Students' Stage Fright Symptoms In English Public Speaking Class

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Abstract.
The purpose of this research is to find out the symptoms of stage fright in students in English public speaking classes. The study approach uses a qualitative survey consisting of four open-ended questions. The data in this study were taken through direct observation of English public speaking classes, document reports on the progress of students learning public speaking from the teacher and interviews. The data analysis procedure was carried out in three stages, including 1) data reduction, which is the process of collecting data according to the focus of the research, 2) presenting data through the process of categorizing data, classifying and analyzing the process, and 3) drawing conclusions to find out the results. solving research problems. The results of the data analysis concluded that there were two general symptoms associated with student stage fright during public speaking class practice, namely physiological symptoms and cognitive symptoms. Thus, the teacher should be able to direct students to apply strategies to overcome speaking anxiety such as increasing preparation and practice. These findings have implications for teachers' understanding of the concept of the importance of understanding the character of students' anxiety in practicing English public speaking in class, so that teachers can choose learning methods or techniques that are appropriate to students' anxiety levels.

Keywords: English, Public Speaking and Stage Fright.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is a skill of speaking in public. Public speaking skills are very important in today's global era as an act of communication and are needed because every action is synonymous with activities that lead to keynote speakers. So, everyone needs to practice every activity[1]. From understanding the concept, it can be understood that all fields of work require public speaking skills. Therefore, public speaking is one of the subjects in the English study program at a private university in Jakarta. This course is given as a provision for mastering English speaking skills aimed at a large audience. Moreover, graduates of the English study program for the third diploma level have various job professional objectives such as tour guides, interpreters, educators, or translators. So, these public speaking skills support their scientific field or their profession after graduation.However, being able to speak in front of a large audience or forum is not easy, like students in English public speaking classes. Data analysis of student learning outcomes in public speaking courses found several points related to deficiencies or problems faced by students during public speaking practice, including 1) students have low self-confidence, 2) students often do not make eye contact with the audience, 3) material that has been designed for public speaking practice is not all delivered because of nervousness, and 4) students have difficulty dealing with feelings of anxiety when practising public speaking.

The findings of this problem have also been studied by previous researchers who found various difficulties students found in public speaking practice. Several contributing factors such as feeling unprepared, not daring, full of worries, indecisive, not understanding the topic, feeling afraid/stage fright, not confident, not knowing how to convey it, and various other problems[2].A study found that the level of confidence of students to control their nerves, maintain eye contact, use gestures and speak comfortably when the audience is approximately 25 people. The findings are very surprising and provide an understanding that a more in-depth review is needed regarding the reasons for these findings. Thus, teachers must be able to align learning activities with these conditions to minimize obstacles for students[3]. Therefore, teachers must be able to translate students' wishes for public speaking learning activities. Teachers can also start by understanding the concept of the nature of speaking strategies and communicative goals that they want to build on the speaking process so that they can fulfil the goals of achieving public speaking learning[4], [5].Other studies have shown that increased interoceptive aspects of awareness have a

positive relationship with fear[6]. Several universities around the world have also responded to the challenges of globalization as outlined in the curriculum.

This research was conducted through ethnographic analysis to explore the cultural gaps that arise in the interpretation of public speaking between Anglo-Americans and non-Anglos[7]Meanwhile, the learning process requires learning strategies that are applied in public speaking classes. This strategy is directed at increasing independence, responsibility and self-confidence. There are two important ways of learning public speaking namely 1) raising awareness about cultural barriers and 2) teaching public speaking to EFL students requires the application of several learning strategies including strategies for dealing with imminent cultural barriers[8].Therefore, educators must be able to create learning strategies that can be aligned with the character of students. So, this research is not oriented towards the development or selection of appropriate learning strategies for teaching public speaking students. However, this study examines more deeply the symptoms of stage fright in students in English public speaking classes. This research is a form of the initial assessment of the internal difficulties or obstacles faced by students in practising public speaking. Thus, the results of the research can be one of the inputs for determining learning strategies. So, the purpose of this research is to find out the symptoms of stage fright in students in English public speaking classes.

II.   METHODS

The study approach uses a qualitative survey comprising four open-ended questions. Qualitative research usually explores and reveals facts in the field by the social phenomena that occur, so data is taken through a process of observation or interviews [9], [10]. From this concept, this study examines more deeply the stage fright that is often experienced by someone who learns English public speaking in class. This is an interesting phenomenon to be analyzed as one of the teacher's considerations in determining public speaking learning strategies. Thus, the data in this study were taken through direct observation of English public speaking classes, and document reports on the progress of students learning public speaking from the teacher.

In addition, interviews were also conducted with students who were studying public speaking related to the stage fright they felt. The interviews conducted referred to aspects or friends, including 1) fear of being judged; 2) physical symptoms; 3) uncertainty about the topic; 4) a negative effect on the university experience; 5) practice and preparation; and 6) more practical support is needed[11]. Interviews were conducted with students who had taken public speaking courses. Participants are 50 students in the fifth semester of the 2022-2023 academic year at a private university in Jakarta in the English study program. The data analysis procedure was carried out in three stages, including 1) data reduction, which is the process of collecting data according to the focus of the research, 2) presenting data through the process of categorizing data, classifying and analyzing the process, and 3) drawing conclusions to find out the results. solving research problems [12].

