

## TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY DURING DIALOG PRACTICE AT MA MUHAMMADIYAH 2 YANGGONG

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### ABSTRACT

Speaking anxiety is a common problem in English language learning. Most students feel anxious when they have to participate in speaking activities, including dialog practice. This study aimed at analyzing the types of anxiety experienced by tenth-grade students at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong, factors that cause speaking anxiety, and the teacher's strategies in overcoming students' speaking anxiety during dialogue practice. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The subjects of this study were tenth-grade students and the English teacher at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong. Then, the data were analyzed by reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that the type of anxiety experienced by students was state anxiety. Researchers found the biggest factors that cause students' speaking anxiety during dialog practice i.e. limited vocabulary, fear of friends, and lack of motivation. Finally, researchers also found several strategies the English teacher used to overcome students' speaking anxiety during dialog practice, including providing a warm learning environment, involving students in various learning activities, and using gadgets in learning.

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, Dialogue Practice, Speaking, Student*

### ABSTRAK

Kecemasan berbicara merupakan masalah yang sering terjadi selama pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Sebagian besar siswa merasa cemas ketika harus mengikuti kegiatan berbicara, termasuk praktik dialog. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis jenis-jenis kecemasan yang dialami oleh siswa kelas 10 MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong, faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara, dan strategi guru untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara tersebut selama praktik dialog. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, angket, dan wawancara. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas 10 dan guru Bahasa Inggris MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong. Kemudian, data dianalisis dengan reduksi, *display* data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa jenis kecemasan yang dialami siswa adalah kecemasan keadaan. Peneliti menemukan faktor terbesar yang menyebabkan kecemasan berbicara siswa selama praktik dialog, seperti kosa kata yang terbatas, ketakutan terhadap teman, dan kurangnya motivasi. Terakhir, peneliti juga menemukan beberapa strategi yang digunakan guru bahasa Inggris untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara siswa selama praktik dialog, antara lain menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang hangat, melibatkan siswa dalam berbagai kegiatan pembelajaran, dan menggunakan gawai dalam pembelajaran.

**Kata Kunci:** *Berbicara, Kecemasan, Praktik Dialog, Siswa*

### Introduction

English is one of the international languages that indirectly has a strong position in the field of education in Indonesia. Most of the science and technology in any field is written

in English, so mastering English will provide a way for the Indonesian people to develop science and spread it in Indonesia. English is a compulsory subject in junior high schools (SMP), senior high schools (SMA), and vocational high schools (SMK). Besides, English is also a compulsory subject in secondary schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs: *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) and *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA). Therefore, English automatically becomes a second language for people who only speak Indonesian or becomes a third language for most Indonesians who speak Indonesian and their native language (Zein et al., 2020).

In English language teaching and learning activities, students must master four basic skills: speaking, writing, listening and reading. Of the four skills, speaking is the most important skill for acquiring foreign or second language learning. Speaking is a meaningful utterance that expresses ideas, conveys messages, makes social contact, and describes things or people (Farida, 2018). Speaking is considered an active or productive skill. The students have to form sentences and learn a lot about grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and usage.

There are many activities for purposeful speaking practice to develop foreign language speaking skills. Dialogue practice is one of the speaking activities that can make a great contribution in students' learning to develop basic interactive skills (Waite, 2012). Dialogue is the textual depiction of spoken words and dialog in most creative writing. Dialogue practice is common in ESL textbooks. It is one of the references that can help students in language teaching classes to develop their communicative abilities. In addition, dialog is a crucial component of language learning.

Dialogues help students understand correct English grammar. In addition, students can learn new vocabulary, grammar rules, and pronunciation which they can then apply to express their ideas orally through dialog. Dialogue is a focused conversation between people of the same level. Dialogue can be used as a strategy to engage people to work together and promote different points of view in order to produce stable and effective results. Dialogue brings people at different levels of interaction into each conversation to make agreement a realistic goal and to create momentum that moves people beyond the conversation and into practical action (Mark L, 2011).

However, speaking causes the most anxiety in the classroom. Many students feel anxious during speaking classes because they have to participate in speaking activities. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), anxiety is characterized by tension, chaotic thoughts, and physical changes such as increased blood pressure (Beyond Worry, 2016). In speaking classes, students get anxious when the teacher asks questions in English or asks them to do something in English in front of the class. This situation can be detrimental to students as they may lose the opportunity to speak in English. Reactions from an anxious state such as holding hands, not looking at the partner, voice volume tends to be loud, many pauses, smiling/laughing, silence and trembling hands (Behnke & Sawyer, 2001).

