



Speaking Anxiety in English Class at the Senior High School Level

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the types of anxiety experienced by students when learning English and the teacher's strategy in overcoming the anxiety at one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques in the form of observation and interviews. The results showed that students experienced three types of anxiety, namely trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. The triggering factors include fear during pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and concerns about judgment from their teacher and peers. Due to the problems, the teacher uses various strategies to reduce anxiety, such as creating a fun learning atmosphere, providing motivation, ice breaking, and learning outside the classroom. With these strategies, students become more confident and motivated in speaking English.

Keywords: Speaking Anxiety, Teacher Strategies, English Learning, Senior High School Students

Introduction

Speaking skills make a great contribution to supporting the application of learning skills (We, 2020). Speaking is an important skill that learners must learn and master seriously (Fauzi et al., 2022). With good speaking skills, one can easily understand and convey information. Through these skills, individuals can effectively communicate their understanding, engage in critical discussions, and convey and receive information more efficiently. Speaking skills can also contribute to improving analytical and reflective thinking, which in turn strengthens the effectiveness of the learning process. Thus, the development of speaking skills becomes a crucial aspect in supporting the achievement of better learning outcomes. The science of speaking is related to the progress of communication development in today's fast and dynamic world. Speaking can also be considered designing and delivering a message to an audience. The talk's purpose and the basic topic selection must follow the audience's background to transmit the message skillfully. In addition, speaking is also a basic form of communication that can be a forum for expressing thoughts, ideas, and emotions orally.

In English, speaking is one of the things that makes students feel anxious, which in turn causes nervousness in class (Hakim & Syam, 2019). In reality, students' communication in speaking classes often faces various problems. (Hardiyanto, 2022). Anxiety is something

that can make it difficult for students to develop their skills and can interfere with their performance (Hermagustiana et al., 2021). Anxiety is also defined as a situation of discomfort, anxiety, fear, or worry that is not related to a particular situation (Rahmadani & Etfita, 2022). Julianti et al. also said that anxiety has a big impact on second language development (Julianti et al., 2019). Anxiety can be triggered by social situations or learning environments that are not supportive, which will make individuals feel inhibited in expressing themselves freely and without fear (Firna et al., 2024). This anxiety often stems from the fear of making mistakes, which often makes them feel less confident. As a result, many students experience nervousness when asked to speak in class, which can hinder their ability. The anxiety that students have will have a big impact on their learning when they want to learn a foreign language (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020). According to Saputra et al., oral speaking can provide a forum for students to share opinions, suggestions, ideas, and thoughts (Saputra et al., 2023). If students feel anxious, shy, and not confident when speaking in front of the class, it is a natural thing, because each student has a different psychological condition (Cherniaieva, 2021). Anxiety in speaking English is often caused by a lack of self-confidence that makes individuals doubt their abilities (Firna et al., 2024). This anxiety can appear in various forms that can make students experience high levels of anxiety. This causes students to have difficulty in understanding the material, remembering vocabulary, and participating in speaking activities.

In speaking, some problems are also related to anxiety, one of which is that many students often feel depressed when they have to speak English in public. Nadia & Hilalina state that these feelings are natural, and anxiety occurs because it is influenced by several aspects, namely, feelings, conditions, situations, and fears (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020). Many of them feel that speaking in English is a heavy burden and makes their speech delivery unnatural. Students with good English speaking skills will feel more confident in speaking English. It can also reduce anxiety and increase their motivation to speak English naturally. However, the absence of students' willingness to speak English is also an obstacle for them in learning a language (Smks & Husada, 2024).

