Research article

Students' Anxiety in Speaking in Front of the Class

Isna Humaera and Pina Pramustiara

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari, Indonesia

ORCID
Isna Humaera: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7251-0307

Abstract.
This study investigated the factors that cause students to feel anxious during impromptu activities in speaking class. Qualitative descriptive methods were employed. An open-ended questionnaire was used to collect the data. Nine students from class A in the second semester of the academic year 2019/2020 took part in this study. They were majoring in English education at one of Southeast Sulawesi's higher education institutes, and they had speaking anxiety when performing impromptu activities in speaking class. The study's findings indicated that students had feelings of nervousness, fear and worry, and a lack of vocabulary during impromptu activities. The findings also demonstrated their reasons for feeling anxious and how they overcame their anxiety. This research found that teachers used impromptu activity performance to create and provide a learning environment that made students feel less nervous about speaking in front of the class.

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Corresponding Author: Isna
Humaera; email:
isnahumaera@iainkendari.ac.id

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language takes an important part in the communication system. Many people are motivated to learn English, some of them decided to learn English [1]. There are four skills that have been mastered by students to enrich their English skills, one of which is speaking skills, and these skills play a very important role in good oral communication. One area of public speaking is impromptu speech [2]. An impromptu speech, a speech delivered with little or no direct preparation, is one of the activities normally offered during this course. Girardelli [3] states that the importance of impromptu speeches as an important vehicle for promoting the ability of students to communicate effectively, especially in organizations settings.

The universal development of English has increased the demand for good communication skills in English. This is a general idea among students that speaking is more difficult than other skills of learning English and may be more important than other skills.

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Language learners are face with anxiety problems when they speak in front of the class without preparation. Speaking class sometimes becomes an anxiety-breeding class, as students have to deliver English impromptu activity n front of the class. Speaking in the class is often citing as anxiety provoking by anxious learners [4]. It is in accordance with what occhipinti [5] state that foreign language class can make students become more anxious rather than any other class they take.

In Indonesia, the awareness of mastering English as the first foreign language is quite high. One of the skills that must possess in English is speaking and some people think that they want to be able to speak fluently in English. Speaking is very important since by mastering speaking skill, people can carry out conversation with others, give the ideas and exchange the information with others. In this case, the students should have the ability to speak English in order that they can communicate with others. Although speaking skills are crucially important, many students consider that speaking is frightening skill and they felt anxious when speaking in front of class, it is often report that they feel stressed and even start to freeze when they have to act out a role-play or deliver a speech.

In speaking, students have an activity called impromptu activity. It is one of the teaching strategies accomplish expectations towards the students' competencies for gaining confidence in expressing basic communicative functions in English and building up English speaking habits. Impromptu is a mode of presentation in which the speaker has little or no time for preparation Zarefsky [6], In impromptu speech, many use one speech or impromptu activity as a means to improve public speaking performance [7]. Actually, impromptu activity performance is an activity that pushes the students to talk actively. Gebhard [8] says that, pre communicative activities are used fot the teacher to isolate specific elements of knowledge or skills that comprise communicative ability, giving students opportunities to practice the pre-communicative activities without having to fully engage in communicative meaning.

Speaking in front of the class can cause a high level of them to feel insecure when doing spoken English in front of the class [1]. This is in line with Szyszka's view [9] that the students who take an oral performance may experience a high level of performance anxiety; she encountered anxiety indicators, such as a fast heartbeat, cold hands and forgetfulness. These physical indicators may differ from one to another person who experienced anxiety [9]. Students might lose self-esteem when some people, both in and out of classroom are unwilling to help them to communicate in a new language. For that reason, students need to prepare for new and unexpected situation whereby

they will have to write what they wish to say on a piece of paper. This is to ensure they use the correct English and can encourage them to be more confident in future.

Based on the phenomena, the researcher predicts that speaking anxiety in the impromptu speech performance is still a problem in speaking class. Therefore, the researcher intends to examine the types of speaking anxiety experienced by the students in performing impromptu speech. Besides, the researcher also investigates the factors affecting students' speaking anxiety in performing impromptu speech in speaking.

