# AN INVESTIGATION OF ANXIETY MANIFESTATION AND COPING MECHANISM USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING EFL CLASSROOM

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### **ABSTARCT**

This study focuses on the manifestation of speaking anxiety and the coping mechanism that used by the second semester of university students. Young (1991) claimed that anxiety may affect the quality of an individual's communication or willingness to communicate. Students with anxiety show a passive attitude in their studies such as low motivation in learning and poor in performances and examination. Thus, this study used descriptive qualitative approach, the data collection was carried out through observation and interview adopted from (Hadziosmanovic, 2012). There were 6 students who are belong to different levels of anxiety participated in this study. The result showed that students experienced hearth racing, dry throat and mouth, muscle twisted, trembling hands, embarrassed, and nervous feeling which belong to physiological manifestation, 3 students experienced lost the words and could not find the right vocabularies in English that leads to switched the language use which belong to linguistic manifestation. In coping mechanism, reminiscence, relearning, and remediation were used by the students. However, only 2 students learn to re-experiencing their previous experiences for the successful performances. Future researches may considered the anxiety manifestation and its coping mechanism in online learning.

**Keywords:** Anxiety manifestation, coping mechanism, Speaking EFL Classroom

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### INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learners always assumed that speaking is difficult part to be done. Pinter in Amelia (2013) stated that to speak English fluently and accurately is not something easy to do and it can be achieved by practicing. When the students have to speak in front of the class or practice the conversation in the classroom, most foreign language learners feel that it is something hard and difficult to do for them. It is proven by young (1991) who found out that speaking in foreign language is not exclusively the source of students' anxiety, but speaking in front of others is real anxiety situation.

Now then, language anxiety has become one of the significant concerns in EFL teaching and learning in the last three decades (Tien, 2018) because of students' anxiety bad effects. One of effect is it will influence students' adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals (Woodrow, 2006). Anxious students feel a deep self-consciousness when

asked to a revealing themselves by speaking the language in the presence of other people. They feel vulnerable as others may ridicule and make fun of and laugh at them.

There are many bad effects because of students' anxiety. One of them is it will influence students' adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals (Woodrow, 2006). Other effect of students' anxiety is the students will try to avoid any speaking activities in the classroom, especially in classroom conversation (Samuelsson, 2001). To respond to the bad effect of the speaking anxiety, several researches has been conducted to find the factors and overcome the students speaking anxiety. First, Putri (2018) found out that the factors of the students speaking English anxiety are from threat, conflict, fear, and unfilled need. Second, Aleemasa (2018) focused to the factors that cause anxiety experienced by Thai students when speaking English are they seldom practice to speak English, they did not know the meaning of vocabulary, nervous when presentation and did not know well the material. It made the students difficult in learning speaking, because they usually translate the meaning word by word, Lachica (2019) found out that among the causes and types of anxieties experienced by the participants are psychosocial anxiety, anxiety related to the use of the target language, and anxiety related to limited exposure to the target language, and Baloran (2020) showed that Philippine students utilized various ways to cope with mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Moreover, reminiscence, relearning, and remediation were three of the coping mechanisms used by the student participants in dealing with their anxieties. All these studies account for the English speaking anxiety in the senior high school level that learners experience in the classroom. So far, there are only a few studies done on university students' speaking anxiety. Thus, it is the hope of this present study can help the teachers not only in the higher education level like university but all teacher in many education levels in general on managing the increasing anxiety of language learners. Eventually, this study will focus on the manifestation of speaking anxiety and the coping mechanism used by fourth semester of university students.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

### a. Speaking anxiety

Speaking is a part of daily life. Nunan (1992) Says: "the ability to function in another language is generally fundamental human behavior that we don't stop to analyze it unless there is something noticeable about it, Speaking consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. The difficulty of speaking relates to the students' knowledge of speaking. There are difficulties relate to their anxiety psychology traits that come from students themselves. Brown (2001) stated that the anxiety in producing wrong and incomprehensible thing is one of the main obstacles in learning to speak that have to be solved by students. According to Harmer (2007), students are shy to express themselves in front of other include their classmates and they worry about speaking badly that caused anxiety.