In some studies, anxiety is one of the problems in speaking that can affect students' ability to speak English. Each student has a different psychological state, where there are students who can speak confidently, and there are also those who cannot speak at all or stammer because of embarrassment and nervousness (Dwi Kalsum Pertiwi, 2021). According to Gumartifa & Syahri, when someone feels happy, they will be more comfortable speaking (Gumartifa & Syahri, 2021). In addition, a lack of confidence will lead to several emotional responses such as shyness, passivity, worry, and anxiety. An anxiety perspective is a feeling of worry or fear that can cause a person to always think that future events will be bad. It can be interpreted that when someone has signs of excessive anxiety, they will not act normally. Most of them will overreact, to the point of losing their nerve (Mia Febriana, Burhansyah Burhansyah, Saiful Marhaban, 2024). One of the influencing factors is emotion, which is the presence of bodily responses, such as heart palpitations or facial flushing, as well as fidgeting and stuttering behaviors when speaking, which often appear due to anxiety and can hinder fluency in speaking English (Sumarsono et al., 2021).

Anxiety is a mental health disorder that is mostly related to anxiety and has psychological and social impacts. According to Febriana et al (Mia Febriana, Burhansyah Burhansyah, Saiful Marhaban, 2024), there are three different types of anxiety, namely:

a) Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is a person's tendency to feel anxiety in various situations. Students who have trait anxiety will easily feel anxious under certain conditions. This is part of a person's personality that will be difficult to change and will remain for some time.

b) State Anxiety

State anxiety is feelings of anxiety that arise when someone faces certain situations. Someone who has experienced this assumes that it is something normal because this anxiety is temporary and will disappear when the situation that is considered frightening has passed.

c) Situation-specific Anxiety

This type of anxiety occurs specifically in certain situations. Feelings of anxiety tend to increase whenever the person faces situations such as group discussions, presentations, and various other public speaking activities.

Teacher strategies in overcoming students' anxiety in language and communication learning are very important to create a supportive learning environment. Adjusting strategies to students' abilities, needs, and conditions will have an impact on good learning activities (Irmayani et al., 2022). In addition, appropriate speaking teaching strategies will help students develop their speaking skills. According to Marlia et al., speaking anxiety can affect students' performance; teachers and students must overcome it collaboratively, one of which is by conducting self-reflection, which will help identify strengths and weaknesses, overcome problems, and increase confidence in speaking. (Marlia et al., 2023). This will have a positive impact and get more effective results to improve students' speaking skills.

Creating a positive classroom atmosphere will make students feel safe to make mistakes. The anxiety generated by students can also affect teachers; therefore, teachers need to maintain a more comfortable learning atmosphere for all (Resmini et al., 2020). Where teachers give students space to make mistakes but encourage students to see these mistakes as part of learning, not failure. In addition, providing positive feedback, avoiding harsh criticism, and appreciating each student's effort will help in increasing students' confidence and fear of negative judgment from both peers and teachers. Therefore, teaching strategies are made as creative as possible to achieve learning objectives that have an impact on increasing students' motivation toward learning English (Sukmawati & Sabillah, 2020).

Several previous studies are relevant to what researchers are currently doing. The first is research conducted by Febriana et al. (Mia Febriana, Burhansyah Burhansyah, Saiful Marhaban, 2024). In this study, researchers explained a broad range of anxiety, types of anxiety, factors of anxiety, and the impact of language anxiety. This article explains that speaking is an important skill for mastering English. The researcher also said that developing speaking skills requires strong self-confidence, good public speaking skills, and fluency in English.

The second study is research done by Damayanti & Listyani (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). In this study, it was found that students experienced three factors that caused them to be afraid, namely communication anxiety, test anxiety, and anxiety about negative evaluation. In addition, there are factors of a lack of vocabulary, a lack of preparation, and worry of being humiliated by friends in front of the class that also cause anxiety in speaking to appear in students. With this, a learning strategy is needed where the role of the lecturer is very important to control students' anxiety by creating a positive learning atmosphere.

