



## AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' STATE ANXIETY IN SITUATIONAL SPEAKING CLASS

Received: 2024/02/11

Accepted: 2024/03/15

Available Online: 2024/03/31

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### Abstract

The study is a qualitative study which aims to examine the factors influencing students' state anxiety in Situational Speaking class. This study also investigates the circumstances that trigger students' state anxiety as well as how they overcome it. The population of this study is the second-semester students of English Education Study Program. To determine the sample, the researcher use purposive sampling, and chose the students in Situational Speaking class C out of 3 classes as the sample. The aims of this study are to aid students and teachers in understanding anxiety especially state anxiety well and how to deal with state anxiety. State anxiety, linguistic factors, fear of negative evaluation (FNE), and self-confidence are the four key factors that influence whether students experience state anxiety while speaking English. The researcher used questionnaire and semi-structured interview to collect the data. The questionnaire of this study is an adaptation of the FLSAS (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale) by Kayouglu and Saglamel to determine the frequency of students' state anxiety. To validate the data collected from the FLSAS, the researcher used method triangulation. The study uses descriptive statistic and thematic analysis to analyze the data. The main theory of this study is come from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) called Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). Besides that, the researcher also use theory from Saviola, Pappiani, Monti, and Grecucci (2021) about the mapping of trait and state anxiety in human brain. From the data collected, the findings of this study suggest that the highest percentage of state anxiety factor is the general symptom of state anxiety (78,30%) followed by linguistic factors (76,66%), self-confidence (66,20%), and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) (52,36%). Based on the data collected, anxiety among students is greatly influenced by the lecturers teaching style. Besides students' self-aware to the mental issues symptoms, a variety innovative teaching techniques also help to lessen student' state anxiety in speaking class.

**Keywords:** Influencing factors, Speaking skill, State anxiety.

### Introduction

People think that anxiety has a significant impact on academic achievement. Seipp (1991) in Teimouri, Goetze, and Plonsky (2019, p.15) an example of the relationship between student anxiety and their academic performance can be seen in course grades and academic assessments. As stated by Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019, p.310) language instructors frequently emphasize that their learners experience anxiety, which can affect their performance and achievement. Anxiety may impair the learning process by causing the learner to become academically and mentally disturbed (Aguila & Harjanto, 2016, p.29). Students frequently feel excessive anxiety about their pronunciation, the accent they use, the fluency, or other people's view about their speaking performance (Ortega, 2014, p.23). It will result in students' self-confidence and will grow excessive fear of the possibility of getting bad comments (Downing, Cooper, Cala, Gin & Brownell, 2020, p.1). On that account, Miskam and Saidalvi (2018, p.6), added that anxiety is a matter of considerable influence and needs attention so that it can be overcome.



Speaking is a crucial linguistic ability that students must master, and it becomes the main goal of learning a language (Syakur et al., 2020, p.685). Furthermore, teaching and learning English in Indonesia has always been grammatically focused (Daud, Ras, Novitri, & Audia, 2019, p.419). It will be more stressful for students, especially those who think too much about the bad possibilities that might happen. Djahimo (2018, p.189) stated that students' anxiety influenced most students unable to perform their speaking adequately, as a result that feeling leads to anxiety. Anxiety is divided into 2 core types, called state anxiety trait and anxiety. Stated by Saviola, Pappaianni, Monti, Grecucci, Jovicich, and Pisapia (2020, p.1) stated that "state anxiety is a temporary condition where someone feels excessive anxiety as a reaction to an incident, whereas trait anxiety is the opposite of state anxiety." Anxiety is not a homogeneous situation in which there is only one condition (Micah, 2022). Overwhelmed is the most common symptom of anxiety and can have a big impact on students, this is proved by data showing 43% of students reported feeling overwhelmed. Anxiety is another prevalent childhood condition that affects approximately 6.9% of children (Lawrence, Johnson, Hafekost, de Haan, Sawyer, Ainley, & Zubrick, 2015, p.14).