According to Aryes & Hopf (1993), speaking anxiety refers to the situations when an individual reports that she or he is afraid to deliver speech or

# AN INVESTIGATION OF ANXIETY MANIFESTATION AND COPING MECHANISM USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING EFL CLASSROOM

involve in a conversation. Speaking anxiety as difficulty to speak in the group or before a group of people. These difficulties vary in the cases of prepared speeches, oral presentations, answering questions or simple presentation rounds among others (Samuelsson, 2001). Someone that get anxiety will behave some strange behavior like avoid any speaking activities in front of the group, concentrating on less important details as what to wear, neglecting the actual task, talking too fast, skipping sentences, mumbling, reading notes directly, failing to have an eye contact with audience among many other things. An anxious student may think and believe that the other students probably are going to laugh. The situation becomes embarrassing and the anxious student feels that she or he being strange and failure. So their performance is poor. Horwitz, et. al. (1986) also stated that students with high level of anxiety have difficulties concentrating, often miss classes, have palpitations and can even sleep deprivation.

# b. Manifestations of Students' Speaking Anxiety

### 1. Physiological Manifestations

According to Lachica (2019), the physiological manifestations that accompany social anxiety may include intense fear, racing heart, turning red or blushing, excessive sweating, dry throat and mouth, trembling, and muscle twitches. Mannerism is another physiological manifestation, these normally and generally carry negative connotations and are often deemed distracting. The study of Williams & Andrade (2008) identified smiling, laughing, sounding and looking childish to be most evident reactions perceived from students who are trying to appear confident yet still anxious. Zheng (2008) specifies these non-verbal acts as defense mechanisms evoked by anxiety which tend to make learners usually distractible. As defense mechanisms, laughter releases or reduces pain, stress, social anxiety, and self-shame, whereas avoidance of eye contact was revealed to be a pertinent feature of social anxiety.

# 2. Cognitive Manifestations

Aside from physiological reactions, difficulty in expressing what they think and their difficulty to express their thoughts caused by emotional tension, this inability to think and remember something is coined by many as 'mental block'. In speaking, mental block is common to students who have adequate ideas to address an inquiry but are apprehensive about finding the right word in English or doubtful if what they think is right. It can be described as a psychological obstacle. Faster heartbeat and perspiration are among the other physical reactions in the middle of speaking, while emotional reactions include having the mind go blank, inability to concentrate, remaining silent and not responding quickly (Williams & Andrade, 2008). Confusion also said to be one of the main causes of mental blocks as it can upset one's natural rhythm and stride. Such cognitive reactions to public speaking anxiety often include intrusive thoughts that can increase anxiety itself.

### 3. Linguistic Manifestations

Other manifestations of anxiety include code switching, code mixing, stammering, pauses and stops, and gambits or fillers. Heredia & Altarriba (2001) explain that code switching is a plausible strategy to be better understood, that is, some ideas are better communicated in one language than in another where usually, the first language surfaces more often during the process of speaking. On

the other hand, stammering, pauses and stops, and use of fillers are non-cooperative behaviors caused by panic. Furthermore, fillers are words or sounds interjecting the process of speaking. Words such as 'um', 'uhh', or 'ya know', as well as repetitions, are examples of fillers (Goldwater, et. al. (2010).

