

STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN SPEAKING ENGLISH DURING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES IN THE SEVENTH GRADE OF SMP YPK PEMATANGSIANTAR

¹Yanti Yolanda Nababan, ^{2*}Tiodora Fermiska Silalahi, ³Mardin Silalahi

^{1),2),3)}Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Simalungun

*E_mail: tiodorasilalahi2@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is (1) to find out and describe students' anxiety in speaking English during Classroom activities, and (2) to find out the factors that caused the students' anxiety in speaking English during Classroom activities in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar. This research used a qualitative approach with a qualitative descriptive method. The subject and the sample of this research were the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar. The data collection techniques in this research were video, interviews, and questionnaires. The data analysis techniques that applied in this research were data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification. The result of this research showed that (1)The types of student's anxiety found in speaking English are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The dominant type of students' anxiety is communication apprehension because most students felt nervous, hesitant, and lacked confidence when they had to speak English in front of the class or communicate directly in English during learning activities, and (2) The factors of students' anxiety in speaking English are psychological factors, linguistic factors, and classroom factors. The dominant factor is psychological factors.

Keyword: *Anxiety, Speaking, Classroom Activities*

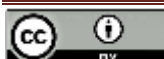
I. INTRODUCTION

The Background of Research

Language is an essential tool for human communication. Yusuf (2023, p. 1) states that language is the primary tool for communication, both spoken and written, used to convey ideas, thoughts, and feelings and to build social interaction, while Mamonto et al. (2024, p. 11) define it as a system of arbitrary sound symbols used by social groups to cooperate, communicate, and identify themselves.

Speaking is a crucial skill in learning English as a foreign language because it reflects students' ability to use language in real communication. Through speaking activities, students apply vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation to develop communicative competence. Purnami (2024) states that speaking activities provide opportunities for students to participate actively, express themselves confidently, and communicate meaningfully. In classroom practice, speaking becomes a central medium through activities such as questioning, discussions, and role plays. Nugroho et al. (2023) explain that speaking and presenting ideas are important skills for global competition, and Kurniawan et al. (2018) emphasize the need for curricula that support English as a medium of instruction.

However, speaking English is challenging because it requires spontaneous processing, accuracy, and psychological readiness. Based on the researcher's experience at SMP YPK Pematangsiantar, students showed hesitation, silence, low voice, and avoidance, indicating



difficulties influenced by linguistic and psychological factors. Abrar et al. (2022) state that the complexity of speaking can lead to difficulties in expressing ideas and result in speaking anxiety.

Therefore, this research uses a qualitative approach to analyze students' anxiety in speaking English, including its types and factors, in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar. The study focuses on how anxiety occurs and what factors cause it, with the aim of describing students' anxiety and identifying its causes, in order to contribute to more effective and supportive English speaking instruction.

The Problem of Research

Based on the background of the research, the problem of the research are:

1. How is the students' anxiety in Speaking English during classroom activities in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar?
2. What are the factors cause the students' anxiety in Speaking English during classroom activities in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar?

The Objective of Research

Based on the problem above, the objective of the research are :

1. To find out and describe students' anxiety in speaking English during classroom activities in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar.
2. To find out the factors which cause the students' anxiety in Speaking English during classroom activities in the seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar.

The Scope of Research

The scope of this research focuses on students' anxiety in speaking English during classroom activities at seventh grade of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar. This research limits the discussion to students' experiences and perceptions of speaking anxiety and the internal and external factors that influence its emergence during the English learning process in the classroom.

II. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definition of Speaking

Speaking is a productive language skill used to convey ideas, thoughts, and emotions orally in communication. Marzuqi (2019, p. 2) states that speaking is a productive ability to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings orally, while Nabilla et al. (2025) define it as a complex cognitive-linguistic process used to communicate information and engage in interaction. In line with this, Bella et al. (2025) view speaking as the ability to use spoken language interactively through appropriate vocabulary, meaningful utterances, and responses.



