A Study on Students' Psychological Problems of Speaking

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ABSTRACT

The most difficult ability to learn is speaking. Thus, it is essential to understand speaking psychological problems during the teaching and learning process. The researchers used a descriptive quantitative method to conduct this present study. The goal of this research was to gain in a deeper understanding about the types and underlying causes of students' psychological speaking problems among eighth-graders of MTs NW Sepit. There were twenty students taken as participants. Data then were collected through questionnaire and interview. The result of this research indicated that the students of MTs. NW Sepit faced the psychological problems in learning speaking. From the data gained in questionnaire and interview, speaking difficulties were most frequently caused by a lack of confidence (50%) followed by a lack of motivation (38, 46%) and nervousness (11, 53%), which was the least common. It was hoped that by putting this study into practice, students would become more fluent in English and experience less psychological speaking problems.

Keywords: psychological problems, speaking

ABSTRAK

Kemampuan yang paling sulit dipelajari adalah berbicara. Oleh karena itu, penting untuk memahami permasalahan psikologis selama proses belajar mengajar. Peneliti telah menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dalam melaksanakan penelitian ini. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menganalisa lebih jauh tentang jenis dan penyebab yang mendasari permasalahan psikologis siswa dalam berbicara pada kelas delapan MTs NW Sepit. Terdapat 20 siswa yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian. Data selanjutnya dikumpulkan melalui angket dan wawancara. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa-siswi MTs. NW Sepit memiliki masalah psikologis dalam belajar berbicara. Dari data yang diperoleh melalui angket dan wawancara, kesulitan berbicara umumnya sering disebabkan oleh kurangnya rasa percaya diri (50%) diikuti oleh kurangnya motivasi (38, 46%), serta rasa gugup (11, 53%) yang merupakan hal yang paling jarang terjadi. Diharapkan dengan dijadikannya penelitian ini, siswa akan menjadi lebih mahir berbahasa Inggris dan masalah psikologisnya lebih berkurang.

Kata kunci: masalah psikologi, berbicara

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important English skill that allows us to commnunicate with others and gather information from a variety of sources. It is one way to convey meaning in a variety of verbal and non-verbal contexts (Chaney & Burk, 1998, as referenced in Tetyana 2022). It functions as the "cornerstone" of communication and learning that focuses on verbal expression and style (Haidara, 2016; Phuong & Huan, 2018; Tridinanti, 2018).

Accuracy, complexity, fluency, and improved grammar and vocabulary are necessary for effective speaking and communication (Rababah, 2005; Spring et al., 2019). Fluency is the primary factor in oral skills and it can be improved through phonological production and vocabulary development. These elements are necessary for the exchange of ideas, negotiations, and social interaction (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017; Rao, 2019).

As researchers have deeply investigated, psychological problems have a significant impact on students' relationships, interactions, quality of work, and general well-being. (Mesidor & Sly, 2016; Nijat, et al., 2019; Umisara, et al., 2021). Along with that, Holt et al. (2019) and Arifin, (2017) also emphasize the importance of psychology in understanding communication and behavior, including problems such as shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. In relation to undertaking research, Mustafa (2015) then discusses how these variables may influence on students' English-speaking skills and proficiency.

These problems, as reported by Siti (2020), make it challenging for students to engage in English conversation, which can increase dissatisfaction and low self-esteem, then may hinder their ability to express their ideas effectively. Riftriani et al. (2019) claim that these problems might cause students to be shy and lack confidence because they worry that that their classmates will laugh at them if they make mistakes.

Anxiety

Language anxiety is a psychological condition that impacts language learning and is partly caused by interpersonal interaction, test-taking, and a fear of getting a low score (Horwitz & Code, 1986 as cited in Tsai, 2018). The term "anxiety" refers to a condition characterized by high nervous system activity, rapid emotional reactions, and unpleasant feelings (Hadi, et al., 2020; Spielberger, 2019).

Speaking anxiety is a significant psychological factor that can negatively impact students' oral English performance in learning a foreign language (Meloah, 2013). The intensity of anxiety is can be influenced by the student's situation and also through his or her physical and mental health.

Anxiety is a complex experience that includes emotions, personality traits, and feelings. It is classified into two types: situational anxiety, which is temporary and repetitive, and trait anxiety, which is permanent and experienced in a variety of situations (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020).

Teachers must identify and intervene when students indicate the anxiety indications such as headaches, tense muscles, pain, wiggling, fidgeting, and stuttering (Suleimenova, 2013). Other signs may include hand shaking, sweating, amnesia, blankness, stomach butterflies, dry mouth, sore throat, rapid heartbeat, and squeaky voice.