### c. Coping Mechanisms

- 1. Reminiscence, occurs in response to psychological stress in an effort to maintain mental health and emotional well-being. It involves the recalling and reexperiencing of one's life events. With regard to speaking anxiety, this refers recollection of previous speech undertakings in order to develop and refine oneself before and during a performance. Student participants who welcome teachers' corrections and feedback may be among whom Lachica (2019) describe as those who come to the classroom mentally prepared to experience some type of anxiety that lead to the majority of students do feel excited though nervous.
- 2. Relearning. Lachica (2019) Stated that Relearning banks on acting on tidbits of information and reinforcement activities that help improve skills and abilities.
- 3. Remediation. Remediation, in this study according to Lachica (2019) is operationally defined as rehearsing with a mirror would enable someone to see himself in real time, gauge effectiveness, and make instant adjustments. By looking into a mirror, one can watch himself in action and work on correcting incongruences especially when words and body movements do not match. However, mirror image is not exactly what an audience sees but looking into it while rehearsing a speech can help one become aware of his posture, stance, body language, and gestures.

### RESEARCH METHOD

### **Research Method**

This study used descriptive qualitative research to investigate the students' speaking anxiety in the second semester of English education department of Wiralodra University. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research takes places in natural setting and fundamentally interpretive, which means that the researcher makes an interpretation of the data that includes developing a description of an individual setting, analyzing data for theme categories and making an interpretation or drawing conclusion about its meaning personally and theoretically.

## **Research Participant**

The participants of this study were taken from the second semester of English education department of Wiralodra University. 6 students, 5 female and 1 male, were chosen through purposive sampling the participants of this study were chose regarding to their anxiety level, low, medium and high anxiety level. The anxiety level was considered from the score of students performances in speaking classroom through the semester. Those who got 'A' score considered as low anxiety level and the students who got 'CD' belongs to the high anxiety level, while for the medium level were taken from 'B' score.

### **Data Collection**

Dornyei (2007) stated that qualitative research works with a wide range of data including recorded interviews, various types of texts and images (photo or video). While according to Yin (2008), the data collection of case study can be in various sources. The data collection in this study was used:

# AN INVESTIGATION OF ANXIETY MANIFESTATION AND COPING MECHANISM USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING EFL CLASSROOM

- 1. Observation: it is a research process that offers investigator the opportunity to gather 'live data' from naturally occurring classroom situation. In observation, video recording was used to capture the students speaking performance and it transcribed to investigate the manifestation of speaking anxiety. No intervention and manipulate the situation or subjects nor do or create provocations will be needed.
- 2. Interview: this study used semi structure interview adopted from Hadziosmanovic (2012). The interview was recorded, transcribed and Code/coding. Coding is the process of labeling and segmenting text to form descriptions and themes in the data (Creswell, 2009). In the interpretation stage, the codes were separated for important patterns or themes related to the students' anxiety manifestation and coping mechanism that the students used in speaking performances.

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' speaking anxiety manifestation

According to Aryes & Hopf (1993), speaking anxiety refers to the situations when an individual reports that she or he is afraid to deliver speech or involve in a conversation. In this case, speaking anxiety happened when the students have to perform in front of other students in the classroom, many students feel it was as difficulty as to speak in the group or before a group of people.

Students that get anxiety behave some queer behavior like keep avoiding any speaking activities by giving lots of excuses such as 'not ready yet, have not completed the script paper yet, need time to check the talk/speech, let other students to perform first (on the hope that they would not get chance to perform because of the time limitation), etc'. Other students' behaviors that showed the feeling of anxiety such as bringing and reading notes, avoiding lecturer and other students or audiences eye contact by looking to the ceiling or to the floor, playing their finger or something that the students hold in their hand, muttering (speaking unclearly), trembling heart, sweating, hand freezing, skipping several part of the speech by keep saying "uhh" or "apa lagi ya (what else)", and talking rather fast. Anxious students may always think the speech or the talk that they are going to perform as 'not really important one' that will caused other students laughs at it and look at her/him in strange faces. This kind of situation makes the anxious students embarrassing and failed in their performance. In several cases, the high level anxious students also having difficulties to concentrate, often late coming to the classes or even worse often miss classes (Horwitz, 1986).