2. Method

This research used qualitative research as the method in conducting this research. The researcher intended to interpret how the students in the English education department in one of higher institutes in Southeast Sulawesi experience speaking anxiety in doing the impromptu activity in speaking class. Heigham and Croker [10] states that qualitative research focuses on understanding how participants experience a phenomenon at a certain time, with a particular context, and the multiple meanings of it for them. This research focuses on the students' anxiety in impromptu activity. The researcher conducted this research in speaking class of English education department students in second semester of academic year 2019/2020. The selection of participant based on their experience of impromptu activity in speaking class. There are two motives why the researcher conducted the research in this class. First, this class implemented impromptu speech. Second, the researcher could observe this class directly since the first meeting. In impromptu activity in speaking class, the lecturer give questions to students without telling them first and students answer the questions in the class directly after the questions are given without preparation. In general, for the question 1 and question 2, the data collection technique is done by sorting out the answers according to the research needs. The reflection be adopted data analysis scheme proposed by Creswell 2016 is: collecting data, preparing data for analysis, reading data, coding data and coding text for themes and descriptions for use in research papers. Coding levels use color coding [11] to mark language patterns. Language patterns in participant reflection were identified to code student experiences that were frequently answered. Meanwhile for question 3, the researcher will use data analyses that are developed by Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen [12]. This qualitative research was analyzing through three stages, organizing and familiarizing, coding and reducing, interpreting and representing [12].

3. Findings and Discussion

This finding presents the interpretation of data collecting from students' anxiety in the impromptu activity performance. The findings show that the indicators of speaking anxiety when the students were doing the impromptu activity in speaking class. Based on the data that has been collected by the researcher, it was important to verify that students in impromptu activity performance experienced speaking anxiety.

TABLE 1: Participant code

No.	Participant Name (pseudonym)	Gender
1	S.1	Female
2	S.2/	Female
3	S.3	Female
4	S.4	Female
5	S.5	Female
6	S.6	Female
7	S.7	Female
8	S.8	Female
9	S.9	Male

3.1. Students' feeling in impromptu activity

Based on the answers from the open-ended questionnaire, participants indicated that the students' feelings when they entered speaking class with the impromptu activity in class were divided into several themes. In this theme, the researcher divides into several sub-themes based on the participants' answers, including; nervous, afraid, worried, and lack of vocabulary.

3.1.1. Nervous

Based on the recognition of the students from open-ended questionnaire, the most indicator of students' feel anxiety in impromptu activity in speaking class is nervous. It was also confirm by students answers in question number 1 that;

"*Nervous, because lest the question cannot be answered. Previously we might have been able to answer smoothly but because it was impromptu, the idea suddenly disappeared*" (S.1)

Based on the statement from S.1 above, she said that he was nervous because she was afraid of the questions asked by the lecturer when lecturer Impromptu Activity

Performance in the class could not be answered properly, she thought that she might be able to answer well, but because the lecturer do Impromptu Activity in the class So all the ideas in her head suddenly disappeared.

"Of course, we are a little nervous, because we don't know what things or questions will suddenly appear in the class, and we also don't know what the results of the impromptu activity will have an impact on the final grade" (S.2)

Based on the answers from S.2, she said that she was a little nervous because she did not know what questions would suddenly appear when the lecturer did Impromptu Activity Performance, and he also did not know how the results of this Impromptu Activity would have an impact on the final value.

3.1.2. Afraid

Another feeling that students feels of students' anxiety in impromptu activity performance in speaking class is afraid. That confirm by students in their answers that;

"I am very nervous, afraid, and anxious because of the lack confidence when I will answer the question or speak in the class" (S.3)

3.1.3. Worried

Worried is another feeling that students feel when the lecturers do impromptu activity in the speaking class. It was also confirm by students'

"I feel quite worried because I can't freely express my opinion in a class speaking session openly. because, I had to think at that time and it was a difficult limit to adjust to my thoughts where I would feel anxious and panicked about the content I was about to convey so that what happened was that when taking classes I could not do it optimally" (S.6)

3.1.4. Lack of Vocabulary

Lack of vocabulary also becomes a something that students often feel when lecturer come to class and did impromptu activity. It was also confirm by the students S.9, he admitted that

"I'm a little nervous and surprised because I'm not confident, so when I have to answer questions I can stutter and I'm also lacking in vocabulary, so I'm always nervous for fear of failure" (S.9)

3.1.5. Students reason in feel anxiety

Based on the result of open-ended questionnaire, here are the reasons why students feel anxious when lecturer did impromptu activity in speaking class.

(S.1): *"anxious for fear of not being able to answer according to the question, especially if you are nervous, sometimes the sentence is repeated."*

(S.2): *"For impromptu activity, usually I can control myself, because I am used to when the race is usually asked questions suddenly. But, anxiety or fear of not being able to answer definitely exists."*

(S.3): *"anxious because it will answer in a nervous way and the answer is not correct"*

(S.4): *"anxious because with impromptu activity like that we are asked to answer concisely and clearly without having time to think long"*

(S.5): *"Of course I was anxious, but I knew if I kept worrying I wouldn't be able to answer. So, as much as I can get rid of those anxious feelings by thinking positively, and if I'm wrong, that's okay because that's the purpose of studying. That is to fix what was wrong."*