Furthermore, Safitriani & Jayadi (2021, p. 2) emphasize speaking as a process of conveying messages through sounds produced by speech organs, and Septiani & Nugraeni (2025) state that speaking is a fundamental element in language learning. Daulay et al. (2022) add that speaking involves pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Thus, speaking is a productive ability involving linguistic and cognitive processes to communicate meaningfully.

Definition of Anxiety

Anxiety is an emotional condition characterized by feelings of distress, nervousness, worry, and fear of negative outcomes (Permatasari, 2023). In foreign language learning, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define it as foreign language anxiety, a complex construct involving learners' self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors in classroom language learning. Anxiety may also appear physically, such as sweating and increased heart rate (Sulistiyowati, 2023), while Susilawati et al. (2025) state that it reduces students' confidence and participation. Thus, anxiety is a complex condition affecting emotional, cognitive, and physiological aspects and influencing students' performance and engagement.

Types of Speaking Anxiety

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), speaking anxiety is part of foreign language anxiety that arises when learners use the target language orally, requiring both linguistic competence and psychological readiness, and it is classified into three types. Communication apprehension occurs when students feel nervous, lack confidence, and tend to avoid speaking, which is reflected in silence, trembling voice, and physical tension. Fear of negative evaluation refers to students' fear of being judged by teachers or peers, causing embarrassment, hesitation, and worry about making mistakes. Meanwhile, test anxiety appears in evaluative situations where students fear failure or low scores, characterized by excessive worry, difficulty concentrating, and physical symptoms.

Factors Causing Students' Speaking Anxiety

Linguistic Factors

Speaking anxiety is influenced by linguistic difficulties in the process of language production. Burns et al. (2012) explain that speaking involves conceptual preparation, formulation, and articulation. Anxiety occurs when students struggle to generate ideas, leading to hesitation and silence, when they lack grammar and vocabulary in formulation, causing fear of mistakes and low fluency, and when they are unsure about pronunciation in articulation, resulting in fear of being misunderstood.

Psychological Factors



Psychological factors play a dominant role in causing speaking anxiety. Achmad et al. (2024) identify fear of making mistakes, lack of knowledge, and lack of self-confidence as key factors. Fear of making mistakes makes students reluctant to speak due to concern about negative evaluation,

Classroom Factors

Classroom conditions also contribute to students' speaking anxiety. Nurilahi & Suhartono (2022) explain that teacher correction style, classroom atmosphere, and peer reactions are key factors. Immediate and direct correction can make students feel embarrassed and afraid of making mistakes, while a formal and teacher-centered environment creates tension and reduces comfort in speaking.

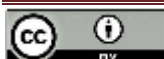
III. THE RESEARCH METHOD

The Reseach Design

According to Sembiring et al., (2023, p. 1) research is an activity that involves careful examination and investigation, as well as the systematic and objective collection, processing, analysis, and presentation of data. Research can also be understood as a scientific effort to explore and solve problems based on factual evidence, which enables the development of knowledge and the testing of theories. The researcher used qualitative research. Sahir (2022, p. 41) emphasizes that qualitative research aims to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomena under research by examining each case in detail, recognizing that the characteristics of the problems being investigated may differ from one case to another. In this research, the researcher used a qualitative descriptive research method. According to Sugiyono (2013, p. 15) a qualitative research method is a research method used to research natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out through triangulation (combination), data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, data collection in this research will be conducted in three stages. The first stage focuses on recording students' spoken interactions, including dialogues, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions, in order to capture authentic language use. The second stage consists of conducting interviews with students to explore their perspectives and provide deeper insights into the observed and recorded data. The third stage is to conduct a questionnaire which will be distributed to all seventh grade students of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar.

The Location of Reseach



This research is conducted at SMP Yayasan Perguruan Keluarga, located at Jalan Seram No. 15, Pematangsiantar. This location is selected because it is relevant to the research focus and supports effective data collection.

Technique of Collecting Data

In this research, the researcher applied several techniques as stated by Arikunto (2010), namely video, interview, and questionnaire. Video is used to record classroom activities and capture students' verbal and non-verbal responses during speaking activities. Interview is conducted to obtain in-depth information about students' feelings and experiences related to speaking anxiety. Meanwhile, the questionnaire is used to collect data systematically regarding students' levels and types of anxiety in speaking English.