III.   RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of data analysis found that the biggest factors that cause student stage fright are 1) fear of being judged; 2) physical symptoms; and 3) training and preparation. The following is the percentage of data that has been sorted according to the data findings.
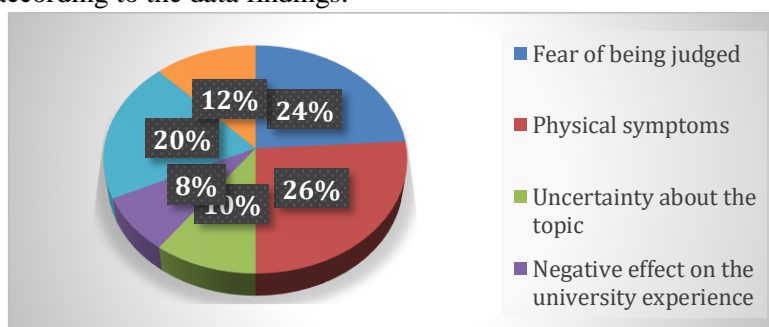

Fig 1. Symptoms of students' stage fright in public speaking class

Graph 1 shows that the main cause of student stage fright symptoms is public speaking activities during class. The data shows that the biggest to the smallest causes is fear of being judged, physical symptoms, training and preparation, more practical support, topics that are considered confusing for students, and negative experiences in learning. While the results of the analysis of learning report documents from educators found several points that cause student stage fright;

1. Students have difficulty mastering teaching materials or topics to be conveyed in public speaking practice.
2. Students have fear of internal factors such as lack of confidence, mastery of gestures or expressions, and feeling shy.
3. Students lack the readiness to practice public speaking.

The findings from the results of document analysis and interviews have similarities with the results of direct observation of the observation process in public speaking classes during the learning activities. Thus it can be said that teachers must first recognize students themselves when carrying out activities in public speaking classes. Teachers should be able to direct students to apply strategies to overcome speaking anxiety such as increasing preparation and exercises that involve all physical activities, and the knowledge they have[13].The ability to speak is one of the language components that are inseparable from the acquisition of English. This ability is a challenge for ESL learners to master because it involves several linguistic and non-linguistic features in presenting ideas and is often associated with anxiety. Public speaking anxiety is a common problem faced by students learning a second language. Feelings such as stage fright and nervousness can contribute to their anxiety in communicating in the target language. In addition, the classroom environment, instructor presence and peer pressure can also be factors that pose a threat to students, especially in public speaking settings. So, teachers can use mixed methods with audiovisual media[14].From the data findings, it can also be seen that the causes of student stage fright during public speaking practice can be understood to be directly related to physiological symptoms or physical self-control.

There are even indications of cognitive symptoms implying that these symptoms are directly related to disturbances in mental or cognitive activity such as being easily distracted in front of an audience, being overly preoccupied, and creating new perceptions based on disturbing thoughts. These two general symptoms provide changes in student behaviour during public speaking practice. As stated by Payne and Carlin that public speaking is a class activity that triggers anxiety. Some of the reactions that arise from this anxiety are shaking hands, unsteadiness and general tension, flushed face, sweating, dry mouth, upset stomach, or in the worst case, the speaker is completely broken[15], [16].Other studies have found that public speaking anxiety has a strong relationship with the adaptation of psychophysiological strategies and can be reduced effectively[17]. Thus, these findings provide consideration for public speaking teachers to overcome student stage fright. The several ways found by the problems of this research are 1) providing a change in mindset about public speaking, 2) stopping worrying about nervousness, 3) building student self-confidence, 4) students are advised to practice at home such as speaking in front of a mirror, and 5) master all materials that will be presented in public.

IV.   CONCLUSION

From the results of the data analysis, it was concluded that there were two general symptoms associated with student stage fright during public speaking class practice, namely physiological symptoms and cognitive symptoms. These two symptoms are illustrated in six aspects and there are three dominating aspects, namely 1) fear of being judged; 2) physical symptoms; and 3) training and preparation. These findings have implications for teachers' understanding of the concept of the importance of understanding the character of students' anxiety in practising English public speaking in class so that teachers can choose learning methods or techniques that are appropriate to students' anxiety levels. Teachers can also give different treatment to students when they practice public speaking.Thus, these findings provide suggestions aimed at teachers to first map student personalities before determining learning methods. Because in the student personality mapping, physical or cognitive symptoms are also found for students carrying out public speaking activities.The results of this study can still be developed related to the influence of pedagogy or

teaching strategies of teachers on solving students' anxiety problems for speaking practice. In addition, future researchers can use the results of this study to identify more deeply other psychological symptoms that affect student learning levels at home or in the classroom.

V.   ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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