



Exploring Teacher's Attitude Toward Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom: A Descriptive Case Study

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Abstract

Students' problems with fear of speaking a foreign language are usually related to the atmosphere built in the classroom. The educator's performance usually dominates the atmosphere in the classroom. This research aims to explore teacher's attitudes toward students' speaking anxiety in the classroom and what a teacher does to help students overcome their anxiety. Qualitative was used as a research design. This research involves one teacher and four students in junior high school. This research used interviews and observation to collect the data according to the theory of Zukani, N. M. (2018). The data analysis is adapted from the thematic analysis by Braun & Clark (2006). The findings showed that teachers had a very positive attitude toward the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. This research can be applied to every teacher in overcoming student problems when students have problems in speaking such as being afraid to speak or worrying about being wrong. This can be used to increase the effectiveness of learning in the classroom and can make students play a more active role because of the reduced anxiety possessed by students.

Keywords: Teacher's attitude, Speaking anxiety, EFL classroom

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INTRODUCTION

Students' problems with fear of speaking a foreign language are usually related to the atmosphere built in the classroom. The educator's performance usually dominates the atmosphere in the classroom. Students learning a foreign language will easily experience learning stress even though the teacher tries to create a classroom conducive to learning (Narzoles D. et al., 2021). Thus, strategies for teaching speaking skills are needed by teachers to overcome students' speaking anxiety in the classroom. It established that a good classroom strategy requires the entire interest and support of the teacher (Ekperi, 2019). Furthermore, the strategies needed by students must also follow the needs and circumstances of students. Monsen (2017) found that teachers who provide much motivation tend to be more easily approached by students than teachers with a negative attitude.

Moreover, students who feel unsure of themselves when speaking a foreign language must have some affecting factors, such as the environmental impact, and lack of knowledge and practice. Then, teachers' expectations of student performance, including competency, fluency, reaction time, and quality of self-expression, can also trigger students' speaking anxiety in the classroom. The nature



of a student who does not want to be outdone by other students in the context of language learning, fear of tests, communication skills, and fear of evaluation from people around them can be assumed to be a source of anxiety (Ellis, 2008). According to Horwitz (2001), anxiety associated with foreign language learning is termed foreign language anxiety and refers to learners' adverse emotional reactions to language learning. Speaking anxiety makes someone experience failure when they are unable to speak and convey what they know. Therefore, speaking anxiety dramatically impacts a person's self-confidence (Danebeth T. et al., 2021).

In addition, for the learning process to run well, the role of the teacher as an educator is crucial. According to Wahibah et al. (2020), teachers must have skills in the learning process, which can be seen from the teacher's ability to use various strategies in learning. For students to obtain the expected results, teachers should be able to us4d students' future success. Thus, being a teacher is a challenging profession. Teachers as educators have gone through many obstacles while teaching at school and have provided many ways to educate and help their students (Zukani, N. M. 2018). Many factors can affect teacher attitudes. Factors that influence teacher attitudes include Environmental adjustment, work effectiveness, work efficiency, locus of control from oneself or others, academic achievement, creativity, and a sense of satisfaction at work (Zaidi, Z. 2015). Another study by Boer D. et al. (2011) showed that factors affecting teachers' attitudes include age, gender, experience, and teacher training.

METHODS

The research used qualitative data to understand the phenomenon. Creswell, J. (2014) explained that qualitative data is used to collect data in a scientific method by a researcher who is naturally interested in an issue. The case study was used to learn teacher's attitudes toward students' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. According to Yin (2009, p.18), a case study is an empirical research design that investigates a phenomenon in a real-life context. The target participant of this research is one English teacher and four students at a secondary school in Karawang, West Java. The participants were choosen because this research investigates the experience of in-service teachers, and participants consisting of four students were selected to provide additional data to discuss the issues. To collect the data this study used observation and interview that adapted by Osgood et, al. (1957)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Results

1. Teacher's Attitude Toward Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom

At this stage, the researcher wants to discuss and answer the first research question, " How does a teacher's attitude towards students' speaking anxiety that exist in EFL classrooms." In this study, the researcher focused on the teacher's attitude in SMPN 1 Klari. The researcher interviewed one teacher and four students to get the data. Also, the data is obtained from observations made by the researcher during speaking activities in the classroom

a. Cognitive component

Based on the interview, the researcher found out how teacher's attitudes towards the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety from a cognitive aspect, as shown in the balance below:

"Alhamdulillah selalu mengingatkan kembali, dan selalu melakukan pengulangan agar siswa dapat mengingat apa saja yang salah". (PT 1)