According to Szyszka (2017), there are two types of anxiety. The first is trait anxiety. Trait anxiety is a generally consistent emotional state that a person experiences more often or more intensely than most individuals in general, which is a personality trait of that person (Kurniadi and Kasyulita, 2019). Trait anxiety is the tendency to react anxiously, even in non-threatening circumstances (Ormrod, 2011). Such worry is characteristic of the person. People with trait anxiety often worry more than people in general, and perceive many aspects of their environment as inappropriately threatening. In other words, trait anxiety refers to a person's tendency to experience anxiety or nervousness regardless of the circumstance. Meanwhile, state anxiety is a temporary emotional state consisting of feelings of worry, nervousness, and physiological sequelae such as increased heart rate or unsteady breathing

(Speilberger, 2014). State anxiety is a hesitant form of anxiety caused by a shift in one's emotional state due to external influences. This occurs because they are faced with certain feelings, pressures, and stress when taking lessons.

There are many factors that cause anxiety. These factors are fear of making mistakes, fear of friends, limited vocabulary, grammatical errors, shyness, self-consciousness, lack of confidence, lack of preparation, and lack of motivation.

Many students experience anxiety when speaking. This also happened at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong. The students preferred to be silent and sat passively for fear of making mistakes. Anxiety can also have an impact on student learning. This means that students with low anxiety levels will be more successful in mastering English. Students with high levels of anxiety will have difficulty in learning English. Anxiety can make students feel insecure and have difficulty speaking English in class.

Therefore, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to create a fun and interesting English class in order to make students confident to speak English, especially in dialog practice. It can be said that a good teacher strategy is necessary to get optimal results in dialog practice. Many researchers have conducted studies related to students' speaking anxiety.

There are several studies similar to this study. The first is a study conducted by Ayu Maulidia Handayani and Siska Rizkiani entitled "Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classrooms". This study aimed at investigating the speaking anxiety of students in the first grade of vocational high school. This study emphasized on the level, contributing factors, and strategies to reduce anxiety (Handayani and Rizkiani, 2019).

The second previous study was a study conducted by Fitriah and Hayatul Muna entitled "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: A Case Study at English Department Students of IAIN Lhokseumawe and Al Muslim University". This study aimed at investigating several factors that affect students' anxiety and at finding out the type of anxiety they experienced (Ar-Raniry & Aceh, 2019). The third is a study conducted by Fu'ad Sholikhi (2022) entitled "Communication Students' Anxiety in Speaking Skill Practice", Balitar Islamic University. The purpose of this study was expected to convey messages persuasively in an organization.

Based on these previous studies, there are differences with this study. In this study, researchers were interested in analyzing the types of anxiety experienced by students. In addition, researchers also would like to identify the factors that cause students' speaking anxiety. Furthermore, researchers would like to analyze the teacher's strategy to overcome students' speaking anxiety. The data was collected from the observation in the classroom. The focus of this study was dialogue practice in English class. Researchers would like to analyze students' anxiety when practicing dialogue because they frequently do dialogue practice during English learning in the classroom. This was a way of assessing speaking carried out by the teacher.

## **Methods**

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Qualitative descriptive method is a method that describes the results of research while asking questions about the occurrence of natural variables without modifying variables. Descriptive qualitative focuses on answering research questions related to who, what, where and how an event or experience occurs until finally it is studied in depth to find patterns that arise in the event (Yulianti, 2018).

Researchers used a descriptive design in this study because the study focused on a specific event in English teaching and learning activities. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. This study was conducted from February to March at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong. The subjects of this study were tenth-grade students.

