

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background of the study related to public speaking anxiety among students. It highlights the importance of identifying the underlying causes of anxiety and the strategies students use to overcome it. Additionally, this chapter presents the formulation of the problem and outlines the objectives of the research. The significance of the study for teachers, students, and future researchers is also explained to provide a solid foundation for the following chapters.

A. Background of the Study

Public speaking anxiety is a prevalent issue among students, particularly when they are required to deliver speeches in a foreign language such as English. Horwitz describes speaking anxiety as a type of communication apprehension, specifically related to oral performance in a second or foreign language.¹ This form of anxiety can manifest in various ways, including psychological symptoms such as excessive sweating, trembling, and increased heart rate, as well as psychological symptoms such as fear of embarrassment or failure. Such anxiety can significantly affect students' academic performance and overall learning experience. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to students' anxiety in speaking

¹ J. Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety," *The Modern Language Journal* 70, no. 2 (1986): 125–132.

English publicly is crucial for educators and policymakers in developing effective strategies to address this issue and promote confident communication skills among students.

A significant contributor to anxiety is a lack of confidence. Most students tend to experience low self-confidence when speaking in public, especially when using a foreign language such as English. Students often experience anxiety due to the fear of making mistakes and the embarrassment associated with speaking in front of an audience. Speaking anxiety and failure can be caused by a lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and fear of making mistakes.² This lack of confidence can be exacerbated by previous negative experiences in public speaking, which can lead to a fear of being judged or evaluated unfavorably by peers and instructors.³ In the context of UIN SATU Tulungagung, this fear may be intensified by the cultural emphasis on academic excellence and comparison with peers. Well prepared students tend to feel more confident and less anxious. Conversely, poor preparation can lead to uncertainty and increased anxiety. The study by Mahmoudi emphasizes the importance of adequate preparation in reducing anxiety among EFL learners.⁴

In addition to confidence, cultural and institutional factors also play a significant role in shaping students' anxiety at UIN SATU Tulungagung,

² S Thornbury, *How to Teach Speaking*, 2005.

³ Musrifatun Nangimah, "Engineering Students' English Public Speaking: Why Is It a Nerve-Wracking Experience?," *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature and Culture* 7, no. 1 (2022): 82.

⁴ S mahmoudi, M & mahmoudi, "The Impact of Preparation on Reducing Public Speaking Anxiety among EFL Learner," *journal of language an education study* 8, no. 3 (2022): 45–49.

societal expectations and cultural norms can affect students' anxiety levels. The pressure to excel academically and the importance of public image can increase anxiety. These cultural aspects impact English learning anxiety among university students at UIN SATU Tulungagung, providing valuable context for this study.⁵ The educational environment contributes greatly to public speaking anxiety. The transition from secondary education to university often involves increased academic demands and expectations. Students majoring in English may face additional pressure as they are expected to deliver more complex presentations in English.

Social and environmental support is another determinant of students' anxiety levels. Students who have access to supportive peers, instructors, and family members are less likely to experience minimal anxiety. Conversely, a lack of support can exacerbate feelings of stress. The role of support networks in reducing public speaking anxiety among Indonesian EFL students and suggested that increasing these networks could be a valuable strategy.⁶ The role of teaching methods and classroom environment is also important. Instructors who create a supportive and encouraging classroom atmosphere can help reduce students' anxiety. Conversely, a highly critical or competitive environment can increase anxiety levels.

⁵ D. A. W Nurhayati, "Cultural Aspects and English Learning Anxiety," *International journal of language and linguistic* 7, no. 33 (2019): 89–99.

⁶ Yulianti D, "The Role of Support Network in Reducing Public Speaking Anxiety Among Indonesian EFL Students," *Asian EFL Journal* 25, no. 1 (2023): 123–135.