Techniques of Data Analyzing

Data analysis is a systematic process used to organize, interpret, and understand data in order to answer research questions. In this research, the analysis follows the qualitative model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014, p. 8–10), which consists of three interactive processes namely, data reduction, data display, Conclusion Drawing and Verification.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

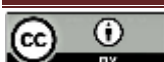
Data Analysis

Based on the data collecting, this research will discuss the types of anxiety and factors of anxiety experienced by students when speaking English in classroom activities in the seventh grade at SMP YPK Pematangsiantar in the 2025/2026 academic year. The table below presents data from the videos, interviews, and questionnaires, which describe the types of anxiety and anxiety factors experienced by students when speaking English in class.

Recapitulation of the type of students' anxiety in speaking English

No.	Types of Anxiety	Amount	Percentage
1.	Communication apprehension	46	54,7 %
2.	Fear of negative evaluation	20	23,8%
3.	Test Anxiety	18	21,5%
	Total	84	100%

Base on the table, a total of 84 responses were classified into three types of anxiety. The communication apprehension, with 46 occurrences (54.7%), indicating that more than half of the students' anxiety is related to nervousness or fear when speaking and



communicating in English. This is followed by fear of negative evaluation, which appears 20 times (23.8%), showing that a considerable number of students worry about being judged, criticized, or laughed at by others. Meanwhile, test anxiety accounts for 18 occurrences (21.5%), suggesting that anxiety related to speaking assessments also contributes to students' overall anxiety, although it is slightly less dominant. Overall, the findings demonstrate that communication apprehension is the primary source of students' speaking anxiety, consistent with the foreign language anxiety framework proposed by Horwitz and Cope (1986).

Finding and Discussion

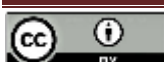
a. Types of Students' Anxiety in Speaking English

Base on video data, interview data, and questionnaire data from students, that many students experience anxiety when learning and speaking English in the classroom. There were three types of students' anxiety in speaking English, namely communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension occurred because students felt nervous and uncomfortable when speaking English, as shown by hesitation, pauses, low voice, and tense body language, influenced by psychological factors (lack of self-confidence, fear of mistakes) and linguistic factors (limited vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation difficulties). Fear of negative evaluation appeared when students worried about being judged, indicated by avoiding eye contact and nervous expressions, influenced by psychological factors (fear and embarrassment) and classroom factors (peer and teacher responses). Meanwhile, test anxiety occurred during speaking assessments, shown by fast speech, long pauses, or forgetting ideas, influenced by classroom factors (evaluation pressure) and psychological factors (fear of failure and low scores).

Overall, the findings show that the dominant type of anxiety experienced by the seventh-grade students of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar in speaking English is communication apprehension. This type of anxiety appears most frequently because many students feel nervous and hesitant when they have to speak English in front of the class or communicate directly with others. Speaking activities require students to communicate spontaneously in a foreign language, which often makes them feel uncomfortable and anxious. Many students are not confident about their vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation, so they are afraid of making mistakes when speaking in front of the teacher and their classmates.

b. The Factors of Students' Anxiety in Speaking English

Base on the data analysis of video, interview, and questionnaire there were three types of students' anxiety in speaking English namely communication apprehension fear of negative



evaluation, and test anxiety. These types of anxiety caused by three factors were linguistic factors, psychological factors, and classroom factors.

Based on the data analysis, students' anxiety in speaking English is caused by linguistic, psychological, and classroom factors. Linguistic factors appear when students have difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and sentence construction, which lead to hesitation, pauses, and incomplete sentences. Psychological factors include lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, nervousness, and embarrassment, making students afraid to speak and worried about being laughed at. Meanwhile, classroom factors arise from learning situations such as speaking in front of the class, teacher evaluation, and peer reactions, which create pressure and increase students' anxiety during speaking activities.

