

Students' Strategies In Coping With Anxiety In Speaking English

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ABSTRACT

The present research aims to analyse Students' Strategies in Coping with Anxiety in Speaking English. The research question of this research is what are the students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. The aim of this research is to investigate the kinds of students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. In this research the writer used a qualitative method with a case study approach. The data was collected from the students of second semester English Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University. The instrument used were observation, questionnaire and interview. The result shows that the students of the second semester English Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University carried out the five strategies, namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. It is in line with a theory proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004). The students apply these strategies with various activities. By doing these strategies the students can reduce the anxiety they feel when speaking English, feel more prepared to speak English, and calmer when speaking English. In addition, they can be more confident in speaking English and their ability to speak English can



increase. Therefore, it is very good for students to do these strategies.

Keywords: Anxiety, Speaking, Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Language has an important role in human life. Through language, humans can interact, communicate, and develop themselves. The language used to communicate daily by the public at large is their mother tongue which has been acquired since they were born. However, over time humans not only use their mother tongue but also use foreign languages, especially English which is an international language. According to Crystal (2003) in (Gunantar, 2016) English language is the most studied language in the world. It means that at this time people must learn English in order to communicate well with all people around the world.

In order to learn English, there are four abilities that people must master, namely reading, speaking, writing and listening. Speaking is one of the most important skills to be developed and enhanced as means of effective communication. Fulcher (2003) in (Tridinanti, 2018) defines speaking as the use of language in a spoken manner to communicate with others. This means that speaking is a skill that is owned by a person to create a good communication that can be understood by others.

Speaking anxiety is one of the issues that students frequently have when learning to speak English. Nowadays, there are many students experience this speaking anxiety, starting from students who are at the elementary school level to the university students, they must have felt anxiety when speaking English. Price (1991) in Saarahwati, (2020) states that for foreign language students, speaking in front of their class is an extremely anxiety experience since they are afraid of making mistakes and getting laughed at. It proves that anxiety is a real problem faced by language

learners when they speaking English. This is very reasonable because English is not their mother tongue but as a foreign language that they must learn.

In learning a language, students must have their own strategies in order to make the language learning easier. According to Weinstein and Mayer (1986) in (Wael et al., 2018) learning strategies are the behaviors and thoughts that a learner used in during learning that intended to influence the learner's encoding process. There are many strategies that are usually used by students to learn English, for example, listening to English songs, watching English movie, practicing with friends, and many more. By using the right learning strategies, students will be able to reduce feelings of anxiety when speaking English and their ability to speak English will increase.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research the writer used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Creswell (1997) in (Asparanita, 2020) states that in qualitative research, the researchers observe things in their natural environments in order to understand or interpret phenomena. Meanwhile, Yin (2003) in (Saarahwati, 2020) defines case study as a study that is used to comprehend real-life events. Therefore, qualitative method with a case study aims to explain a phenomenon accurate according to research characteristics. The real-life phenomenon that is raised in this research was about students' anxiety in speaking English.

The writer chose the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pakuan University as the research site of this research. The location was at Jl. Pakuan RT.02/RW.06, Tegallega, Bogor, West Java. The population in this research were the students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Pakuan University which consisted of 39 students. In this research, the writer used a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling requires the researcher to be aware of the characteristics of informants and to presume that the informants chosen will be able to provide information or data relevant to the research problems based on the research design. The writer carried out observations in the class, this was to find out students

who do not feel anxiety when speaking English. The writer only observed students who were recommended by the lecturer to be the sample. After that, the writer gave a questionnaire to the students as the sample in order to find out the strategies they used to cope with the anxiety when speaking English. The last the writer gave the interview to the students in order to ensure that the students' answers in the questionnaire were the same as when interview. In this research the writer used three techniques to gather the data, namely observation, questionnaire and interview. They were clarified as follows:

a. Observation

In this research, the writer used non-participant observation. It means that the writer only came to the online class that using an application named Zoom Meeting and observed the class without participating in the activity. The observation was conducted only twice in the online class. The purpose of this observation was to find out the students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. In this observation, the writer focused on students who were recommended by the lecturer as the sample.

b. Questionnaire

In this research, the writer used a questionnaire with the aim of knowing the strategies used by students in coping with anxiety in speaking English. The questionnaire used in this research is open ended question which consisted of 10 questions that must be answered honestly by students. Questionnaire was administered to students using Google Forms.

c. Interview

Interview was also conducted in this research to find the suitability of students' answers in the questionnaire regarding students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. Interviews were conducted one by one between the writer and students using WhatsApp application. The interview questions consisted of 10 questions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

In this part, the writer presents the results of the research related to the students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. The results of the research were obtained from three different types of data collection sources namely observations, questionnaires and interviews.