There are several factors causing students to experience state anxiety, both internal and external, as follows psychological, linguistic, and cultural. A second language (L2) learners is never just about picking up the language; for most people who are interested in doing so, acquiring a second language is about getting the material, symbolic, and emotional rewards they want for themselves as well as being seen by others as valuable social beings. Besides several factors mentioned above, there are other factors that cause anxiety, as follows: social factors, linguistic factors and individual factors, especially students' self-confidence (Toubot, Seng & Abdullah, 2018, p.49). Low self-esteem and low perception of one's general academic ability were linked to anxiety level (Ellis, 2015, p.201). Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019, p.314) students' state anxiety reflects their level of language competency, and high level of anxiety over learning a foreign language have been linked to academic achievement. State anxiety has an impact on students' self-confidence, speaking performance, and academic achievement.

The reason students must consider their concern is that speaking has become a criterion for English competency. Speaking ability demands students to converse with people and communicate well in public so that other people can understand what we were talking about, especially if the other people are native speaker. Nonetheless, students typically experience excessive anxiety in terms of making mistakes when speaking English. Therefore, the researcher would like to bring up this subject to find out what factors that influenced students' anxiety, what circumstances that trigger students' anxiety and how they solve their state anxiety in performing speaking English in Situational Speaking class.

### **Methodology**

To address this study, the researcher uses case study. Yin (2009, p.69) stated that "case study research is a linear, but iterative process." Yin (2009, p.69), articulated that case study research focuses on responding to inquiries that inquire how or why, particularly in situations when the researcher has little control over current events. In this study, the population was the students of English Education Study Program, Faculty of Humanity of Jenderal Soedirman University (UNSOED). The researcher used purposive sampling; the sample is the second semester students who took Situational Speaking Class C in the academic year 2022/2023. The researcher gave a questionnaire containing 22 questions. Some question taken based on the questions in a FLSAS (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale) created by Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2013). There are several differences, in the original version of FLSAS there are 5 scales (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), whereas in this study there were four points (Never, Occasionally, Frequently, Always), because the researcher wanted to know about the frequencies and students' tendencies of their state anxiety in speaking. In order to calculate the data, the



researcher used the formula from Walizer and Wiener’s (1978) book entitled *Research Method and Analysis: Searching for Relationship* and a modification formula of a previous study done by Toubot et al., (2018) entitled *Examining Levels and Factors of Speaking Anxiety among EFL Libyan English Undergraduate Students*. In this study, the researcher also used semi-structured interview to help the researcher strengthen respondents’ questionnaire answers and thematic analysis to analyze the data. Besides thematic analysis, this study also uses descriptive statistic to analyze the data collected. In this study, descriptive statistic uses to help the researcher to summarize in terms of data samples. Descriptive statistics are presented numerically in the article text, tables, or graphically figures (Vetter, 2017, p.1797).

## Findings and Discussion

### Students’ State Anxiety

In this study, the researcher is attempting to determine how frequently students experience state anxiety symptoms when speaking English in class by providing them with a questionnaire that includes three additional sections specifically related to state anxiety in speaking English, they are Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Linguistic Factors, and Self-Confidence and some general state anxiety symptoms that contain in the first section, called State Anxiety. The researcher gathered the results listed below from the questionnaire.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistic (Frequencies) of the Questionnaire Answer  
 Descriptive Statistics

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20
	Q21	Q22								
N	Valid		23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
	23	23	23	23						
Miss	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0							
Mean	2.52	2.70	2.13	2.17	2.17	2.09	1.43	2.30	1.78	2.00
	1.91	1.43	1.48	2.09	1.96	2.17	3.17	2.26	1.43	2.43
	1.61	2.52								
Median	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	2.00
	1.00	2.00								
Mode	3	2a	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
	1	1	1	2	2	2	4	2	1	2
	1	2								
Std. Deviation	.846		.926	.869	.778	.834	.793	.788	1.020	1.126
	.953	1.083	.896	.790	.900	.767	.937	.937	.810	.788
	1.080		.722	.947						
Range	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	2	3								