Based on the overall findings, it can be concluded that the most dominant factor causing students' anxiety in speaking English among seventh-grade students of SMP YPK Pematangsiantar is psychological factors. This is supported by data showing that most students experienced lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, and fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers. These feelings consistently appeared in both interview and questionnaire results across various speaking situations. Even when students had adequate linguistic ability, they still felt nervous and hesitant due to fear and low confidence. This indicates that students' anxiety is more strongly influenced by internal emotional factors rather than language limitations, making psychological factors the most dominant due to their frequency and strong impact on speaking performance.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussions, the types of anxiety that occurred among students when speaking English could be concluded as follows:

1. The types of anxiety found in students' speaking English are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The dominant type of students' anxiety is communication apprehension because most students felt nervous, hesitant, and lacked confidence when they had to speak English in front of the class or communicate directly in English during learning activities.
2. The factors of students' anxiety in speaking English are psychological factors, linguistic factors, and classroom factors. The dominant factor is psychological factors.

Suggestion

1. For Teachers:



Teachers should create a supportive classroom environment, give constructive feedback, encourage participation, and appreciate students' efforts to reduce anxiety and build confidence.

2. For Students:

Students should practice speaking regularly, improve vocabulary and pronunciation, and view mistakes as part of the learning process.

3. For Future Researchers:

Future researchers should explore strategies to reduce speaking anxiety and examine different contexts or the use of technology in learning.

REFERENCES

- Abrar, M., Fajaryani, N., Habizar, H., Miftahudin, M., & Sokoy, M. (2022). Exploring EFL Students' Speaking Anxiety of English Teacher Education Program at One Public University in Jambi. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 7(1), 15.
- Achmad, D., Samad, I. A., Muslem, A., Yusuf, Y. Q., Fitriani, S. S., Safitri, T. H., & Linville, H. (2024). The Types and Causes of Anxiety in EFL Students during Proposal Seminar Presentations. *IRJE |Indonesian Research Journal in Education| |Vol, 8(1), 189–206.*
- Adelia, D., Damanik, I. J., & Saragih, N. (2024). Improving Students Speaking Skill Through Conversation With Peetr Group Method Grade Eleventh In Senior High School Tamansiswa Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 6(2), 86-93
- Arikunto, S. (2010). *Prosedur penelitian: Suatu pendekatan praktik (Edisi revisi)*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.
- Bella, M. S., Triana, J., & Masykuri, E. S. (2025). The Effectiveness of Interactive Learning Method toward Students' Speaking Ability. *Scripta : English Department Journal*, 12(1 SE-Articles), 111–121.
- Burns C. C. M. G. A. (2012). *Teaching Speaking : A Holistic Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Damanik, I. J., Purba, R., & Tiyas, A. (2023). An Analysys Of Vocabulary Mastery Effects On Students' Speaking Ability In SMA YPK Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 5(2), 180-186
- Daulay, E., Nasution, L. E., & Rangkuty, A. R. (2022). The Effect of Cartoon Movie on Students' Speaking Ability. *Education & Learning. Edunesia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 1(2), 39–44.