Although anxiety can negatively impact speaking fluency and accuracy, analyzing and integrating new information into existing knowledge can help reduce anxiety and provide better language comprehension

(Suleimenova, 2013). Lesson plans and learning activities can be strengthened by integrating vocabulary into speaking teaching strategies (Scarpino et al., 2019).

Lack Confidence

Confidence is an important aspect of life that influences someone's behavior through value-based self-evaluation and childhood interactions. It is a sense of optimism which comes from self-assesment of one's own abilities that shapes interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions (Fadhillah, 2015).

The development of self-confidence has an effect on psychological and social well-being. According to Harris (2009) as cited in Salim (2015), education, individual experiences, social messages from peers, family, and community are all determinants.

A lack of confidence in English also may impact decision-making (Gulzira et al., 2021; Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Furthermore, both positive and negative messages can have an impact on confidence. Positive messages having a tendency to be harmful, whereas negative messages have the tendency to be helpful.

As stated by Haidara (2016), solving self-confidence problems like shame, shyness, unrealistic expectations, false acceptance, fear of transformation, and depression is necessary for students' achievement and succesful learning outcomes. More specifically when speaking with English teachers or native speakers, students frequently feel nervousness and uneasiness to express their ideas, and therefore, they often keep silent until they feel confident to speak.

Lack of Motivation

According to Osabiya (2015), motivation is an important factor that links people to their needs and expectations. It helps them in the development of routines, the meeting of deadlines, the improvement of lives, preferences, and goals, and finally the maximization of potential.

To boost students motivation in English-speaking, the study by Taufiqulloh et al. (2018) underline the significance of motivation in students' language learning achievements and recommend that teacher should be familiar with a variety of psychological problems.

According to the explanation provided above, this study aims to investigate the psychological problems faced by students at MTs. NW Sepit, specifically in terms of speaking skill, and to identify the types and the causes of these problems, which are mostly defined as anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Due to the purpose of the study, a descriptive quantitative design was used to investigate the types and underlying causes of psychological speaking problems among students at MTs NW Sepit. The variables were chosen using based on a design which focused on specific factors that influence participants' speaking skill rather than drawing comparisons or connections.

Participant of the Study

In this study, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique. The chosen technique also indicates that the researchers picked the subject that corresponds with the goals of their study. Its sample consisted of twenty eighth-grade students from MTS NW.

Data Collection

The following steps were taken during the data collection process:

a. Questionnaire

The study involved giving a questionnaire to eighth-grade students at MTsNW Sepit in order to identify psychological problems such as anxiety, lack of confidence, and motivation. The questionnaire had 15 questions, with five questions for each problem. A checklist was used to assess these problems.

In this study, the following statements were used to assess students' anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation in their speaking abilities.

Anxiety

- I do not feel anxious when I make a mistake in speaking English;
- I do not feel nervous when I speak English in front of the class;
- Anxiety does not affect my English speaking performance;
- I do not feel preassured when I attend the speaking class;
- I am not worried if the other students in my class speak English better than me.

Lack of confidence

- I like to speak Engish in front of the class;
- I feel confident when I speak English;
- I am not worried if the other students will laugh at me when I make a mistake in speaking English;
- I prefer to speak English and make mistake than keep silent when speaking;
- I like to be the first participant to answer a question if i know the answer.

Lack of motivation

- I learn English to pass my degree and get a job in the future;
- I feel motivated when I listen to music while I am learning;
- Speaking English is important for self-improvement;
- Studying English enables me to discuss interesting topics in English with people from the other country;
- When I am on my way to speaking class
- I feel very relaxed and confident.

b. Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, researchers conducted structured interviews with eighth-grade students at MTs NW Sepit to determine the underlying causes of psychological problems. During the interview, three questions were asked to verify and determine the students' experiences with the problems .

- In your opinion, what are the causes of the psychological problems that include lack of confidence, lack of motivation and anxiety in learning speaking,
- Among lack of confidence, lack of motivation and anxiety, which one is the most factor that can affect to your speaking performance?
- Finally, why do you feel a lack of confidence when you want to speak English ?

Data Analysis

Based on the data collected, the researchers then analyzed questionnaire and interview results to identify common psychological issues in speaking instruction and their root causes, which significantly impact students' speaking abilities. The following steps were taken to analyze the data:

a. Questionnaire Data

Step 1. To figure out the difficulties that students face when learning to speak, the researchers gave a questionnaire with 15 negatively phrased items to the students. The total percentage of psychological problems was then calculated by reversing the scores of the negative items.