Technological factors are also increasingly relevant in the context of public speaking. The advent of online learning environments has introduced new challenges and opportunities. While some students may feel more comfortable speaking in a virtual environment, others may feel more anxious due to technical difficulties or lack of understanding of the platform. Understanding how technology impacts public speaking anxiety is crucial in today's educational world. Personal experiences and individual differences also play a role in public speaking anxiety. Each student brings unique experiences, personality traits, and coping mechanisms. Some students may be naturally more anxious or introverted, while others may have developed effective strategies to manage their anxiety. Recognizing and addressing these individual differences is crucial to providing tailored support. Recent research underlines the importance of a holistic approach to addressing public speaking anxiety. This involves considering the interaction of multiple factors and implementing multifaceted interventions. For example, cognitive-behavioral strategies to address the fear of negative evaluation, suggesting that such an approach can be effective in reducing anxiety among students at UIN SATU Tulungagung.⁷

This study aims to explore the specific factors that contribute to public speaking anxiety among fourth semester English Education Department students at UIN SATU Tulungagung. By identifying these

⁷ P.J rachman, s & de jong, "Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies for Reducing Fear of Negative Evaluation," *behavior therapy* 52, no. 4 (2021): 789–802.

factors, this study seeks to provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers. Therefore, the goal is to create a supportive environment. This environment will allow students to develop their public speaking skills and confidence in English, thus improving their overall academic experience.

B. Statement of Research Question

In this descriptive quantitative study aims to analyze the factors that contribute to the anxiety experienced by fourth semester students English Education Department at UIN SATU Tulungagung. The following research question have been formulated:

1. What are the main factors that contribute to students' public speaking anxiety among fourth semester students of the English Education Department at UIN SATU Tulungagung?
2. What strategies can be implemented by the fourth semester students of the English Education Department at UIN SATU Tulungagung to reduce public speaking anxiety?

C. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study are as follows:

1. To Identify and analyze the factors that contribute to students' anxiety in public speaking in English.
2. To explore the effective strategies to reduce anxiety and improve public speaking in English.

D. Significance of Study

1. For teacher

For teachers, the importance of this study lies in its potential to inform instructional practices and classroom management strategies. By understanding the specific factors that contribute to students' public speaking anxiety, teachers can create a more supportive and inclusive classroom environment. They can adopt teaching methods that reduce anxiety, such as providing more opportunities for practice, offering constructive feedback, and fostering a non-judgmental atmosphere. Furthermore, teachers can tailor their support to the individual needs of students, aiding those who are particularly anxious in overcoming their fears. By doing so, educators can help students develop the confidence and skills necessary for effective public speaking.

2. For students

This study holds significance for students as it pinpoints the various elements contributing to their public speaking anxiety, particularly in English language presentations. By identifying these factors, students can gain greater awareness of the roots of their anxiety and take steps to address them. The results can aid students in developing more effective mechanisms and strategies to enhance their confidence in public speaking. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of thorough preparation and practice, motivating students

to participate more actively in improving their language learning and presentation skills.

2. Future researchers

This study offers a foundational understanding of the factors contributing to public speaking anxiety among students at UIN SATU Tulungagung. Future researchers can expand on this work by investigating additional variables or conducting comparative studies in different educational contexts. The findings provide a basis for developing and testing interventions to reduce anxiety and improve public speaking skills. Additionally, this research contributes to the broader field of language anxiety studies, providing insights applicable to other populations and settings.

E. Scope and Limitation of Study

This study focuses on certain factors in the academic and cultural environment and examines how the use of technology in the learning environment influences students' anxiety levels in speaking English in public at UIN SATU Tulungagung. The scope of this study includes fourth semester students in English Education Department at UIN SATU Tulungagung, especially those who take public speaking courses. The study used a descriptive quantitative method, collecting data using questionnaires.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Anxiety

Anxiety is understood as a complex emotional reaction, characterized by feelings of anxiety, tension, and worry about possible future threats.⁸

2. Public speaking

Public speaking is described as the art of speaking before an audience' and is a fundamental element in achieving effective communication in a various of contexts.⁹

⁸ Charles D. Spielberger et Al., "Manual for the State–Trait Anxiety Inventory," in *Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press*, 1970, 7.

⁹ Stephen E. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*, 2020.