Data Description

The research was conducted in the second semester of the English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University. The number of students was 39 students who were divided into two classes, namely, A class which consisted of 19 students and B class which consisted of 20 students. The lecturer recommended 6 students in each class to be the sample in this research, so the total number of students who became the sample were 12 students. The lecturer recommended the students who have high scores in English speaking class. The learning process was carried out online using the Zoom Meeting application. The observations were made twice. The first observation was carried out on June 16, 2022, namely for A class at 17.00 and B class at 16.00. Meanwhile, the second observation was carried out on June 23, 2022, namely in A class at 10.00 and B class at 08.00. In this observation, the writer involved 2 other people to become observers, so the total observers in this observation were 3 observers. In one class each observer observes 2 students. This observation is a non-participant observation, which means that the observers are not directly involved in the learning process. In this observation, after observing the students, the observers filled out the observation checklist. In the observation checklist, there are five statements taken from the five strategies proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004).

In the first observation, the lecturer started the learning process as usual. The first class that was observed was B class at 16.00, after that continued with A class at 17.00. At that time there were 17 students from B class who attended the Zoom Meeting and 3 students were absent. While in A class there were 18 students who attended the Zoom Meeting and 1 student was absent. The lecturer informed the students that there were 3 observers present at the Zoom Meeting at that time. During the learning

process, the lecturer asked students to always turn on the camera so that the learning process can be more effective. The learning process started with the lecturer reminding students to fill in attendance at the LMS after that the learning continued with the lecturer explaining the material and conducting questions and answers with students. Lecturer always speak to students in English. It makes students more motivated to speak in English. The learning process at that time went smoothly. The students being observed were seen to be present and active to speak English. This makes it easier for the observers to see the strategies they use when coping with anxiety when speaking English. Observers noted the strategies that were seen to be used by students. Every student was seen doing different strategies to cope with anxiety when speaking English.

In the second observation, the learning process was carried out as usual in the two classes. In the B Class the learning process was held at 08.00 and in the A class was at 10.00. At that time, the number of students in B class who attended the Zoom Meeting were 18 students and 2 students were absent. Meanwhile, in A class there were 18 students attended the Zoom Meeting and 1 student was absent. The observers observed the same students as the first observation. In the observation, the observers observed the strategies that students used in coping with anxiety when speaking English. The observers filled out the observation checklist. The observation checklist consisted of five statements. The five statements were taken from five strategies proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004). Each of these statements represents a strategy. The result of the observation will be shown bellows:

- a. Student prepare himself/herself before speaking

When the observations were carried out, the observers found that there were some students who made preparations before speaking English, as many as 4 out of 12 students made preparations. Based on the observations made by the observers, the preparations made by students were reading the material or something before speaking English.

b. Student can reduce his/her nervousness by trying to be relax and keeping calm.

Based on the observations that have been made, the observers found that there were 6 out of 12 students who did relaxation. This can be seen from the way students talk when they look relaxed and not in a hurry. Meanwhile, the other 6 students did not seem to be doing relaxation because they did not seem relaxed and in a hurry when speaking English. Relaxation done by students are taking deep breaths, trying to stay calm, and speaking in a relaxed tone.

c. Student looks optimistic and enthusiastic when speaking English.

According to the observations that have been made, the observers found that 8 out of 12 students looked optimistic and enthusiastic when speaking English. This illustrates that the 8 students have positive thoughts when speaking English. This can be seen from the expressions of students who look optimistic, enthusiastic and confident when speaking English.

d. Student is seen looking for friend who has the same problem.

Based on the observations made by the observers, there were 4 out of 12 students who did not focus when speaking English. The four students seemed unfocused and often looked the other way. In addition, the observers also saw from their eyes gestures and faces that they seemed to be looking for friends.

e. Student looks to be doing nothing.

According to the observations made by the observers, it was found that there is 1 out of 12 students who seem to do nothing before speaking English. The student looks spontaneous when speaking English. The observer did not find the activities that she did before or while speaking English.



Figure 1. Observation Activity

In this research the questionnaire is the second instrument to collect the data. Questionnaire was used to find out more about the strategies used by students in coping with anxiety in speaking English. The questionnaire used is an open-ended question consisting of 10 questions. Open-ended questions can make students more flexible to answer questions about the strategies they usually use in coping with anxiety when speaking English. The question comes from five existing indicators, namely the five strategies proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004) namely, preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. This questionnaire was administered to 12 students who were respondents. The questionnaire was administered in the form of Google Form. This is to make it easier for respondents to fill out the questionnaire.

