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**INDONESIAN MARKETING STUDENTS' FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING
USING ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

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Abstract

Students are expected to be proficient in conducting public speaking using English language. However, many students struggle to speak in front of many people because of the fear that they experience. The present study aimed to examine the fears students experience when speaking in public. This study employed descriptive qualitative study. Qualitative survey was distributed to the students to collect the data. The survey consisted of four questions regarding fear of public speaking. As many as 50 marketing students who had taken public speaking course were asked to fill in the survey. The data collected was examine through qualitative thematic analysis. The results showed four themes extracted from the survey, including nervousness, fears, practice and facilitating practice.

Keywords: *Indonesian Marketing Students, Fear of Public Speaking, English Public Speaking*

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A. INTRODUCTION

One of the essential language skills that learners must acquire when studying a foreign or second language is speaking skill. There are many occasions in which students are expected to speak using the target language for academic purposes as well as for other purposes in their daily life. Moreover, learning to speak a language can also help them to understand the language better. Therefore, it is vital for students to master speaking in target language so that they can communicate effectively using the target language.

Moreover, marketing students are expected to be able to conduct public speaking. Public speaking means that the speaker has to speak in front of an audience. Students are usually troubled with public speaking since they have to speak in front of many people. Some examples of public speaking are giving a presentation, giving a speech, becoming an MC or host, conducting a debate or discussion, promoting a product, and so on. For marketing students, public speaking can enable them to persuade and influence people in relation to brands or products being marketed. It also allows them to inform and educate existing and potential clients.

There are many constraints that every student might encounter when learning to speak a language. One of them is the fear or anxiety to speak. Students often have to deal with fear or anxiety when speaking a second or foreign language in front of other people, especially when they have to speak in front of many people (Fitriah & Muna, 2019). Bartholomay and Houlihan (2016) claimed that one in every five persons is affected by fear of public speaking. It is even mentioned that speaking gives students the most anxiety compared to other communication skills (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). A study found that many college students experience fear of speaking in front of an audience during their learning (Marinho et al., 2015). Similarly, Dwyer and Davidson (2012) found that among college students in the US, public speaking is one of the biggest fears commonly faced by them in their academi activities .

Fears of public speaking have been categorized into two types: those stemming from external and internal sources (LeFebvre, LeFebvre, & Allen, 2018). Internal sources of anxiety are associated with the speaker's personal emotions and reactions to the



speaking context. A speaker's nervousness when standing on the stage and forgetting the information to be conveyed to the audience are two examples of internal fears of public speaking. The other kind of fears, the external fears, are related to the audience that the speaker faces during a speech. A speaker's fear of being the centre of attention is an example of external fear of public speaking (LeFebvre, LeFebvre, & Allen, 2018).

There are some factors which are believed to be causing students to fear public speaking. Yuliana and Haryanti (2024) mentioned that communication apprehension is one of the main factors causing fear of public speaking. This refers to the anxiety connected with communicating in different situations, which causes nervousness and avoidance of speaking. Additionally, this condition can also be worsened by students' fear of being judged when making a mistake.

Linguistic factors also have a role in causing fear of public speaking. Students' limited vocabulary can make it difficult for them to express their mind verbally (Yuliana & Haryanti, 2024). Moreover, grammar and pronunciation problems can stress out the students even more when conducting public speaking in English language (Sabri, 2019).

This fear of public speaking could lead to the difficulty in communication. Some students could find it difficult to express their opinions and ideas because of this fear (Ibrahim et al., 2021). It may also cause the their language learning to be obstructed. It can be an obstacle for the students to try to speak (Wardani, 2018). As a result, they may find English language learning to be more challenging. Therefore, investigating the fear of public speaking becomes important to help them cope with this problem.

The current study tries to further examine the fears of public speaking faced by college students. More specifically this study tries to investigate students' fears of public speaking, the effects of their fear, and how the institution can help them to overcome their fear of public speaking. By understanding students' fears of public speaking, it is hoped that the institution can help them cope with this problem.



B. RESEARCH METHOD

The present study employed qualitative design utilizing qualitative survey to collect the data. The survey consists of four open-ended questions concerning students' public speaking fear adopted from Grieve, et al. (2021). The survey consists of the following questions:

- 1) What do you fear about public speaking?
- 2) What strategies have you used to cope with your fear?
- 3) Does fear about public speaking influence your academic achievement?
- 4) What can the institution/lecturers do to help you cope with your fear?

Undergraduate students majoring in marketing in a polytechnic in Indonesia were chosen as the participants for the present study. All of the students had completed or were taking public speaking class. As many as 50 students were asked to complete the survey.

To analyse the collected data, qualitative thematic analysis was carried out to interpret the data gathered from the qualitative survey. Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six stages in carrying out qualitative thematic analysis: making oneself familiar with the data, making initial labels, investigating potential themes, evaluating those themes, describing and naming them, and finally, creating the final report.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As many as 50 undergraduate students responded to the questions. All of the respondents answered all four questions in the survey. After conducting thematic analysis, there were 4 themes generated from the survey. The themes include the following:

1. Nervousness
2. Fears
3. Practice
4. Facilitating Practice

The first theme extracted from the survey is nervousness. Many students reported that they feel nervous when they are speaking in front of the public. They reported that it



affected their public speaking performance. It makes them unable to properly control what they are speaking. It also often causes them to forget their speaking material. This nervousness often comes from a fear of being judged by other when speaking in front people. Moreover, they have to use English as they speak which is not their first language. This adds another dimension to the difficulty in public speaking.

The students also reported that they have various fears of public speaking that impairs their public speaking performance. A student mentioned that he was scared of people's judgement towards him, making mistakes, and being the centre of attention. Students fear making mistakes as they worry others might form a negative opinion of them. Santos, et al. (2018) also found English students to experience fears that include fear of making mistake, fear of unfamiliar audience, fear to be watched, fear to be rejected, and fear of speaking in a public discussion. This fear of negative evaluation and other various fears make them overthink their speaking performance. As a result, they cannot speak naturally and often forget their speaking material.

Practice emerged as another significant theme from the survey responses. Students acknowledged that practice was the key to overcoming their fear of public speaking and improving their performance. Students seem to have different ideas of the best way to practice and prepare for English public speaking performance. Some students prefer practicing in front of a mirror, while other students prefer speaking by themselves. There are also students who memorized every single word in their script as a practice. These kinds of practice will certainly improve their public speaking performance. However, they also should not neglect their needs to improve their English language as it plays a central role in the communication (K & Alamelu, 2020).

The students believe that practice is indispensable for improving their public speaking. Hence, they hope that lecturers and institution could provide adequate training for them. They also expect public speaking classes to be carried out in a more enjoyable and relaxed manner so that their fear could be lessened. Tips and tricks, and theoretical materials related to public speaking are also needed to support their practices.



D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the survey revealed four key themes, including nervousness, fears, practice, and facilitating practice that collectively shape students' experiences with public speaking in English. Nervousness and fear, particularly of being judged by others and making mistakes, impair students' ability to speak fluently and confidently. These challenges are further heightened by the need to use English because English is not their first language. Despite these obstacles, students recognize the benefits of consistent practice as a means to build confidence and improve performance. They employ various methods of preparation, though they also acknowledge the need for improved language skills. Importantly, students express a need for supportive learning environments where public speaking can be practiced in a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings, it is suggested that institution provides a helpful and encouraging learning atmosphere for students practicing their English public speaking. Classes should be designed to create a relaxed and engaging environment, where students feel safe to make mistakes and learn. For future research, it is suggested to gather more data from observation and group discussion to provide a more in-depth analysis.



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