"Alhamdulillah, always reminding, and always repeating so that students can remember the wrong pronunciation." (PT 1)

(Vignette 01)

"Karena saya percaya bahwa menjadi guru selalu bermuara kepada kebaikan dan harus menjadi figure yang baik bagi para murid" (PT 1)

"Because I believe that being a teacher always leads to goodness and must be a good figure for students." (PT 1)

(Vignette 02)

"Iya saya pernah dengar. Kalau tidak salah, isu itu tentang kecemasan berbicara. Dan yang saya pahami memang kebanyakan siswa Ketika ingin berbicara Bahasa Inggris pasti cemas. Dan menurut saya isu ini memang harus segera ditangani dengan baik". (PT 1)

"Yes, I have heard. If I am not mistaken, the issue was about speaking anxiety. What I understand is that most students must be anxious when they want to speak English. And I think this issue must be handled properly" (PT1)

(Vignette 03)

Based on the interviews above, it can be concluded that the teacher's attitude towards the students' speaking anxiety in the cognitive aspect is very positive. It can be seen from the participants' attitudes, words, and knowledge; it is clear that the teacher knows how to deal with the student's problems and experiences in teaching.

b. Affective component

Additionally, the researcher can find out how the teachers' attitude towards the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety is from an affective aspect, as shown in the balance below:

“Yang paling utama, sabar. Dan saya selalu menanyakan Kembali bagian mana yang tidak dipahami oleh murid dari materi yang telah saya disampaikan. Lalu, saya akan memberikan penjelasan yang lebih detail agar murid dapat memahinya”. (PT 1)

“Most importantly, patience. And I always ask the students again which part of the material I have delivered they do not understand. Then, I will give a more detailed explanation so students can understand it.” (PT 1)

(Vignette 04)

“...saya akan mengarahkan ke spesifikasi topik. Saya akan mencari trending topic agar murid lebih tertarik, dan meminta siswa untuk berbicara dalam Bahasa Inggris menggunakan materi yang sudah dipelajari sebelumnya agar siswa paham terlebih dahulu, setelah itu baru saya meminta mereka untuk praktek.” (PT 1)

“...I will direct them to the topic specification. I will look for trending topics so that students are more interested, and ask students to speak in English using previously learned material so that students understand first, and then I ask them to practice.” (PT 1)

(Vignette 05)

“Ketika saya mengalami kecemasan berbicara Bahasa Inggris, guru selalu siap membantu saya. Bahkan guru saya tidak pernah memaksa jika muridnya tidak cukup berani untuk berbicara Bahasa Inggris.” (PT 2)

“When I experienced anxiety about speaking English, my teacher was always ready to help me. In fact, my teacher never forced me if I was not brave enough to speak English.” (PT2)

(Vignette 06)

“...saya lebih termotivasi dan semangat. itu semua datang dari sikap guru saya yang sangat baik.” (PT 3)

“...I am more motivated and enthusiastic. It all comes from the attitude of my teacher, who is very kind.” (PT 3)

(Vignette 07)

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that the teacher's attitude toward students' speaking anxiety, seen from the affective aspect, also shows positive results. In the affective aspect, which leads to emotional feelings, the teacher seemed to be very emotionally supportive of the issues experienced by the students. Participant 1 had a very rational answer to the question asked by the researcher. Participant 2 also explained that the teacher's attitude towards students'

speaking anxiety is very positive from the affective (emotional) aspect. Additionally, participant 3 also stated that the attitude of teachers in this school is excellent, which triggers students' motivation to learn to speak. From the statement, case study research and applications: Design and methods to their students so that students do not feel pressured when learning to speak.

c. Behavioral component

Furthermore, the researcher can find out how the teachers' attitude towards the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety is from a behavioral aspect, as shown in the balance below:

"berikan topik yang menarik, biarkan myurid bekerja dalam kelompok, berikan mereka kata-kata yang membangun, dan melakukan ice breaking."(PT 1)

"Give interesting topics, let my students work in groups, give them constructive words, and do ice-breaking." (PT1)

(Vignette 08)

"Efektif banget, soalnya sudah tidak ada kendala sih Ketika belajar speaking dikelas." (PT5)

"It's very effective, because there are no obstacles when learning speaking in class." (PT5)

(Vignette 09)

Based on the findings above, participant 1, as a teacher has shown a positive attitude in the behavioural aspect towards students' speaking anxiety. Providing exciting topics, allowing students to learn in groups, giving words that motivate students, and always doing ice-breaking have shown a positive teacher attitude in the behavioral aspect. In addition, Participant 5 as a student also supports the answers given by the teacher as Participant 1 so that Participant 5 no longer feels any obstacles when learning to speak English. The data findings through observation supported by the instrument, namely the observation checklist, also contain the findings of the three aspects that indicate the teacher's attitude, as below.