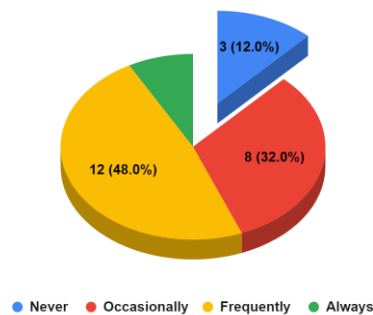
### Recapitulation of the Questionnaire Answer

Total	Respondent	N	O	F	A
506	163	204	92	60	
Percentage	100%	33.21%	40.32%	18.18%	11.85%

This table indicates the percentage of the answer of the questionnaire “Never” (33.21%), “Occasionally” (40.32%), “Frequently” (18.18%), and “Always” (11.85%). From the table above the researcher can calculate, how often students experienced state anxiety symptoms mentioned above in 4 stages (never, occasionally, frequently, and always). Based on the aforementioned data in the second column of students’ state anxiety frequency, the researcher find out 12 students (52.2%) out of a total of 23 students who get points >40 of the total that is 88 points on the FLSAS (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale).

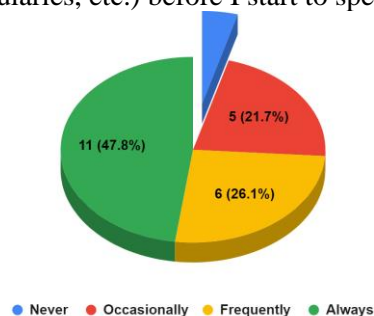
From the data collected related to the primary factor causing students’ state anxiety in Situational Speaking C class is general symptoms of state anxiety, which has average percentage of agreement in factor items 78.30%, linguistic factors came in second with average 76.66%, then came the self-confidence with average 66.20% agreement and the last is linguistic factors with average 52.36% in factor items.

Chart 1 I felt anxious when I was waiting my turn to speak English in the class.



In addition to the aforementioned signs, there are additional general elements for state anxiety symptoms that are similarly strongly correlated with how frequently students experience state anxiety when speaking English. Based on the data collected, there are 91.7% students in Situational Speaking C class explains that those students who give a response experienced symptoms of state anxiety either occasionally, frequently or even always. There are other factors, such as linguistic factors that force students to relapse into state anxiety when speaking English. Linguistic factors itself related with speaking skills requirement. Look at the chart below:

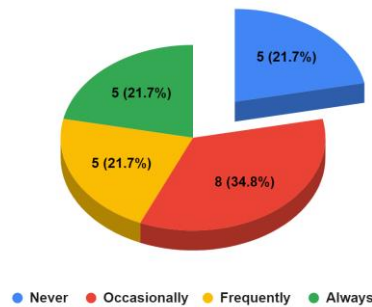
Chart 2 I thought I should master English speaking rules (grammar, pronunciation, vocabularies, etc.) before I start to speak English



As can be seen from the data above, a portion of other than "never" denotes extremely large data. Counted 95.7% of students, or roughly 22 students, believe they must first master linguistics, such as English grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary, before they try to speak the language. This is not a negative thing. However, there are occasions when students will only speechless, because they are too afraid of making mistakes about the grammar used, too concerned about how to pronounce certain words, or what vocabulary

to use to communicate what they want to say. It will affect students' confidence in their skill and induce state anxiety. As a result, 20 out of 23 students (87%) concur with the assertion that they have self-doubt. Besides of that, students are not confident to speak English in public. It caused by their perception that their friends' speaking skill levels are far higher than their own. It is making them feel inadequate and unequal to others. Take a look at the following chart below:

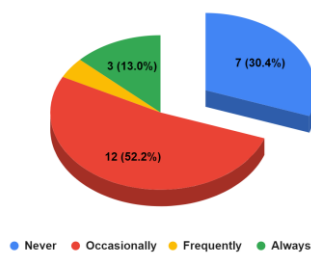
Chart 3 I always think whether my English-speaking abilities is not as good as my friends



Based on the data, roughly 18 out of 23 students, or 78.3% of the class, believed that their friends' English-speaking skills were a way better to theirs.