### a. Physiological Manifestations

According to Lachica (2019), in physiological manifestations may include intense fear, racing heart, turning red or blushing, excessive sweating, dry throat and mouth, trembling, and muscle twitches. From the data collected from interview, S1 experienced heart racing along with the feeling of nervous and embarrassed. S2 felt her hand shaking and cold, she also keeps playing her finger and anything in her hand. The feeling that other students may notice their trembling hands and voice also made the anxiety will even higher. It also happened when she thinks she had not have enough preparation. S3, S4 and S6

always had nervous feeling but they could manage it when they already start the speech/talk. Somehow, S4 always felt muscle twitches and to manage that, S4 always need to calm down in the toilet. Somehow, fear of correction from the teacher and high expectation of himself and from other students make him lost his words and keep silent. S5 felt that her mouth stiff that no words can come out her mouth. It was difficult for her to say what is in her mind. The table below show how the students felt the physiological manifestation:

Table 1
Students' physiological manifestation

Students' physiological manifestation		
No	Students 'Code	Physiological Manifestation
1	S1	Malu. Pertama malu, terus ya nervous, deg-degan.
		'Shame. First I was embarrassed, then I was nervous, my heart racing'.
2	S2	ya saya juga nervous. Shaking. Terus kayakapa ya kaki, tangan itu kayak kadang ngerasa dingin. Apalagi kalau misalnya I don't get enough prepare gitu. Kalau missal prepare nya ga benar-benar siap banget gitu kayak ga ga bisa gitu. Bener-bener nervous.
		'Yes, I am nervous too. Shaking. Then, my hand and feet fell cold. Especially when I didn't have enough preparation even when I had enough preparation, I felt like I'm not really ready. I'm really nervous.'
3	S3	Ya sama, malu. Pertama malu, terus gugup. Itu suka Gugup.
		'Yes shame. First I felt shame and then nervous. I used to get nervous'
4	S4	Kalau mau maju biasanya perutnya suka mules, makanya pasti ijin dulu ke toilet
		'Everytime I had to talk in front of the class my muscle twitches, that's why I always ask permission to go to the toilet'
5	S5	Gk tau mau ngomong apa, gitu. Kayak kaku gitu miss ngomongnya.
		'I didn't know what to say. My mouth felt like stiff when I want to say something'
6	S6	Karena saya orangnya apa sih soalnya dulu tuh ga pede miss. Benar-benar ga pede kalau buat depan orang ngomong tuh bener-bener kayak grogi (tertawa) Grogi banget.
		'I didn't feel confident in the past. I really don't feel confident when talking in front of people, I really feel nervous (laughing) So nervous'.

Physiological manifestation also consists of smiling, laughing, sounding and looking childish to be most evident reactions perceived from students who are trying to appear confident yet still anxious (Williams & Andrade, 2008). In the interview, the participants didn't mention those acts. However, from the observation the students did smiling and laughing when they could not continue the speech/talk. The students also did over reaction after the speech such as jumping and saying 'hamdallah' in really loud voice. Zheng (2008) identifies those non-verbal acts as defense mechanisms evoked by anxiety which tend to make learners usually distractible. As defense mechanisms, laughter releases or reduces pain, stress, social anxiety, and self-shame, whereas avoidance of eye contact was revealed to be a pertinent feature of social anxiety.

### b. Cognitive Manifestations

Cognitive manifestation considered mental block as the difficulty in expressing what the students think and expressing students thought that caused by emotional tension. In speaking, mental block is common to students who have adequate ideas but are hard to find the right word in English or doubtful if what they think is right (Williams & Andrade, 2008). Form the interview, it found out that S1 and S3 didn't know what to say because they could not remember the vocabulary that they going to use, though they have adequate ideas. S2 did not confident with the topic or the material in her speech/talk. This condition made her anxious feeling even higher as Williams & Andrade (2008) considered confusion also said to be one of the main causes of mental blocks as it can upset one's natural rhythm and stride. The following is the students' cognitive manifestations.