In the current study, the researchers have observed one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. In the school, anxiety among students also becomes an issue in the process of learning English, particularly in speaking. The study is not only concerned with the types of anxiety faced by the students (Mia Febriana, Burhansyah Burhansyah, Saiful Marhaban, 2024)(Damayanti & Listyani, 2020), but the study also scrutinizes how the teacher's attempts to help the students deal with their anxiety when learning English. Therefore, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of anxiety faced by the students at one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo?
2. How does the teacher overcome the students' anxiety at one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo?

Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research was chosen because it is suitable for investigating social phenomena in depth, especially related to speaking anxiety experienced by students. The data used in this study are descriptive data presented in the form of words and pictures, which are obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The information obtained will later be retold by the researcher in descriptive form with data in the form of words and images [10]. The focus of this research is to describe the types of speaking anxiety experienced by students and the strategies used by teachers to help students overcome this anxiety. The researcher acts as the main instrument in the process of collecting data, analyzing information, and presenting research results in depth and objectively.

Participant

The subjects in this study were an English teacher and third-grade students in one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. Third-grade students were selected because they already had experience in learning English, so they were able to describe their anxiety. English teachers were selected because they have a direct role in learning and understand strategies for overcoming student anxiety. The researchers chose 6 students from those with low, medium, and high speaking criteria. The criteria were chosen based on the students' scores in English lessons.

Instrument

The instruments used by researchers are observation and interviews. The first instrument used in this research is observation. This was done to identify the interaction between teachers and students and to observe the level of anxiety experienced by students during the learning process. Through this observation, the researcher can get a direct picture of the situation in the classroom, including students' responses to learning activities, how the teacher provides feedback, and some situations that can trigger the emergence of anxiety in students, especially in learning to speak English.

Observations were conducted over one month due to time constraints and school policy, which prohibited interference with students' learning hours. In the first week, the teacher conducted a speaking lesson as usual, using games and song media. The teacher chose a song that matched the students' level of understanding, after which the teacher asked the students to convey the meaning of the song using English. This method aimed to improve vocabulary understanding and introduce correct intonation and pronunciation in English. The second week, learning focused on direct conversation between students and the teacher. The teacher asked the students to come forward one by one to have a conversation with the teacher using English. After that, the teacher asked the students to do storytelling according to the topic that had been determined. This observation aims to find out the types of anxiety that arise in students during learning and the teacher's response to this anxiety. The combination of interviews and observations will help researchers get information about the role of teachers in overcoming student anxiety in the classroom. This activity aimed to train fluency in speaking and improve students' ability to string sentences well and correctly.

The second instrument is an interview. In the interview process with the English teacher, the researcher developed several questions adapted from scientific articles to obtain the teacher's views and experiences regarding students' anxiety when speaking English. These questions include whether students feel anxious about teacher assessments, the influence of the social environment on anxiety, strategies used to reduce anxiety, and how the teacher monitors the development of students who experience anxiety. All of these questions aim to explore the role of the teacher in creating a learning environment that supports students' speaking skills.

Using the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method, involving six selected students in one discussion group. The discussion was guided directly by the researcher to find out the students' views on anxiety in learning English. Several questions asked were also adapted from the article, including the causes of anxiety when speaking and the factors that most often trigger their anxiety in class. This aims to understand students' learning experiences in more depth.

After conducting interviews with students, researchers analyzed and tabulated the data to determine the types of anxiety experienced by students as recorded in the observation sheet. Then the results of the interview were tabulated and analyzed by categorizing student responses based on the types and aspects of anxiety that emerged. Furthermore, researchers summarized and highlighted important points, with a primary focus on the types of anxiety experienced by students and the strategies implemented by the teacher to overcome them.

In the process of documenting the interview results, students' names were disguised and only written using the initials of their first names. This was done to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of participants, following the ethical principles of research. The use of initials also aims to minimize the potential identification of individuals by unauthorized outsiders, so that students still feel safe and protected in expressing their feelings and experiences.