Based on the results of the students' answers from the questionnaire that was administered, the writer found that each student had different strategies to cope with anxiety when speaking English. The first strategy is preparation, students' answers from the questionnaire showed that 7 out of 12 students admitted that they made preparations before speaking English. The preparations they did include reading the material, practicing speaking in front of a mirror, practicing speaking with friends, watching short films, and taking small notes. Students revealed several reasons they made preparations before speaking English, namely to be less nervous, more confident, minimize mistakes, and not sound stiff when speaking English. Meanwhile, 5 students who did not carry out the preparation strategy also stated the reasons, including being used to speaking English, being in an environment that was accustomed to using English, and accustomed to speaking spontaneously.

The second strategy is relaxation. Relaxation is an activity carried out by students so that they become calmer when they feel anxiety when speaking English. Based on the results of the administered questionnaire, there were 9 out of 12 students who did relaxation activities when they were anxious to speak English. Students revealed some of the activities they usually do to make themselves feel calm, including taking deep breaths, listening to music, reading books, watching movies, listening to English conversations on social media, doing religious activities such as praying *dhuha*

and reciting the Koran, reading *Bismillah* and imagining that there is someone in front of him. Meanwhile, the 3 students who did not do relaxation activities did not reveal their reasons for this.

The third strategy is positive thinking. Based on students' answers to the questionnaire that was administered, there were 11 out of 12 students who tried to think positively when coping with anxiety while speaking English. The activities they do include being confident, always optimistic, always enthusiastic, and not thinking about things that are not important. Meanwhile, 1 student did not use this strategy and did not explain the reason.

The fourth strategy is peer seeking. Based on students' answers to a questionnaire that was administered, there were 10 out of 12 students who thought that other people felt the same anxiety when speaking English. They admit that by seeing other people who have the same anxiety, they feel calmer, more confident, and the anxiety they feel can be reduced. However, of the 10 students, there were 8 who were more comfortable being alone than with friends in order to reduce the anxiety they felt. They expressed the reason that usually when with friends their feelings of anxiety usually increase, therefore they choose to be alone. The other 4 students chose to be around their friends so that they became calmer. In addition, they also revealed that together with their friends they could discuss each other, and practice speaking English together.

The last strategy is resignation. Resignation is an action that does nothing, it means the student did not carry out the previous strategies. Based on students' answers from the questionnaire, there was 1 student who chose resignation as her strategy. The student was just silent and did nothing. She spontaneously spoke English. She revealed that her reason for choosing resignation was because she was used to speaking English and when she felt anxious, she chose not to do anything because she believed that anxiety would always be there when she spoke English.

In this research, interview is the last instrument used to collect data. Interviews were conducted in this research to determine the suitability of students' answers in the questionnaire regarding students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking

English. It is intended that the data found in this research is consistent so that this research can be considered credible.

Interviews were conducted on 8 and 9 July 2022. The students who were interviewed were the same students at the time of observation and were given a questionnaire. The number of students who were interviewed were 12 students. Interviews were conducted one by one through a social media called WhatsApp using the voice note feature. The writer conducted the interview using Indonesian language. The number of questions in the interview are 10 questions. All questions asked are based on the five indicators. Two questions represent one indicator. The interview session started with the first question, which tried to find out whether the students carried out the first strategy, namely preparation before speaking English. The students' answers are stated below.

Excerpt

Ya, saya butuh persiapan sebelum berbicara bahasa Inggris.

[Yes, I need preparation before speaking English.]

After the writer knew the students' answers regarding whether they carried out preparation strategies before speaking English, then the writer wanted to find out more about what preparation activities were carried out by the students. Those answers are stated in these statements below.

Excerpt

Menyiapkan beberapa kosakata, membaca kamus dan juga berlatih intonasi.

[Prepare some vocabulary, read dictionaries and also practice intonation.]

The third question asked by the writer was whether the students used the second strategy, namely relaxation to reduce anxiety when speaking English. The writer found different answers from each student. Below are the answers given by students.

Excerpt

Iya karna saat saya merasa cemas saya tidak bisa fokus untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris, jadi saya melakukan relaksasi.

[Yes, because when I feel anxious I cannot focus on speaking English, so I do the relaxation.]

The fourth question was conducted by the writer aimed to find out more about the kinds of relaxation that students did to reduce the anxiety they felt. There were many kinds of students answers. Below are the students answers to the fourth question.

Excerpt

Dengan cara menarik napas dalam-dalam sehingga dapat mengurangi rasa panik dan menjadi tenang.