## Result and Discussion

### *Types of Anxiety*

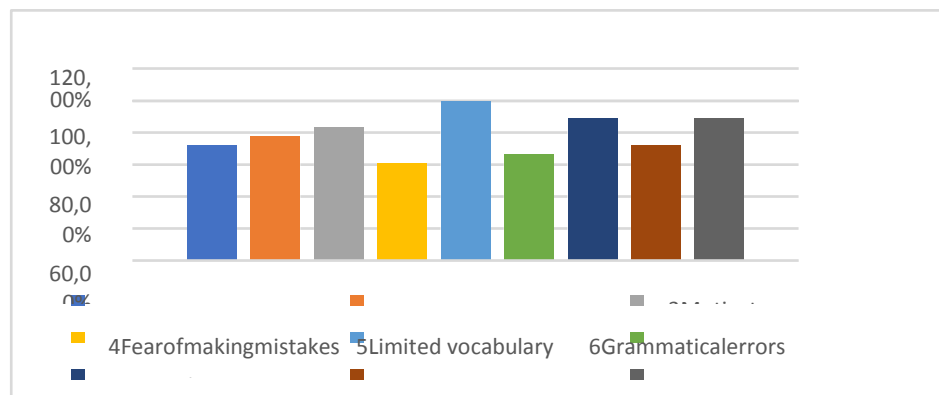
Researchers conducted observations to collect data related to the types of anxiety experienced by students. There are many conditions that make students experience anxiety during English lessons, one of which is speaking. Students who experience anxiety when speaking will show reactions such as a rapid heartbeat, sweaty body, trembling voice, difficulty delivering sentences, and so on. These reactions can occur in all situations (Trait Anxiety) or in certain situations (State Anxiety). It depends on whether the students perceive the situation as a threat to themselves or not. These are the types of anxiety.

Based on observation, there are many learning activities that involve students' speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills. Of the four skills, tenth-grade students at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong have problems in speaking performance, especially dialog practice. Researchers found that almost all students could not practice the dialog well. The students tended to be extremely nervous. In addition, the students' facial expressions and gestures were like touching their hair. In other words, the students' voices trembled and tended to weaken. The students also preferred to avoid eye contact with their interlocutors. This showed that students felt anxious and nervous. It could be said that students experienced anxiety only in certain situations. Thus, the type of anxiety experienced by tenth-grade students at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong was state anxiety.

### *Factors Causing Students' Speaking Anxiety in Dialogue Practice*

One of the most challenging problems in the teaching and learning process is anxiety related to speaking English. The following chart presents the results of the questionnaire regarding the causes of students' speaking anxiety.

Chart 1. The results of the questionnaire on factors causing students' speaking anxiety in dialog practice.



From the chart above, it can be seen that the factors that cause students' speaking anxiety have a fairly high percentage.

### *The Teachers' Strategy in Overcoming the Students' Speaking Anxiety*

Speaking anxiety makes students' speaking skills not optimal. So, the teacher must provide a better teaching activity strategy. The teacher also must have an appropriate strategy for students' needs in dealing with speaking anxiety problems. In this case, the

researcher conducted an interview with an English teacher of the tenth-grade MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong to find data related to the teacher's strategy for dealing with students' speaking anxiety. From the results of interview, the researcher classifies these strategies into 3 groups which is described as follows:

### **1. *Creating a Warm Learning Environment***

One strategy teachers use to help students overcome anxiety is to create a warm learning environment. A warm and friendly learning environment can increase interest and engagement. In addition, it can improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement. Therefore, teachers must strive to create the best learning environment for their students.

### **2. *Involving the Students in Various Classroom Activities***

The students who collaborate during learning activities will retain information better and be able to apply and extend their new knowledge. This strategy also promotes learning among students with different backgrounds and learning preferences.

### **3. *Use a Unique Strategy***

Every teacher must have a strategy for teaching. The teacher makes a strategy so that the students can learn well. The teacher can also teach in a structured way and make students enjoy learning more in class. The teachers must make strategies that are very interesting and not boring for their students. In this part, the researcher asked whether the teacher has a special or unique strategy for overcoming student speaking anxiety. The researcher concludes that the teacher has a special strategy that is through the use of gadgets to support learning in class. It aims to attract the students' attention so that students can learn English in a relaxed and not intimidated manner.

Based on the observation results, many learning activities involve students' speaking, writing, reading and listening skills. From those four skills, the tenth-grade students of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong have problems in speaking performance, especially dialogue practice. The researcher found that almost all students cannot practice dialogue well. The students tend to be very nervous. Moreover, the faces of students' expressions and gestures, such as holding hair. In other words, students' voices are shaky and tend to weaken. The students also prefer to avoid eye contact with their interlocutor. It shows that the students are anxious and nervous.

When the dialogue exercise took place, the students had a very negative attitude when practicing dialogue in front of the class, regardless of what was assigned to attend. The students had difficulty conveying ideas, as shown by the frequent use of speech fillers and pause in the middle of a conversation. Furthermore, the dialogue practice did not run smoothly, and the teacher had difficulty assessing students' speaking abilities. From the explanation, it is indicated that the tenth-grade students of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong experienced anxiety when practicing dialogue. In line, Ralph & Sawyer mention the reactions of state anxiety such as holding hands, not looking at their partner, the decent volume of their voices, tending to pause a lot, smiling/laughing, staying silent and hand trembling (Behnke & Sawyer, 2013).