So, the researcher suggests that self-doubt also take a big part in students' state anxiety when they are performing their speaking skill. Besides that, others' opinion will negatively impact students' academic performance. Others' opinion here related to comment, feedback, people's views, how they treat the speaker when or after the speaker speak, and many more. Students' who tend to think too much about people's view can easily to experience state anxiety when they speak English, the bad comments/negative feedback itself will affect differently to one and another. Can be seen in the following chart:

Chart 4 I was afraid if I get bad comments/ feedback when I speak English.



It was discovered that 16 out of 23 students (69.6%) had anxiety about receiving negative feedback when speaking in English. There are 5 out of 9 respondents during the interview admitted that whenever they got bad comments, she would feel inferior and lost self-confident. Apart from verbal form, negative feedback might sometimes take the shape of unfavorable audience reactions. This is exceedingly harmful and may have long-term impacts on the victims. Students often hesitate to volunteer to speak in class as a volunteer speaker. In the Situational Speaking C class, only 3 (12.5%) are willing to volunteer to speak in front of the class, while 20 (87.5%) other students decided to decline the challenge rather than participate. This is confirmed by the following students' arguments regarding the academic difficulties of volunteering to speak in class.

The factors mentioned above will trigger state anxiety in students when speaking English only in certain circumstances. This is because state anxiety is mental illness due to something and is temporary or known as non-pathological mental illness. Which, in this



case the main cause of state anxiety is speaking English in front of the class or in a public place. However, apart from that, there are more specific circumstances that trigger state anxiety in students when speaking English:

1. Lack of preparation
2. Overthink about people's reaction (FNE)
3. Insecure of their own abilities (self-doubt)
4. Lectures/Topic/Materials
5. Audience
6. Fear of making mistakes (linguistic factors)
7. Understanding
8. Noticed
9. Expectation
10. Awkward
11. Wear uncomfortable clothes
12. Speaking skill, and
13. Partner

There are many techniques to overcome state anxiety when speaking English in front of an audience. The most typical method is to prepare things beforehand by practicing. The respondents listed several others of strategies, such as inhaling deeply and then gently exhaling, trying to gaze at the interlocutor or the hearer so they would be calmer and more focused, trying to understand the current situation, and trying to think positively. Here, positive thinking might take the shape of rebuffing ideas of unpleasant scenarios that might not necessarily occur as well as believing that everything will work out without having any doubts about one's own capabilities. The respondents also mentioned encouraging themselves and ingraining the belief that today must be better than yesterday as a method for conquering their state anxiety. This is crucial since changing someone's thinking is rarely a simple process. The final step is to believe in yourself, as respondent 21 suggested. This type of self-assurance might take the shape of being certain of our skills, certain to begin, certain to change for the better, and certain that we can perform at our highest level.

## Conclusions

Situational Speaking class C has quite significant student state anxiety. Because 12 students get more than 50% (or 44 points) on the FLSAS. The fact that general state anxiety symptom is the most influencing factors of students' state anxiety when they speaking English with 78.3%. mostly because students are not well prepared when they have to speak English in public, they will experience state anxiety. However, there are opportunities for students to overcome their state anxiety when speaking English. Next is linguistic factors (76.66%) students frequently anxious in terms of the rules of speaking English. There are several circumstances that can support the occurrence of students' state anxiety. Some students mentioned that lack of preparation is a common thing that can trigger state anxiety for them when speaking English in public. And to overcome their state anxiety, students have developed unique strategies such as take a deep breath; look at the audience/hearer; avoid look at the audience; enjoy the situation; convince myself; positive think; believe in yourself; motivate yourself; instill good mindset; relax, and so on. Situational Speaking class C has quite significant student state anxiety. Because 12 students get more than 50% (or 44 points) on the FLSAS. The fact that general state anxiety symptom is the most influencing factors of students' state anxiety when they speaking English with 78.3%. mostly because students are not well prepared when they have to speak English in public, they will experience state anxiety. However, there are opportunities for students to overcome their state anxiety when speaking English. Next is linguistic factors (76.66%) students frequently anxious



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