[By taking deep breaths so that I can reduce panic and become relax.]

The next question is the fifth question. The writer asked the students whether they did the third strategy, namely positive thinking. Various answers were obtained by the writer from students. Below are the students answers to the fifth question.

Excerpt

Iya. Karena kita harus selalu berpikir positif disaat apa pun terutama saat berbicara bahasa Inggris.

[Yes. Because we must always think positively any time, especially when speaking English.]

After the fifth question is answered, the next question is the sixth question. In this question, the writer tried to find a more detailed answer about what students usually do so that they are able to think positively. Below are student answers regarding this matter.

Excerpt

Saya selalu berpikir untuk tidak takut melakukan kesalahan saat berbicara yang terpenting adalah saya sudah mencoba.

[I always think not to be afraid of making mistakes when speaking the most important thing is that I have tried.]

The next question is the seventh question. This question was conducted by the writer with the aim of knowing whether students think that other people feel the same

way to reduce the anxiety felt by students when speaking English. Various kinds of answers were obtained by writers. Below are students' answers to the seventh question.

Excerpt

Ya tidak jarang saya melihat orang lain dan berpikir bahwa orang lain juga mengalami kecemasan yang saya alami. Hal tersebut mampu untuk membantu saya karna saya merasa tidak tertekan jika saya berpikir orang lain juga memiliki kecemasan yang sama.

[Yes, it is not uncommon for me to look at other people and think that other people are also experiencing the anxiety that I am experiencing. It was able to help me because I feel less depressed if I think other people have the same anxiety.]

The writer continued to ask the next questions to the students. The question is whether students are more comfortable being alone or with friends to reduce the anxiety they feel when speaking English. Various kinds of answers obtained by writer. Below are the answers that writer got from students.

Excerpt

Saya lebih suka untuk bersama teman-teman. Karena mereka juga bisa membuat saya tidak merasa cemas.

[I prefer to be with friends. Because they can also make me feel not anxious.]

The next question is whether students choose to use the last strategy, namely resignation or not to do anything to reduce anxiety when speaking English. The writer found the answer that most of the students did not do it, but there was one student who did the strategy. Below are students answers to this question.

Excerpt

Ya saya tidak melakukan apa pun untuk mengurangi kecemasan sebab dengan melakukan aktivitas aktivitas itu pun kecemasan tidak akan hilang.

[Yes, I do nothing to reduce anxiety because even by doing these activities, the anxiety will not go away.]

The last question is about whether students believe that with the last strategy, namely resignation or not doing anything, the anxiety when speaking English will

decrease by itself. Like the previous answer, the writer found answers from students that most students were not sure about it, but there was one student who was sure about it. Below are student answers to the last question.

Excerpt

Saya tidak yakin karena saya biasa melakukan sesuatu untuk mengurangi kecemasan saat berbicara bahasa Inggris.

[I am not sure because I usually do things to reduce anxiety when speaking English.]

Data Analysis

In this part the writer presented the results from the data description. There was one research question in this research, namely what are the students' strategies in coping with anxiety in speaking English. This research focuses on five strategies proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004) in Aeni (2020) namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. According to the findings in the data description, the writer found the result that the students do the five strategies to cope with the anxiety in speaking English. The first strategy is preparation. According to the observation made by the writer, it is found that the students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University did this strategy by reading a book or something. It is supported by the students answers from the questionnaire and interview that students usually did the preparation by reading the material, practicing speaking in front of a mirror, prepare some vocabulary, read dictionaries, practice intonation, practicing speaking with friends, watching short films, and taking small notes. According to Kondo & Ling (2004) in (Anjaniputra et al., 2020) preparation is an effort to reduce the threat by enhancing learning and study strategies. Preparation is one of the important strategies that can be done by students in order to cope with the anxiety in speaking English. In this research, this strategy is proven to make students more prepared to speak English, so that students become able to cope with the anxiety when speaking English.

The second strategy is relaxation. Based on the observations that have been made by the writer, it is found that the students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University did relaxation strategy by taking deep breaths, trying to stay calm, and speaking in a relaxed tone. It is supported by students answers from questionnaire and interview that students usually did this strategy. Students usually do several activities, for example taking deep breaths, reading books, listening to music, listening to English conversations on social media, watching movies, doing religious activities such as praying *dhuha* and reciting the Koran, reading *Bismillah* and imagining that there is someone in front of him. Relaxation is an activity that can make students feel calmer when they are anxious to speak English. According to (Siagian, 2017) relaxation is an activity that involves feelings that aim to reduce students' symptoms of somatic anxiety. It means that relaxation is one of the right strategies to cope with the anxiety felt by students when speaking English. From the findings in this research, it is proven that this relaxation strategy is often used by students and it is a powerful strategy to cope with the anxiety when speaking English. So that, students need to do this relaxation strategy because it is able to make students more relaxed and can cope with the anxiety when speaking English.