(S.6): *"Yes often anxious. This is because I do not have enough topics or ideas which will probably be my discussion when presenting my experiences or opinions, as well as some new things that are usually asked by the lecturer before opening the material."*

(S.7): *"Yes, I feel anxious, because I afraid that I can't answer because the question is so sudden"*

(S.8): *"Yes, I am very anxious that it feels like all my fears are in one, I am very afraid that if the question I can't understand so I can't speak/answer and be seen by other friends, and even more afraid if the teacher/lecturer will be angry because I don't can answer or give any word of the question."*

(S.9): *"A little anxious if the question is a bit difficult to answer"*

From all of the statement above it is known that the reasons why students feel anxious when lecturer did impromptu especially in speaking class. The researcher concludes that the reason of speaking anxiety appeared in the impromptu activity. It meant that the presence of speaking anxiety existed among the students.

3.1.6. Students overcome their anxiety

Every student has their own strategies to overcome their anxiety; however, some of the same strategies are used when experiencing different types of anxiety. The first

example is from S.1 she confirms that before enter the class she always read a lot of material:

"Usually when you know there will always be impromptu questions every time you enter, you have to read a lot and find out the questions that often arise" (S.1)

Different from S.1, S.2 said that when she don't really understand the question being asked, she usually repeat the question while buying time for thinking.

"When I don't really understand the question being asked, then I usually repeat the question while buying time to think. However, such a situation is very rare for me. Because even though it is done suddenly, usually the questions asked by the lecturer are adjusted to the level of ability of each student." (S.2)

Meanwhile S.3 said that before answering questions on impromptu activity, she always wrote some points from her answers

"The way I overcome it is that I quickly write down a few points from my answer and I try to speak for myself first before answering the question." (S.3)

Relaxing is one of the strategies used by S.4, she says that she should always try to relax in order to answer questions properly.

"Inevitably I have to try to relax so that when I'm answering my answer can make more sense". (S.4)

For the next strategy according to S.5 how to overcome anxiety is to think positively and confidently.

"Just like I said that I overcome my anxiety by thinking positively and confidently, that there is nothing wrong or wrong, because I can fix it again in another session, or in the next class." (S.5)

The strategy that used by S.6, S.7, S.8, and S.9 is the same strategy; the strategy that they used is calming down before answering the question.

"I'll take a deep breath and calm myself down so I don't panic at the same time, trying to make space for myself and my thoughts. Then after that slowly think about what I should say according to my ability." (S.6)

"I kept my self calm and tried to answer as best I could." (S.7)

"Usually I try to calm myself first, like thinking positively and also trying to calm down so I don't panic too much." (S.8)

"Finding calm is like controlling my breath."(S.9)

The anxiety is also the common condition that is what everybody feels by everybody. However, it will be worse if it cannot be control. In learning foreign languages, many students feel anxious because there are many causes related to the physicist's condition

and understanding of topics included in English. This also happened at the Islamic State Institute of (IAIN) Kendari despite the special English study program. Although communicating in English is necessary for them, it can be a difficult thing to do.

First, students' feelings when the lecturer does impromptu activity in speaking class, performing spoken English in front of an audience can be a very difficult task for some students because they may experience anxiety, which prevents them from giving a successful oral performance reasons for student anxiety. Based on the data analysis, students described that they felt nervous, afraid, worried, and lack of vocabulary. They still feel insecure about themselves, afraid that the audience will not understand their speech [13]

The second is the reasons why students feel anxious, every language learner needs to remember knowledge about the topic must acquire if students' wants to speak confidently. The basic preparations that must be completed before communicating with others are to have a good understanding of the topic. Lack of interest in certain topics makes them reluctant to seek further information about that topic. As a result, students become anxious when they are asking to speak because they do not know what to say [14]. Strategic competence and inadequate communication competence can be another reason for not being able to keep the interaction going. Hosni [15] states that students struggle to find the right vocabulary items when trying to speak in English, which reflects their inadequate vocabulary repertoire.

The last is how students overcome their anxiety, based on the data analysis, some of students have their own strategies to overcome their anxiety, the strategy that is; before enter the class students always read a lot of material, when students don't really understand the question from the lecturer they always repeat the question while having time for thinking, write some point for answers, relaxing their self, think positive and confidently, and calming down before answers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the data and discussion of this study it can be concluded that student anxiety in conducting impromptu activity performance have three aspect the first is students feeling in impromptu activity, students reason in feel anxiety and the last is how students overcome their anxiety. These factors can be obstacles in learning to speak in public. In connection with student anxiety, it is necessary for lecturer to always encourage and provide a supportive environment for learning to speak in public. Students need to get used to using English or at least be in an environment where English can be seen

anywhere. This situation is also for other aspects. It is believe that a good environment will allow students to have a more positive attitude in learning to speak in public and English in general.

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