Table 2 Students' cognitive manifestation

No	Students' Code	Cognitive Manifestations
1	S1, S3	Tiba hilang, gk tau apa yg diomongin. Itu ga tau kayak vocabnya hilangnya semua.
		'Suddenly I lost my words. All the vocabulary that I have gone'
2	S2	Ini yang saya sampein nih bener enggak saya sadar kalau yang saya sampaikan itu gak nyambung sama materi, tapi mau gimana lagi soalnya saya ngga ngga bisa gitu nyatuin materi itu tuh.
		'I felt like what I am explaining is incorrect. I realize that what I conveyed doesn't have to do with the material, but what else can I do because I can't I can't mix all the material together'

### c. Linguistic Manifestations

Linguistic manifestation includes code switching, code mixing, stammering, pause and stops, and gambits or fillers. From the observation data, the students used code switching several times when they could not find the English word such as 'apa ya, kayaknya salah deh', 'seperti', etc. this observation finding supported by the students answer in interview "Sometimes, I suddenly switch the language into bahasa Indonesia because I can't find the word in English". The reason why students used code switching is similar to Heredia & Altarriba (2001) who explain that code switching is a plausible strategy to be better understood, that is, some ideas are better communicated in one language than in another where usually, the first language surfaces more often during the process of speaking. However, S2 stated that pronunciation also became one of the problem why she did code mixing, 'I didn't know how to say it in English correctly'. Furthermore, fillers are words or sounds interjecting the process of speaking. Words such as 'um', 'uhh', or 'ya know', as well as repetitions, are examples of fillers (Goldwater, et.al., 2001). S6 stated that she keeps saying and repeating fillers 'Uhh' in her speech/talk because of the anxious feeling.

Table 3
Students' Linguistic Manifestation

No	Students' Code	Linguistic Manifestations
1	S1, S2, S3, S4, S5	
		'Sometimes, I suddenly switch the language into bahasa Indonesia because I can't find the word in English. I also confused how to pronounce the words'
2	S6	Jadi banyak 'uhh, uhh'  'I keep saying 'uhh, uhh''

### 2. Students' speaking anxiety coping mechanism

### a. Reminiscence

This kind of coping occurs in response to psychological stress, it involves the recalling and re-experiencing of one's life events. With regard to speaking anxiety, this refers recollection of previous speech undertakings in order to develop and refine oneself before and during a performance (Lachica, 2019). From the interview, only S3 and S4 used reminiscence to cope their anxiety. Lachica (2019) describe these Students are welcome to teachers' corrections and feedback and mentally prepare before the classroom. S3 used to anticipate the teacher and other students' questions and prepare the answers for those questions while preparing for the speech/talk performance. S3 did this because she re-experiencing her previous experience in doing the speech/talk performance. That way, she could minimize the feeling of anxiety. S4 used to find key word and imagine the situation related to the topic that his going to talk in the hope that it

# AN INVESTIGATION OF ANXIETY MANIFESTATION AND COPING MECHANISM USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING EFL CLASSROOM

could help him when he lost his word in performing the speech/talk. The following are the reminiscence that the students use in coping their anxiety:

Table 4
Students' Reminiscence Coping Mechanism

No	Students' code	Reminiscence Coping Mechanism
1	S3	Yagimana ya kalau dosennya nanya gini terus disusun gitu. Jadi sudah Iya menebak pertanyaan-pertanyaannya Anticipate what the teacher are going to ask by guessing the questions and prepare the answers.
2	S4	Kalau saya mau presentasi sih biasanya apa ya lebih ini lebih enak kayak nyari kata kuncinya tuh. Nyari kata kuncinya. Jadi kata kunci tersebut tuh bisa kita kembangin gitu sambil membyangkan topic nya.  If I want to have presentation, I used to find the key word so that I can develop the topic while imagining what really happen with that topic

## a. Relearning

Lachica (2019) Stated that relearning banks on acting on tidbits of information and reinforcement activities that help improve skills and abilities. From the data gathered, S2 did relearning by re-reading the material that will be performed. Besides that, S2 also used to re-writing the same material, S2 believes that by re-writing the material it will help her remember the material and make her on the track in performing the speaking tasks in the classroom. S5 and S6 did re-reading and translating the material they are going to present as relearning. S5 and S6 believes that by translating and keep re-reading the material will ease their anxious feeling and they could anticipate the bad thing that will be happened when they have to perform the material in front of the classroom. The following table showed how the students used relearning as their anxiety coping mechanism.

