

ABSTRACT

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Despite the importance of speaking skills in academic settings, students, particularly in learning a foreign language, experience significant anxiety during speaking activities. Horwitz et al. (1986) showed three main factors of anxiety there were communication apprehension factor, test anxiety factor, and fear of negative evaluation factor. This study aimed to identify the most symptom of speaking anxiety experienced by the freshman' students, to identify the factor contributing to speaking anxiety experienced by the freshman' students, and to explore some strategies usually used by the freshman' students to overcome their anxiety.

This study was used descriptive qualitative method. Participants in this research were second semester students in regular class consisted of 28 students, but in this research only 6 students were taken who selected using a purposive sampling method. The researcher used questionnaires and interviews to collect the data. The questionnaires instrument was adopted by Horwitz and Cope (1986). Moreover, the interviews instrument with semi-structured questions from the researcher. The researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis, starting from

familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

The findings indicate that the most prominent symptoms are physical, such as a rapid heartbeat, sweaty or cold hands, and a trembling voice. These symptoms appear primarily in situations that require spontaneous verbal responses, such as answering a lecturer's impromptu question or during an unprepared presentation. The factor contributing to speaking anxiety experienced by the freshman' students is test anxiety. Most participants responded neutrally or positively when speaking class is about to start. Students' speaking anxiety may be more related to specific classroom situations (e.g., exam) than to the start of class.

The strategies to overcome speaking anxiety are preparation, positive thinking, and relaxation. In preparation, the freshman' students tend to use problem-focused coping strategies, primarily through thorough preparation of material, independent practice, and note-taking before speaking. They also practice positive thinking and simple relaxation techniques to manage emotional stress. These strategies indicate a relatively good level of self-awareness and emotional regulation among the freshman' students, even though they are still in the early stages of adapting to academic demands.

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