- Horwitz E. K., Horwitz, M. B, & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom. *Research as a Tool for Empowerment*, 70(2), 31–52.
- Kurniawan, I.-, Sabaruddin, S., & J, F. G. (2018). An Analysis of Students' English Speaking Ability at Coastal Schools of Bengkulu City, Indonesia. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 3(1), 18.
- Mamonto, S., Siregar, S., Sunarwan, A., Yuniarti, Suparmanto, Nurjamin, A., Deiniatur, M., Amrullah, M. K., Sari, Y. A., Ninsiana, W., Endi, F. (2024). *Pengantar Belajar Bahasa*. Malang: Litnus.
- Marzuqi, I. (2019). *Keterampilan berbicara (Speaking Theory 1)*. Penerbit Istana.
- Matondang, M. K., & Nababan, N. (2022). Improving Students Speaking Ability By Using Talking Stick Method In The Eight Grade Of SMP Swasta GKPS 3 Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 4(1), 24-30
- Miles M. B., Huberman A. M., & Saldana J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis : A Methods Sourcebook*. Sage
- Nabilla, Z. M., Suwartono, T., Mulyadi, D., Wijayatiningsih, T. D., Sulistyowati, T., & Wakhudin, W. (2025). Exploring the Benefits and Barriers of Online English-Speaking Club for EFL Learners' Speaking Ability Development in Indonesia. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 17.
- Nugroho, S. E. W. A., Rahmawati, L. E., & Huda, M. (2023). Implementation of Reportage-based Speaking Skills Learning in Vocational High Schools. *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 12(1), 165–174.
- Nurilahi, R., & Suhartono, L. (2022). an Analysis on the Cause of Students' Speaking Anxiety in Efl Classroom. *Journal of English Education Program*, 3(2), 95–104.
- Permatasari, A. (2023). An Analysis on the English-Speaking Anxiety of the First Semester Students of Aquatic Resource Management Research Program. *EDUKASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 4(1), 729–746.
- Purba, R., & Aritonang, C. N. (2022). The Effect of Role Playing Strategy on Students' Speaking Ability at Eighth Grade of SMP Negeri 9 Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 4(1), 13-17
- Purnami, I., A., O. (2024). Fostering Student Speaking Skills Through Public Speaking Engagements. *Jurnal Imiah Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 8(1), 93–100.
- Safitriani, R., & Jayadi, M. K. (2021). *Teaching Speaking Book*. Sanabil.
- Sahir S. H. (2022). *Metodologi Penelitian*. Penerbit Kbm Indonesia.



- Saragih, N., & Gultom, E. J. (2022). The Effectiveness of Using Picture Strategy in Improving Speaking Ability At The Second Grade Of SMA Negeri 3 Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 4(1), 18-23
- Sembiring, T. B., Irmawati, Sabir, M., & Tjahyadi, I. (2023). Buku Ajar Metodologi Penelitian (Teori & Praktik). In *Buku Ajar Metodologi Penelitian (Issue 1)*. Karawang Barat: Saba Jaya Publisher.
- Septiani, D., & Nugraeni, I. I. (2025). The Influence of Motivation and Self-Confidence on Students ' Speaking Skills at Vocational Schools. *English Departement Journal*, 12(2), 246–253.
- Siahaan, M. M. (2020). A Case Study: Improving Students'speaking Ability Through Picturesin Smk Swasta Taman Pendidikan. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 2(2), 43-59
- Silalahi, T., & Limbong, D. N. (2023). The Implementation Of ESA (Engage, Study, Active) Method To Improve The Students Speaking Ability At The Eight Grade Of SMP N 4 Pematangsiantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 5(1), 18-24
- Silalahi, T., & Napitu, R. (2021). Improving Students'speaking Skill By Usingword Wallmedia At The Seventh Grade Students Of Smp Negeri 10 Pematangsiantar In The Academic 2019/2020. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 3(2), 111-120
- Silalahi, T., Sibuea, B., & Aritonang, P. A. (2023). Improving Speaking Skill By Using Podcast At The Eleventh Grade Of SMA Negeri 5 Pematang Siantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 5(2), 153-158
- Sipayung, R. W., Purba, R., & Sitompul, M. (2024). Story Telling Method To Develop Speaking Skills Student In Narrative Text At SMP Negeri 5 Pematang Siantar. *Bilingual: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 6(1), 43-49
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metodologi Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*. Alfabeta: Bandung.
- Sulistiyowati, T. (2023). Factors Causing English Speaking Anxiety (ESA) in EFL Context: A Case Research among Post-Graduate Students in Indonesia. *Applied Research on English Education (AREE)*, 1(1), 37.
- Susilawati, Alfian, & Tartila. (2025). an Analysis Of Students' Speaking Anxiety At Smp Al-Falah Jambi. *ELTIN ELTIN JOURNAL: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, 13(1), 31–40.
- Yusuf, P. K. (2023). *Buku Ajar Metode Penelitian Bahasa: Teori dan Praktik*. Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta: Quantum Media Aksara.