Table 5
Students' Relearning Coping Mechanism

No	Students' Code	Relearning Coping Mechanism
1	S2	Kalau saya pribadi, karena cara belajar saya itu memahami, jadi paling baca miss. Baca terus catet ulang apa yang saya pahami.  Personally, my learning style is understanding the material. So, I keep re-reading and re writing the material that going
		to be presented
2	S5, S6	Dibaca, diartiin maknanya yang emang cuma yang emang gampang dimengerti, terus kayak diini tuh miss kayak di translate ke yang Bahasa sendiri sama di hapal nulis di hapal juga. Jadi kan kalau udah nulis, sering nulis tiba-tiba

	suka nyantol.
	Read the text, translate its meaning and re read again because by understanding the its meaning and re write it will
	be easier to memorize it.

From those finding that had been explained above, in relearning, students study even harder with stronger efforts so that they will perform better in the speaking classroom talk. In this case, the students were reported that they tried to be the personal training by conducting personal efforts to improve their on speaking ability. The way of relearning that the students do also could boost their motivation and in the end it will decrease their anxious feeling.

#### c. Remediation

According to Lachica (2019), remediation is operationally defined as rehearsing with a mirror that enable someone to see himself in real time, gauge effectiveness, and make instant adjustments. In the data gathered from interview, students mentioned practice speaking in front of mirror and do recording to make sure their talks are in track and they used the right time provided. S1, S4, and S5 used to practice in front of mirror before they perform in the speaking classroom talk because by looking to the mirror, they could see their self-reflection, see their words and body movement. Yet, mirror image is not exactly what an audience sees but looking into it while rehearsing a speech can help one become aware of his posture, stance, body language, and gestures. However this kind of remediation coping mechanism could decrease the anxious feeling of the students. S3 and S6 used to record their own voices to make sure the time usage and the talk that they will perform in the speaking classroom tasks are in line with the topic given. S3 and S6 also believes that by recording their own voices as the coping mechanism will give them courage and improve their performance in the classroom. The following table described the students' remediation coping mechanism.

Table 6
Students' Remediation Coping Mechanism

No	Students' Code	Remediation Coping Mechanism
1	S1, S4, S5	Practice, iya. Paling berbicara di depan kaca Practice, practice speaking in front of mirror
2	S3,S6	Prepare terus kayak nyusun kalimatnya atau gimana ya kira-kira yang denger itu paham di rekam  Prepare how to constract the sentences or how it sound by recording it

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

University students manifest speaking anxiety significantly in physiological. From 6 students who were participating in this study, they were

# AN INVESTIGATION OF ANXIETY MANIFESTATION AND COPING MECHANISM USED BY THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SPEAKING EFL CLASSROOM

experienced hearth racing, dry throat and mouth, muscle twisted, hand's trembling, embarrassed, and nervous feeling every time they will do the speaking performance tasks. In cognitive manifestation, only 3 students who experienced lost the words and could not find the correct vocabulary in English that deals with the use of Bahasa Indonesia or switched the language that belong to linguistic manifestation. Reminiscence, relearning, and remediation coping mechanism were used by all the participants. Somehow, only two students experienced reminiscence coping mechanism which mean only those students learn to reexperience their previous experiences for the successful performances. This finding can be beneficial for further researches that deal with anxiety. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic climate, the future researcher can considered to investigate the anxiety manifestation and its coping mechanism in online classroom.

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