Then, From the several factors that have been described, limited vocabulary is the factor that most influences students' speaking anxiety when practicing dialogue at the tenth-grade students of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong. Thus, the teacher has the challenge of using a good strategy to increase students' vocabulary. Lastly, there are 3 strategies used by the teacher to overcome students' speaking anxiety in practicing dialogue.

The first strategy is to create a warm learning environment to reduce student anxiety. Based on the interview, the researcher found several ways that teachers do this. Positive attitudes are carried out through a cheerful, friendly and patient teaching attitude. It is done

by the teacher so that students do not feel pressured during learning. That way, students will feel comfortable, and learning can be carried out well. It is also supported by Kursad that a teacher with a positive attitude about their job is more likely to be resilient in the workplace when faced with difficult situations (Dönmez et al., 2018).

Then, avoid correcting the mistake directly. Students will feel uncomfortable and even guilty if they are immediately evaluated when they make mistakes. In this case, the teacher of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong explained that she never corrected students' mistakes when practicing speaking in front of the class. It is due to avoid the mental decline of students. In line with Anna, An immediate correction could be detrimental to a lower level English speaker's speaking confidence (Nizegorodcew, 2007). The teacher's strategy for overcoming this is to let students continue the conversation. After the conversation is successful, the teacher asks other students about the mistakes made by their friends. This term can build the student activity and does not cause down-tempered students who make mistakes. The next is using positive-self talk. In this strategy, the teacher usually praises students who have carried out their duties even though it is not good. According to the English teacher of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong, sentences of compliment can motivate students to keep trying when learning.

The second strategy is involving the students in various classroom activities. The various learning activities can make the learning process exciting and not dull. In this case, teachers at MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong use games and role-play. According to the English teacher, this activity can build students' enthusiasm to learn speaking. Unknowingly, students will learn to pronounce words and remember new vocabulary so that they can improve students' speaking skills. If the students are only fixated on books and lectures from the teacher, students will feel bored and tense. In line with Lesley, participating in various activities with students might help them communicate more in the target language because it creates a relaxed and student-focused circumstance. Therefore, occasionally the teacher uses this activity to overcome students' speaking anxiety when practicing speaking.

The teacher of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong has her own strategy, namely by utilizing technology. This is done because almost 80% of student life is currently playing gadgets. According to Liu, teachers can modify classroom activities through technology, which improves language acquisition and engages the students learning motivation (Liu et al., 2018)

As for the gadget to be useful for students, the teacher uses the features in the gadget for learning. The teacher uses the word wall application for learning English. The teacher explains that in this application, students can fill in the empty boxes with the arrangement of letters that make up the vocabulary. Besides, the vocabulary that has been arranged can produce a sound when pressed. In this case, students can add vocabulary, and hear and imitate the vocabulary. It is very useful for increasing vocabulary and improving students' speaking. In this way, it is hoped that speaking anxiety can be overcome.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that there were various kinds of learning activities. They are; listening and answering the exercise, practicing dialogue about personal experience in the pandemic, reading the biography, and practicing dialogue using nominal past tense. However, the tenth-grade students of MA Muhammadiyah 2 Yanggong experienced anxiety only when practicing dialogue. The students did not show anxiety reactions in other learning activities. So, the type of anxiety experienced by students is state anxiety. Then, nine factors caused the students speaking anxiety when practicing dialogue.

However, the highest percentage are; limited vocabulary, where the students lack vocabulary so that students find it difficult to convey ideas, causing them to feel anxious when practicing dialogue, afraid of friends, where the students are anxious if their friends laugh when the students make mistakes during speaking practice that make them feel embarrassed and lack of motivation where the students are less motivated to speak which causes the students to think that they cannot do speaking. The last, the teacher used three strategies to overcome the students' speaking anxiety in practicing dialogue. The first was to create a warm learning environment by showing positive attitudes, not directly correcting student mistakes and combining L1 and L2. With this, the students are expected to feel more comfortable and motivated when learning takes place. Secondly, involving students in various activities such as role play and games. Finally, using a unique strategy by utilizing applications contained in gadgets to attract students and improve the students skill.

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