Based on the observation checklist, it can be concluded that the teacher has a positive attitude toward students' speaking anxiety in the classroom. In the criteria of respectful and supportive behavior, it consists of two activities: treating students with respect and dignity and providing positive reinforcement and encouragement. In both activities, it is shown with a scale of 5 which means positive. In the observation conducted by the researcher, it was found that the teacher always treated students with respect and was never subjective. Therefore, students seemed to enjoy learning to speak in the classroom. In addition, the researcher also found that the teacher always gave positive reinforcement and encouragement when students experienced speaking anxiety in class.

The second observation criterion, positive attitude, and enthusiasm, contains two activities with a scale of 5: displays a positive attitude in the classroom and demonstrates enthusiasm for the subject matter. This proves that the teacher has a very positive attitude. The researcher found that the teacher consistently demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching so that students will be enthusiastic when learning to speak in class. Students no longer need to feel anxious when speaking English in class. Then, there is a finding on the teachers endorsing the students to be active in asking and answering questions on a scale of 4. This scale still supports teachers' positive attitudes toward students' speaking anxiety.

The third observation criterion, collaboration, and teamwork, contains two activities with a scale of 5: promotes student collaboration and teamwork and encourages student participation and group work. This also proves that teachers have a positive attitude because they want to help students with speaking anxiety by having them work in groups. As noted in the findings of the interviews above, students agreed that group work was beneficial for those with speaking anxiety in the classroom. During the observation, the researcher found teacher activities that asked students to participate in group work activities actively.

In addition, in the last observation criterion, responsiveness to student needs, which includes providing additional support or guidance when necessary, the researcher gave a scale of 4 to this activity. Although less than a scale of 5, this finding still supports a positive teacher attitude in the classroom. During the observation, the researcher found that the teacher did not meet all students' needs. However, this is due to the students who tend to be shy to ask for a lot of help from the teacher. So, they still find some difficulties in speaking English.

2. Things the Teacher does to help Students to Overcome Students' Speaking Anxiety.

At this stage, the researcher wants to discuss and answer the second research question, "What does a teacher do to help students to overcome speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms?". The researcher used interviews to obtain data. The data can be seen in the findings below.

"Berikan topik yang menarik, biarkan murid bekerja dalam kelompok, berikan mereka kata-kata yang membangun, dan melakukan ice breaking."(PT 1)

"Give interesting topics, let my students work in groups, give them constructive words, and do ice-breaking." (PT1)

(Vignette 10)

"Biasanya memberikan materi yang up to date." (PT 4)

"Usually provides up-to-date materials." (PT4)

(Vignette 11)

"kalau saya merasakan cemas dalam berbicara Bahasa Inggris, biasanya guru meminta saya untuk tenang, memberikan kata-kata yang membangun." (PT 05)

“If I feel anxious in speaking English, the teacher usually asks me to calm down, gives me constructive words, and gives me the opportunity to speak in English.”
(PT 5)

(Vignette 12)

Based on the interview answers of Participant 1 as a teacher, it has shown that there are many things teachers do to help students overcome their speaking anxiety. Thus, the interview answers from Participants 4 and 5 as students also support Participant 1's response that teachers always provide updated materials and give constructive words to students who have anxiety about speaking English in class. Based on all the participants' answers, it can be concluded that the ways teachers help students overcome their speaking anxiety are very diverse, including 1. Providing up-to-date materials. 2. Letting students work in groups. 3. Giving constructive words. 4. Doing ice-breaking.

Discussion

Based on the observations the researcher has done and the interviews that the researcher has analyzed, there is a positive attitude from the teacher toward students' speaking anxiety in the classrooms which is indicated by three components, cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Van den Berg et al. 2006).

1. Cognitive component

A cognitive component leads to a teacher's knowledge (Van den Berg 2006); teachers tend to show a positive attitude toward students' speaking anxiety. This aligns with Ikhsan & Dirham (2018), who concluded that teachers must be creative in choosing teaching strategies so students can easily understand the knowledge in class. Positive teacher attitudes in the cognitive component can also be seen from the findings showing that teachers are very professional in dealing with students with speaking anxiety. This aligns with Nepali, S. (2023), who concluded that strict teacher supervision also makes students more aware of their mistakes. Positive teacher attitudes in the cognitive aspect can also be seen from the breadth of the teacher's knowledge of the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety in classrooms. This can be interpreted that teachers with a lot of experience tend to have more insight into the problems experienced by students in the classroom. This aligns with Boer, D. et al. (2011), who concluded that factors affecting teachers' attitudes include experience.

