



## Students' Perception toward Psychological Problems Faced in Public Speaking Class

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### Abstract

*This study aimed to find the students perception toward psychological problems faced in terms of fear and anxiety in public speaking class of English department. The data was collected from Fourth semester students of English Department who learned Public Speaking Subject. This study used descriptive qualitative research design. The instruments used were questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was distributed to 40 students from different classes and based on the questionnaire scores the researcher took 10 students to be interviewed in order to know their perception. The questionnaire used was PSCAS (Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale) and the interview used was semi structured interview. Based on findings, it was found that 33 of 40 or 82.5% students were indicated having medium level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class and 7 of 40 or 17.5% students were having low level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class. Furthermore, it was found that the students gave negative perception toward psychological problems faced in public speaking class of English department. Moreover, there were several factors of students' public speaking class fear and anxiety, those were fear of making mistakes, feeling that their friends would laugh at them, fear when looked at the audiences' eyes, though that other students were better than them, and students did not have good preparation.*

### Introduction

Public speaking anxiety might impact negatively on student engagement with oral communication assessments (Lynch, et al., 2014). Psychological problems became a main factor which made the aims public speaking class did not fully achieved. Al-Nouh, et al (2015) reveals that to investigate EFL college students' perceptions of the psychological problems in public speaking class will help us understand better and cater more to students' needs as well as recognize and acknowledge their weaknesses

Based on the explanation above, the researcher thought that it was important to find the students' perception toward the psychological problems faced in public speaking class. Students perception was needed to know in the basis that the students as the object of the learning process. After analyzing the students' perceptions, the appropriate adjustment can be made to the success of the public speaking subject as the suggestion to the teacher and further

information which will help us in the development of English Education Department of Muhammadiyah University of Makassar. According to Robbins (2003) perception as the process taken by individual to govern and to interpret perception of sensory to give significance in their environment. Perception can be defined as the recognition and interpretation of sensory information. Perception also includes how to respond the information. Perception as a process where people take in sensory information from their environment and use that information in order to interact with their environment. Perception allows human to take the sensory information in and make it into something meaningful.

Coopman & Lull (2012) states that public speaking shares some characteristics of human communication speaking skills apply in the other context. Public speaking also includes physical and mental concentration. An effective speaker requires physical coordination, mental concentration, content organization and skills practice, and a great deal of experience Fujishin in (Ibrahim & Yusoff, 2012).

The aim of the Public Speaking course was to introduce students to the speechmaking process. Students were exposed to two varieties of public speaking, namely, informative speaking and persuasive speaking. Besides instructional lectures, sample speeches and videos were shown to enhance students' understanding of the course (Ibrahim & Yusoff, 2012). Public speaking is the process of designing and delivering a message to the audience. Effective public speaking involves understanding audience and speaking goals, choosing elements for the speech that will engage your audience with your topic, and delivering your message skillfully. Good public speakers understand that they must plan, organize, and revise their material in order to develop an effective speech.

English education department has applied public speaking subject which aims to encourage the students to be excellent in speaking in front of the public. Public speaking was taught in the fourth semester students in English Education Department. Public speaking course will be a good media for student exactly English education department students to train their public speaking skill for the student future career. Based on the research question above, the researcher intended to find out the objective to find the students' level fear and anxiety in public speaking class and to find the students' perception toward the psychological problems faced in public speaking class.

## Methods

The method used in this research was a descriptive qualitative method. The participants of this research were English Department students year 2015 (fourth semester) and adopted purposive sampling technique. There were 40 students to fulfill the questionnaire; afterwards 10 students were taken to be interviewed (who were having medium to high level of fear and anxiety).

The instruments used were Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) Questionnaire aimed to find the students' level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class and semi structured interview aimed to find the students' perception toward fear and anxiety in public speaking class.

## Results and Discussion

### *Students' Level of fear and Anxiety in Public Speaking Class*

The following table provided the result of the first subsidiary research question which was to find out the students level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class. The final questionnaire score was got from the summed point of each statement in the questionnaire.

Students	Score	Level
1	66	Medium
2	65	Medium
3	65	Medium
4	61	Medium
5	60	Medium
6	56	Medium
7	60	Medium
8	57	Medium
9	56	Medium
10	60	Medium
11	62	Medium
12	62	Medium
13	61	Medium
14	61	Medium
15	60	Medium
16	60	Medium
17	60	Medium
18	59	Medium
19	59	Medium
20	59	Medium
21	58	Medium
22	58	Medium
23	58	Medium
24	56	Medium
25	56	Medium
26	56	Medium
27	56	Medium
28	55	Medium
29	54	Medium

30	52	Medium
31	51	Medium
32	50	Medium
33	50	Medium
34	49	Low
35	49	Low
36	45	Low
37	45	Low
38	43	Low
39	41	Low
40	40	Low

Source: Primary Data,2019.

Based on the interview, the students were given negative perception towards psychological problems faced in public speaking class. The findings showed that even if the students had experiences in public speaking they still faced fear and anxiety when they wanted to speak in public speaking class. The students were recognized that public speaking subject is an interesting subject that can help them to build up their self confidence. Students said that they felt fear and anxious while speaking English in public speaking class regardless their public speaking experiences and their speaking ability, the students still felt fear and anxious in public speaking class. There were several factor caused public speaking fear and anxiety based on the students perceptions. Fear of making mistakes, looking at the audiences eyes, afraid that other students laugh at them, feeling that other students were better than them, did not have good preparation.