Results and Discussion

Types of Students' Anxiety in English Speaking Class

Based on the results of observations and interviews with students, the researcher found that most of them experienced more than one type of anxiety simultaneously. The observation data were categorized into three types of anxiety, including their causal factors, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Tabulation of Students' Speaking Anxiety and Contributing Factors

No	Student Name	Trait Anxiety	State Anxiety	Situation-Specific Anxiety	Fear of Judgment	Fear of Mistake	Shyness	Lack of Confidence
1	RS	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	ARP	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	RK	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
4	LS	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	EM	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	AS	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

The recapitulation result showed that three students experienced trait anxiety, three students experienced state anxiety, and five students experienced situation-specific anxiety. The most dominant anxiety-inducing factor was fear of making mistakes (experienced by six students), followed by shyness, lack of confidence, and fear of being judged, each experienced by five students. The findings indicate that students' anxiety in speaking English is influenced by a combination of anxiety types and psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes, social judgment, and low self-confidence.

The first type is Trait Anxiety. Some students said that they often felt anxious when speaking English. This makes students think afraid and forms a person's personality that will be difficult to change.

"When playing a game that required us to sit in front of the class and be seen by our friends, I immediately went blank and forgot what I was going to say. This happened because I was too nervous and felt pressured not to make a mistake when I was in front of my friends." –RS.

"Honestly, when I went to the front of the class, I was afraid of being judged because of my lack of focus, which sometimes made me mispronounce English words. The spontaneous response of my friends, like mimicking my mistakes, makes me afraid that I will make a mistake in pronunciation." –ARP.

Based on the statements made by the students, it is known that some of them experience anxiety, especially when facing difficulties in speaking English in front of many people. The anxiety arises due to the fear of making mistakes in pronunciation as well as the worry of being embarrassed in front of others.

The second is State Anxiety. Some students stated that the anxiety they experience is only temporary and will disappear over time.

"I feel anxious when the teacher suddenly asks me a question or spontaneously has a short conversation during class. Because I have difficulty translating and stringing together what I will say." –RK.

"Sometimes when I answer spontaneously, what I have thought is different from what I say." –LS.

Based on the statements made by students, it is known that some of them experience temporary speaking anxiety. This anxiety arises when they face unexpected situations, such as when the teacher spontaneously asks a question, which causes feelings of confusion to fear.

The last type is Situation-specific Anxiety. Some students stated that nervousness arises in certain situations, both from specific situations when presenting in front of the class, as well as assessments from the teacher.

"When the teacher asked me to speak in English, I was afraid to answer because I was ashamed of my English skills. I also have limited vocabulary, which makes me nervous when speaking English in front of my friends." –EM.

"I feel anxious when I doubt what I'm saying, which makes me stammer when I speak." –AS.

"I can speak English, but sometimes I choose not to show it because I feel that my ability is still lacking with other friends." –EV.

"Yes, I also sometimes feel scared when I'm playing games that require interacting with friends from overseas, even though I'm able to interact with them." –MA.

Based on the statements given by the students, it was known that some of them experienced anxiety in certain situations, for example, when the teacher pointed and asked them to answer questions in class. This anxiety arose because of doubts about their English language skills, especially in terms of grammar and vocabulary.

Based on the interview results above, the students experienced three different types of anxiety related to speaking English. The first type is Trait Anxiety, which refers to a consistent tendency to feel fearful, nervous, and even depressed when speaking English. This underlying fear makes it challenging for students to express themselves in front of their friends. The second type is State Anxiety, which occurs suddenly and is triggered by specific moments, such as when students are unexpectedly asked to answer or communicate in English. This type of anxiety is temporary and tends to subside over time. The last type of anxiety is situation-specific anxiety, which arises in particular contexts. For instance,

students may feel anxious when asked to deliver a presentation or respond to questions in front of the class. Here is a chart of the three types of anxiety experienced by students:

