kondo, D. S., & Ying-Ling, Y. (2004). Strategies for coping with language anxiety: The case of students of English in Japan. *ELT Journal*, 58(3), 258-265.

Lucas, S. E. (2014). *The Art of Public Speaking*.

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and results in the study of anxiety in language learning: A review. *Language Learning*, 41(1), 85-117.

McCroskey, J. C. (1970). Measures of communication-bound anxiety. *Speech Monographs*, 37, 269-277.

Scovel, T. (1978). The effect of anxiety on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety research. *Language Learning*, 28(1), 129-142.

Spielberger, C. D. (1972). *Anxiety: Current Trends in Theory and Research*.

English Teaching Journal and Research

Tseng, S., & Yeh, H. (2018). *Managing Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classes*.

Young, D. J. (1990). *An Investigation of Students' Perspectives on Anxiety and Speaking*.

Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(4), 426-439.