The third strategy is positive thinking. According to the observations that have been made, the writer found that the students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University did this strategy. The writer found that students looked optimistic and enthusiastic when speaking English. This illustrates that the students have positive thoughts when speaking English. It can be seen from the expressions of students who look optimistic, enthusiastic and confident when speaking English. It is supported by the findings from questionnaire and interview that students usually did several things to make themselves think positively, including being confident, always optimistic, always enthusiastic, remember about the supports from family and friends, and not thinking about things that are not important. Positive thinking is one of the

things that must be done when someone feels anxious. According to **(Deni, 2021)** positive thinking refers to students' effort to divert focus from tough periods to positive and joyful signs and bring comfort to nervous students. It means by thinking positively students can keep away negative thoughts and feelings of anxiety that can disturb the students. This strategy is designed to distract attention away from the stressful circumstance toward positive and pleasant cues, as well as to decrease the students' anxiety in speaking **(Ulandari, 2018)**. Based on the findings from the observation, questionnaire and interview, it is proven that students also did this strategy to cope with anxiety when speaking English. Students admit that by applying this strategy, they are able to think more calmly so that they can speak English fluently and properly.

The next is the fourth strategy namely peer seeking. In this research, based on the observations that have been made, the writer found that there were students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University who often looked in various directions which were often directed at other people. Moreover, the writer could see from the eye gestures and faces of students who seemed to be looking for friends. The writer assumed this was an effort for students to find friends who had the same problem. It is supported by the students answers from the questionnaire and interview that there were students who looked for friends who had the same problem and chose to be with friends to cope their anxiety, but there were students who only focused on themselves and did not see others and could cope their anxiety alone. According to **(Aeni, 2020)** peer seeking is students' willingness to seek out other students who appear to be having problems understanding the class and managing their anxieties. Students who did this strategy felt that by finding friends who had the same problem students felt they had more strength and confidence so that they could cope the anxiety when speaking English. In this research, based on the results of observations, questionnaires and interviews, it is proven that this strategy is one of the strategies used by students

to cope anxiety when speaking English. This strategy is good for students who cannot be alone and often need friends.

The last strategy is resignation. According to the observations that have been made by the writer, it is found that there was a student of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University did this strategy by did nothing. It is supported by the answer from questionnaire and interview that she just did nothing to cope the anxiety. The student gave her reasons for this, which were because she was used to speaking English and she believed that her own anxiety would persist, so she chose not to do anything and speak English spontaneously. Resignation is a form of surrender of a person, in this case it means that the students did nothing to cope anxiety when speaking English. According to **(Siagian, 2017)** resignation is students' unwillingness to do anything to reduce their speaking anxiety. In other words, students do not try to do anything to cope with the anxiety when speaking English. In this research, based on the result of observations, questionnaire and interview, it is proven that this strategy is a strategy used by students, however students who used this strategy were quite rare. It can be seen from the total number of respondents, there was only one respondent who used this strategy.

According to the explanation above, the writer knew that the students used the five strategies proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004) namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. The writer found that the students used the five strategies with different activities according to their usual activities. This is a good thing because by using these strategies they are able to cope with the anxiety they feel when speaking English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this research, the writer can conclude that the students of the second semester English Language Education Study Program Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Pakuan University carried out the five strategies, namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. By doing these

strategies the students can reduce the anxiety they feel when speaking English, feel more prepared to speak English, and calmer when speaking English. In addition, they can be more confident in speaking English and their ability to speak English can increase. Therefore, it is very good for students to do these strategies.

The writer hopes that the results of this research can be useful for student, lecturer and future researchers. The writer suggests to the students of English Education Study Program to apply the five strategies. The writer believes that if students apply these strategies, they will be able to cope with the anxiety they feel when speaking English and they will be able to speak English better. For the lecturer, the writer suggests to be able to motivate students to speak English more often by interacting with students and using appropriate and interesting methods according to the conditions and materials in the speaking class. It aims to make the students interested and motivated to speak in speaking class. For future researchers, the writer hopes that the future researchers can find other strategies so that students are able to cope with anxiety in speaking English. It is because this research only focuses on the five strategies according to a theory proposed by Kondo & Ling (2004). Furthermore, the writer hopes that this research can be a good source for future researchers to examine the strategies used by students to cope with anxiety in speaking English.

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