Step 2. The items in the questionnaire are classified as anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. It consists of 15 items with scores on a five-point Likert response scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items are grouped based on their category, with items 1-5 indicating

anxiety, 7-9 indicating lack of confidence, and 1-4 indicating lack of motivation.

Step 3. The study used Likert points to calculate the proportion of participants who indicated experiencing speaking psychological problems, with the highest percentage identified as the primary cause. To determine the percentage, it was calculated by multiplying the total score of each item by 100 and dividing the total score of all items.

b. Interview Data

Step 1. Transcribe – The researchers record interview results and then convert the recording data into sentence form (via transcription).

Step 2. Classifying – The researchers analyzed interview results and identified the most common problems students face when learning to speak.

Step 3. Concluding - The researchers compiled the interview data into a summary to identify the psychological problems students face when learning to speak and the root causes of these problems.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

As previously stated, researchers in this study conducted interviews and questionnaires to collect comprehensive data about the psychological problems that students face and their causes.

a. The Findings of Questionnaire

The study's finding of questionnaires reveals that a significant percentage of students have problems with speaking, with a lack of confidence being the most common psychological issue, 50%. This is followed by a lack of motivation, which accounts for 12 out

of 38, 46% of the problems, and anxiety, which accounts for 11, 53% of the problems.

Table 1. Total Percentage of Psychological Problem Types

No	Psychological Problem Aspects	Total	Percentage
1	Lack of Confidence	65	50 %
2	Lack of motivation	50	38, 46%
3	Anxiety	15	11, 53%

b. The Findings of Interviews

According to the study's findings of interviews, a lack of motivation and confidence are the most common causes of speaking psychology problems. Especially, for students who lack English language proficiency, the fear of making mistakes and receiving harsh criticism from their friends is becoming a major barrier on speaking effectively. They are even less confident because they are afraid of being teased and making mistakes in front of the class.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the questionnaires and interviews, the study identified three major psychological issues that students face when speaking: lack of confidence, lack of motivation, and anxiety.

The most common issue was a **lack of confidence**, due to a total score of 65 (50%). The students lack of confidence often leads to problems such as ignorance of English, fear of being laughed at, preferring silence, and refusing to be the first to answer questions. In agreement with this research finding, Fadhillah's research (2015) found out that students' lack of confidence in studying a foreign language is frequently happens due to their feeling of difficulties while understanding

and communicating with others. Due to this problem, many students in the class are remaining silent.

According to Al Nakhalah (2016), the main reason why students lack confidence is because they are not proficient in English, which causes them to feel insecure and ashamed. Besides, Derakhshan et al. (2016) argue that teachers have an impact on students' speaking confidence. Students may lack confidence when speaking English if their teachers don't encourage them.

Considering its similarities, self-confidence and self-esteem are two concepts that focus on how someone perceives their own abilities. Salim's research (2015) suggested that early experiences—both interpersonal and intrapersonal—are thought to contribute to the growth of self-confidence, which is an essential aspect t of learning.

Toubot & Seng (2018) claimed that lack of speaking confidence is the root of communication anxiety, which is related to shyness and reticence. Additionally, it is nervousness or fear of engaging in conversation with others. In general, students who have difficulty to communicate their ideas or comprehend the perspectives of others typically experience anxiety and frustration.

In line with the Toubot & Seng's investigation, according to Krismanti and Siregar's research (2017) at STKIP PGRI Banjarmasin, the most significant barriers to speaking are lack of confidence, shyness, nervousness, and fear of making mistakes, whereas a lack of motivation is not a significant problem.

Fitriani & Apriliaswatin's study (2015) confirmed that psychological issues, with a mean percentage of 20.70%; lack of self-confidence was 20.11%; and anxiety was 21.27%. were the three biggest challenges faced by third-semester English Education

Study Program students at FKIP Tanjungpura University Pontianak. The average was followed by linguistic problems with a mean percentage of 19.53%; grammar 22.16%, vocabulary 20.19%, and pronunciation 16.25%.

The students' second psychological problem is a **lack of motivation**, which obtained a total score of 50 (38, 31%). This problems is commonly described in terms of having an impact on students' motivation to complete their education or get a job, their perception of the importance of English, their ability to communicate with foreigners, and their confidence in attending speaking classes.