2. Affective component

Teachers also show a positive attitude toward students' speaking anxiety in this component. The affective component leads to emotions and feelings (Van den Berg 2006). Teachers show positive emotions and feelings so that students who

experience speaking anxiety feel recognized and valued. This aligns with Oylum, A. (2004), who proved that teachers' attitudes towards their profession impact their execution, which suggests that positive and negative states of mind towards the job can influence execution in any work. Then, teachers continually provide a positive figure through their emotions and feelings to affect students' classroom performance. This aligns with Paul, E. et al. (2019), who explained that teachers' attitudes correlated positively with students' performance. Teachers' patience in dealing with students' speaking anxiety can also be concluded as a positive attitude in this component. Based on the result of interviews with students, the researcher also concluded that teachers always help them when they experience anxiety in speaking English and force their students.

3. Behavioral component

Positive teacher attitudes can also be seen from the third component, namely, the behavioral component. Van den Berg (2006) concluded that the behavioral component shows how our attitude affects a person's actions or behavior. Based on the result of observations, the teacher was very enthusiastic when delivering the material, making the students excited about learning English. The teacher also uses an approach that helps students with speaking anxiety. This aligns with Nepali, S. (2023), who concluded that teachers using a friendly approach to their students and interactive strategies can reduce students' speaking anxiety. Students also tend to have no longer anxiety problems in speaking English in class because a teacher's positive attitude impacts the students' actions. This aligns with Hemisevis & Hodzic (2011), who explained that attitude is considered a factor within each individual. Furthermore, this also aligns with Rahman (2011), who concluded that a humble teacher would be an added value as an educator in addition to gaining knowledge.

Based on the researcher's observations and the interviews that the researcher has analyzed, a teacher also performs several strategies to help students overcome their speaking anxiety. The strategies carried out by the teacher include providing interesting material to make students enthusiastic about learning and putting aside their anxiety about speaking English. Teachers also use ice-breaking and motivational words to help students overcome their speaking anxiety. This is supported by Sagiqa, G. F. (2022), who concluded that there are five teachers' strategies to overcome students' speaking anxiety in the context of EFL, such as (1) Ice Breaking; (2) Motivational Words; (3) English Practice; (4) Group Working; (5) Youtube Videos. Another strategy used by teachers is group work. Based on the observations, the teacher allows students to form learning groups because the teacher believes that students tend to be more courageous to speak English with their friends. This aligns with Zulfikar, Z. (2022) and Sagiqa, G. F. (2022), who explained that group work efficiently helps students reduce their speaking anxiety.

The answer to this study's first research question shows a positive teacher attitude toward students' speaking anxiety in classrooms. The results of this study are similar to previous research. The researcher answered the question through three components supported by Van den Berg (2006), which explains that attitudes can be assessed using the ABC model, namely; a. Affective, b. Behavioral, and c. Cognitive. In addition, for the second research question, the researcher found four strategies the teacher used to help students to overcome their speaking anxiety, including; a. providing interesting material, b. ice-breaking, c. motivational words, and d. group work. This study contains one result that is different from previous research, namely providing students with interesting material. Moreover, the results of this study show the same results as the two previous studies which are ice-breaking, motivational words, and group work written by Sagika. G. F (2020), and Zulfikar, Z. (2022).

CONCLUSION

English-speaking anxiety in the classroom has become a common issue for students. Teachers' attitude toward students' learning performance is one factor that influences students' speaking anxiety. The findings of the present study showed that teachers' attitude toward the phenomenon of students' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms is very positive. The results of this study have similarities with previous studies which discuss about the teachers are provide a positive attitude towards students' issues. This can be indicated through three components that have been discussed by previous research through the ABC model; a. affective, b. behavioral, and c. cognitive.

In addition, teachers use strategies to help students overcome their speaking anxiety: providing students with exciting materials, ice-breaking to make the classroom atmosphere more flexible, giving motivational words, and allowing students to work in groups. The results of this study show similarities to the results of previous studies which discuss the strategies used by teachers to help students using ice-breaking, motivational words, and group work. On the other hand, the results of this study also show a difference from previous studies, namely the teacher's strategy of providing students with exciting material. The results in this study also did not fulfill all the results of previous studies that used strategies with YouTube videos, selective error corrections, and English practice.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this paper, the author(s) reported no potential conflicts of interest.

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