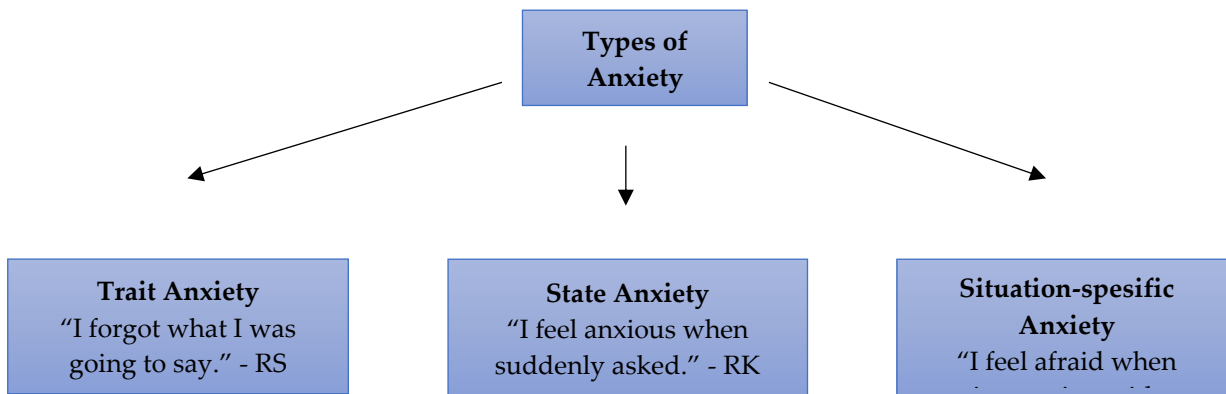


Figure 1. Types of Speaking Anxiety

Teacher Strategies for Overcoming the Students' Anxiety

The researchers also interviewed the teacher to see how teachers deal with students' anxiety in speaking English:

Table 2. Teachers' Strategies in Overcoming Students' Anxiety when Speaking English

No	Teacher Strategies	Strategy Description	Quotes from Teacher (TC)
1	Create a fun learning atmosphere	The teachers try to make students feel comfortable and not tense when learning to speak English.	<i>"First, I create a pleasant learning atmosphere so that students feel comfortable and not stressed."</i>
2	Provide motivation and encouragement	The teacher motivates students to be more confident when speaking in English.	<i>"Second, provide motivation and encouragement so that children are more confident in speaking."</i>
3	Ice-breaking before speaking activity	The teacher does a fun, light activity before the core activity to break the ice.	<i>"Third, do ice breaking before starting speaking activities to break the ice."</i>
4	Out-of-class learning	Teachers conduct learning outside the classroom to provide a fresher atmosphere and reduce pressure.	<i>"Fourth, hold classes outside the classroom as a variation so that the learning atmosphere becomes fresher and more fun."</i>
5	Observation and monitoring of student progress	Teachers make direct observations and record students' progress in	<i>"I will also make direct observations by providing speaking assessment notes. In addition, the teacher also monitors the level of progress made by each student."</i>

Based on interviews with the teacher, it was known that some students showed high levels of anxiety when speaking in front of the class. This could be seen from their body gestures. Assessment and criticism from teachers were some of the main factors that triggered this anxiety. In addition, the social environment also played a role in students' anxiety levels. The teacher revealed that responses from peers had different impacts. This showed that social relationships had a significant influence on students' courage in public speaking. Therefore, teacher applied various strategies, such as creating a pleasant learning atmosphere so that students felt more comfortable to speak, motivating so that students were more confident, conducting ice breaking methods before starting activities to break the atmosphere, and holding learning activities outside the classroom are also applied to provide a new atmosphere that is more relaxed and less stressful. The teacher also conducted direct observation in the classroom to monitor the development of students who experienced anxiety by observing the interaction between students and the teacher during the learning process.

Nonetheless, students had various strategies to overcome their speaking anxiety. Some of these include learning English through games, watching English movies, and listening to English songs. These activities helped them understand English naturally and slowly reduced their fear of public speaking. With the right approach, it was hoped that students could be more confident in using English in everyday life.