The students perceived that psychological problems like fear and anxiety impact negatively toward their performance in public speaking class. Several impacts of students fear and anxiety toward their performance in public speaking class. First, the students were forgot their speech and disturb the preparation which the students have made. it neccessary to have a therapy which release stresses affecting students in speaking. There are already number of methods developed by scholars regarding to this but less specific to research on students grade levels. As to conclude, little is helpful to solve this problem.

Second, there was a communication apprehension because of the students' lack of confidence which make them uncomfortable to speak English in public speaking class. Students overcome their public speaking class fear and anxiety through some coping strategies, building up their braveness and self confidence, trying to look at the other view, imagining that no one look at them while speaking in front of the audiences, be relax by taking a deep breath, considering to have a good preparation, and maximizing their body language.

It has been presented in findings, the first research question about *“How is the students' level of fear and anxiety in public speaking class?”* could be answered by the findings of the questionnaire which showed that 82.5 % students had medium level of fear and anxiety when speak English in public speaking class and 17.5 % students had low level of fear and anxiety. It is indicate that most of the students often felt fear and anxiety in public speaking class. Moreover, for the research question *about “How is the students perception toward*

*psychological problem faced in public speaking class of English Department?”* could be answered after interviewed 10 students regarding their perception toward psychological problems faced in public speaking class the researcher concluded that all of students gave negative perception toward those psychological problems. It was in line with Haidara’s (2016) study which states that students believe psychological factor truly affects negatively toward their English speaking performance. Although most of the students’ problems were (1) Fear of making mistakes, (2) feeling shy, (3) feeling hesitated, (4) lack of confidence while speaking English.

The findings showed that even if the students had experiences in public speaking they still faced fear and anxiety when they wanted to speak in public speaking class. To support the fact, the findings showed that from 6 to 10 students experienced in public speaking but they still feel fear and anxious when they have to speak English in public speaking class. Moreover, 4 to 10 students said that they just have public speaking experience in public speaking class. Haidara (2016) states that most of students felt insecure while speaking English even if they have a good level of grammatical and vocabularies.

The students were recognized that public speaking subject is an interesting subject that can help them to build up their self confidence, the lecturer gave those tips and tricks how to face the audiences, and introduced them any other form of public speaking such as debate, speech and MC through presentation in the class or simulations. Furthermore, S6 also said that *“I just can share my experience in public speaking about how to get my self confidence. In my last mid semester the lecturer asked me to speak in front of management department”*. It showed that the lecturer had given the students chance to do presentation or speech in front of the students from other department not only their classmates as their audiences. Haidara (2016) states that public speaking is one of the productive skills that enable us to convey or to express something in spoken language. It is the ability to interact orally with others by sharing with them one’s point of view and feelings in different situation that take place in the real time.

Based on the findings, all of 10 students were asked whether they feel fear and anxious when speak English in public speaking class. All of the students said that they felt fear and anxious while speaking English in public speaking class regardless their public speaking experiences and their speaking ability, the students still felt fear and anxious in public speaking class. Tse (2011) reveals that anxiety is viewed as a permanent trait, as some people predisposed to be anxious.

There were several factor caused public speaking fear and anxiety based on the students perceptions. The main factor was students were feeling fear of making mistakes while speaking English in public speaking class. Then, feeling fear and anxious when they were looking at the audiences eyes and afraid that other students laugh at them when they were performing in public speaking class are the second factors. There was a feeling that other students were better than them and did not have good preparation before they speaking became the last factor that made students felt fear and anxious when performing in public speaking class. It was in line with Lestari’s (2015) study which stated that the external factors that influenced the students’ anxiety in speaking English are friends/classmates while internal factors are shyness. Both of factors are giving a big influence in students’ performance in speaking English in the class.

The students perceived that psychological problems like fear and anxiety impact negatively toward their performance in public speaking class. Furthermore, based on findings there were several impacts of students fear and anxiety toward their performance in public speaking class. First, the students were forgot their speech and disturb the preparation which the students have made. Second, there was a communication apprehension because of the students’ lack of confidence which make them uncomfortable to speak English in public speaking class. It also in line with Rahman’s (1995) study which stated that shy to speak English, lack of self

confidence etc become a factor of fear and anxiety in speaking English. Furthermore, it was contradicted with the results of Chen's (2015) study which suggest that L2 students' anxiety forms mental blocks during presentations, but it has less influence on their presentation performance. The result of this research found that fear and anxiety impact negatively toward their performance and presentation in public speaking class.

Students overcome their public speaking class fear and anxiety through some coping strategies, such as building up their braveness and self confidence, trying to look at the other view and imagining that no one look at them while speaking in front of the audiences, be relax by taking a deep breath, considering to have a good preparation, and maximizing their body languages. The students realize that those things can help them to decrease their public speaking class fear and anxiety.

## Conclusion

The students were giving negative perception toward the psychological problems in terms of fear and anxiety in public speaking class. Public speaking fear and anxiety faced by the students even they have previous experiences in public speaking. There were several factors of students public speaking class fear and anxiety, those were fear of making mistakes, feeling that their friends will laugh at them, fear to look the audiences eyes, though that other students were better than them, and students have not good preparation. Students perceived that public speaking class fear and anxiety impact negatively toward their performance in public speaking class such as students forgot their speech and disturb their speech preparation, students were confused and stop to speak, make the students uncomfortable to speaking English in public speaking class. There were several ways to cope students public speaking fear and anxiety such as building up their braveness and self confidence, looking at the other view and imagining that no one look at them while performing, taking a deep breath, making a good preparation, and maximizing their body languages

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