Motivation is the desire to act or do something. It is an essential component of educational activities because it increases students' motivation to learn and influences good conversation. As suggested by Özhan & Kocadere (2020), teachers' encouragement can have a big impact on productive conversation. On the other hand, a lack of motivation may cause a lack of success-oriented intention.

For instance, learning English may help in boosting motivation. Along with these, establishing a moral foundation, self-assurance, perseverance, patience, and an understanding of various cultures are also becoming helpful strategies. However, students must be persistent and willing to advance their knowledge, communication skills, and personal development in order to become fluent in a foreign language (Özhan & Kocadere, 2020).

Another motivating factor is the choice of challenge. Assigning a task to sudents that is challenging but achievable is the key to developing persistence or motivation. When a student overcomes a challenge, they become motivated and eager for another one to come.

Therefore, motivated students will select a task that is just a little bit difficult for them but provides a good challenge. Students feel really satisfied when they complete a task like that. On the other way, they who lack motivation (those who have not had early success) will choose an activity that is relatively simple and guarantees success right away

In the context of students' speaking task, motivation is defined as the ability to stay focused on a task for an extended period of time. Moods are the main drivers of motivation, and students who are motivated are more enthusiastic and satisfied with their work. When compared to students who lack motivation, students who are highly motivated tend to stay engaged for longer periods of time. That is why successful students establish their complete attention to their tasks by constantly learning (Osabiya, 2015).

Another sign of motivation also was defined by Putri's research (2016). She found that the level of dependency on an adult significantly impacts motivation. In other words, relying too heavily on adults may hinder student achievement and learning. For instance, when students who are intrinsically motivated or who lack motivation find it hard to work independently, generally motivated students don't need constant supervision.

Lastly, the students experienced a total score of 15 (11, 53%) for anxiety become their third psychological problem. This final issue includes stress, anxiety, nervousness, and worry about other people's speaking abilities. Students may become speechless in front of the class or in public, which can cause a variety of emotions such as nervousness, anxiety, worry, shyness, dread, or fear of things getting worse. As a result, a student's level of anxiety has a significant impact on their ability to communicate effectively, with some students experiencing panic attacks or being unable to speak at all.

Anxiety is defined as a fear or worry about an upcoming situation (Haidara, 2016). It can be associated with issues that affect psychological self-efficacy and the perception that the situation is stressful. Krismanti & Siregar (2017) then identified that students' fear of worry, foolish, or incompressible information as a significant challenge students face when learning communication.

Hermaniar & Azkiya (2021) conducted a study on anxiety in an English speaking class. The study revealed that anxiety is a significant challenge for both advanced and non-advanced English language learners. The study then found three major elements impacting students' anxiety when speaking English: communication anxiety, fear of receiving a negative review, and test anxiety.

In addition to using a questionnaire to collect data, the researchers also conducted interviews to identify a number of factors that contribute to students' psychological problems. A variety of factors, in line with the findings, contributed to the psychological issues that eighth graders at MTS NW Sepit were experiencing. The main issue they faced when speaking because they were afraid of being laughed at, making a mistake, or being judged by their peers.

This hypothesis result is consistent with the data presented by Arifin (2017), who found that students frequently experience psychological problems such as lack of confidence and anxiety, which can have a significant impact on their speaking abilities.

Based on the researcher's overall explanation, the current and previous research findings are different and identical for a variety of reasons. The characteristics of the students, their personal situations, and the environment in

which the research is conducted are all potential resources that influence the differentiation of the research results. As a result, in order to improve students English language skills in the future, teachers must be aware of and manage their psychological problems.

CONCLUSION

Considering the data provided in the research findings, it can be concluded from the problem statements or some conclusions can be drawn. First, the study revealed that students frequently experience psychological problems when learning to speak, such as lack of motivation, confidence, and anxiety. These problems negatively impact their ability to speak effectively in English, as they often deal with low self-esteem and anxiety while speaking in front of others.

Then it was investigated that students lack of confidence was the most following significant factor affecting their English speaking ability and the fundamental cause of their psychological problems. The researchers concluded that students' lack of confidence in their communication abilities is primarily caused by a fear of making mistakes, being judged, and being teased by peers.

In addition, the students' lack of motivation was caused by their lack of understanding of the importance of learning English for their own development, as well as their nervousness when speaking in front of the class and their perception that their pronunciation was poor.

Lastly, the study suggests that future researchers should explore psychological barriers to English proficiency, considering teaching techniques, learning style, and anxiety level in addition to dealing with students' speaking difficulties.

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