Discussion

Types of Students' Anxiety in English Speaking Class

Based on the findings of the study, there were three types of anxiety: State Anxiety, Trait Anxiety, and Situation-specific Anxiety. The result was in line with the theory conducted by Febriana et al (Mia Febriana, Burhansyah Burhansyah, Saiful Marhaban, 2024), which categorized the students' anxiety into three different types.

Trait Anxiety refers to a long-term and consistent tendency to experience anxiety. As found in this study, students felt anxious when speaking English. Nadia & Hilalina (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020) argued that trait anxiety was embedded in a person and was difficult to eliminate. Students who fell into this type of anxiety tended to be afraid of making mistakes and feeling embarrassed by their friends, which harmed their confidence in speaking.

State Anxiety, on the other hand, was a nervous feeling that arose during certain situations. In this study, State Anxiety occurred when students were suddenly asked to answer questions posed by the teacher. Gumartifa & Syahri (Gumartifa & Syahri, 2021) stated that State Anxiety appeared when individuals experienced unexpected pressure and situations. In this study, students showed that spontaneous speaking tasks tended to trigger momentary anxiety that would disappear as they got used to the situation.

Situation-specific anxiety arose in specific speaking contexts, such as when students were asked to come to the front of the class or during a formal evaluation by the teacher. Damayanti & Listiyani (Damayanti & Listiyani, 2020) supported this by stating that students often felt anxious during evaluations, especially when they felt less confident in their language skills. The current study found that student anxiety was often associated with

concerns about pronunciation errors, limited vocabulary, and grammatical errors. These findings reinforced the idea that evaluation-based speaking activities significantly contributed to students' concerns in using English.

Teacher Strategies for Overcoming the Students' Anxiety

This study also identified several strategies used by the teacher to overcome students' English speaking anxiety. This approach was in line with the strategies outlined by Irmayani et al. (Irmayani et al., 2022), who explained the importance of creating a positive and supportive learning environment to reduce anxiety in language learning.

One of the main strategies implemented by the teacher in this study was creating an interesting and relaxed classroom atmosphere. Sukmawati & Sabillah (Sukmawati & Sabillah, 2020) supported this approach and argued that reducing pressure in speaking activities could help students feel more comfortable and confident. Interactive learning and ice-breaking before starting learning were seen as solutions to reduce anxiety in students.

Another strategy was encouraging the students and giving constructive feedback. This was in line with research by Noerjanah & Dhigayuka (Noerjanah & Dhigayuka, 2022), which highlighted the role of positive reinforcement in helping students overcome fear and develop confidence in speaking English. The teacher in this study succeeded in creating a learning environment where students did not feel threatened and felt encouraged to practice speaking without fear of being judged. The teacher focused only on students' efforts rather than their mistakes.

On the other hand, researchers also found that teaching and learning activities carried out outside the classroom reduced student anxiety. Hardiyanto (Hardiyanto, 2022) stated that a learning environment outside the classroom could create a more relaxed atmosphere and make students feel less pressured. In this study, it was revealed that students felt more confident when learning was carried out outside the classroom than in the classroom.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that students in one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo experience three types of anxiety in learning to speak English, namely trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. This anxiety arises due to various factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of vocabulary, and pressure from the social and academic environment. The teacher has an important role in overcoming this anxiety by carrying out various strategies that have been adapted to the needs of students, such as creating a pleasant learning atmosphere, providing positive feedback, doing icebreakers, and facilitating students' learning outside the classroom. This approach is proven to help students become more confident in speaking English expected to be a reference for teachers in designing a much more effective learning strategy to overcome students' anxiety in speaking English. However, this study still has shortcomings, namely, data collected from only one school and a relatively small student population. The observations were also limited to a period of one month, so the depth of student behavior

patterns may not be fully captured. Therefore, further research is needed, and it is recommended to involve more diverse and larger samples in various schools.

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