



Strategies for Coping Anxiety by the Students in Conducting Oral Presentations

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to cope students' anxiety in conducting oral presentation in English for Interpersonal Communication course by applying strategies proposed by Kondo. The students taking part in the first semester in English of Interpersonal Communication course were chosen as the subject of this research. This research used descriptive qualitative method according to student's experiences. Interviews were performed to collect data. The results show that there are several students show speech anxiety in delivering their oral presentation. Some students have also done some strategies such as concentration, positive thinking, preparation, and relaxation. Besides, the students have several practices every day to cope their anxiety.

Key word: coping strategy, anxiety, oral presentation

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengatasi kecemasan siswa dalam melakukan presentasi dalam mata kuliah English for Interpersonal Communication dengan menerapkan strategi yang diusulkan oleh Kondo. Mahasiswa sebagai subjek penelitian ini adalah mereka yang mengikuti mata kuliah English for Interpersonal Communication di semester pertama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif sesuai pengalaman mahasiswa. Wawancara dilakukan untuk mengumpulkan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada beberapa siswa menunjukkan kecemasan bicara dalam menyampaikan presentasinya. Beberapa siswa juga telah melakukan beberapa strategi seperti konsentrasi, berpikir positif, persiapan, dan relaksasi. Selain itu, para siswa memiliki beberapa latihan setiap hari untuk mengatasi kecemasan mereka.

Kata kunci: strategi koping, kecemasan, presentasi lisan

Introduction

Oral presentations have become part and parcel of most courses offered in institution of higher learning. The importance of oral presentation has been recognized and emphasized widely and many undergraduates' programs require students to make oral presentations as a part of their coursework. Oral presentations have become part and parcel of most courses offered in institution of higher learning. The importance of oral presentation has been recognized and emphasized widely and many undergraduates' programs require students to make oral presentations as a part of their coursework.

Oral presentations are influenced by the speaking skills. It must be had by EFL learners to improve their speaking skill. In particular, there are two types of speaking skills they need to improve in university study. In many of the classes, especially

'seminars' and 'tutorials', the students are expected not only listen to the lecturer, but also to be active contribute to discussions that takes place in the class between lecturer and students. They may also be required to prepare and have an oral presentation by one, in pairs or in groups, on a particular topic and to give feedbacks as the participation in discussion. Thus, the essence of being presenters (speaking in front of others) will be totally achieved when the English learners do these two roles well. According to Katchen (1992) oral presentations are a useful outgoing activity which is widely chosen by EFL teachers to practice oral fluency and proficiency. It can also be a good way for students to improve their English skills, especially speaking skill. In addition, the purpose of having the students come to be in front of the class is to give some external motivations. Besides, doing an oral presentation provides a learning experience and teachers lifelong skills that will be beneficial to learners later in their careers if it is properly guided and organized well.

However, the students feel anxious in delivering their oral presentation because of several reasons, such as, lack of vocabulary, less confidence, or other reasons. However, learning how effective presentation is an essential skill to have in university. Brooks (2018) proposed that giving an effective oral presentation gives benefits to the students. One of the benefits is having the opportunity to present and to communicate with audiences naturally in English. It requires the students to have a good interaction. In addition, the students are able to share their opinion, knowledge, ideas and to enrich student's vocabularies while doing oral presentation. In fact, a communicative activity requires the students to finish the task, look for a complete information and express the idea or opinion about the topic. In fact, some students may get lose their confidence in fulfilling the core of a communicative activity. Finally, the goal of communicative approach used is less or even unachieved. Sometimes, some students feel anxious, nervous, or afraid when they deliver oral presentations. It makes them loose what things to say or speak up.

It has been stated by some experts or proposers that there are some considerable researches which states that essential skill needed to be countered by the students is the skill of presenting. (Motley, 2009) stated the key skill to learn for college students is communication skill. In other words, college students are necessary to have skill in delivering an effective oral presentation. It is because this skill is crucial in almost work place. This such skills are often required as the important thing in promotion. The academic study had in universities has led the students to have a good skill in debate. Thus, it can be a great consideration show that oral presentations are very important in developing and energizing English learner's skills.

Feeling nervous when speaking English in front of a crowd in English gives impacts to the students as the speakers, for example being anxious. Feeling anxious or anxiety is defined as a feature of the current state of research in education field (Woodrow, 2006). This proposition is similar to the statement of Indrianty (2018). She argues that students show several aspects related to the proficiency of their speaking skill. Kondo (1994) proposes some strategies keep students' emotional anxiety away in front of a crowd in English such as increasing confidence, adding vocabulary to help students learn how to deliver oral presentation well.

The problem faced by the students in term of coping anxiety becomes important and needs solutions in order the students are able to be confident in

delivering oral presentations. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) give a simply behavioural investigation to speech anxiety that “includes a quivering or tense voice, lack of volume, no fluencies, heavy breathing, lack of eye contact or extraneous eye movement, rigidity or tension, fidgeting or motionless arms and hands. Everyone can easily identify with sweaty palms, accelerated heart rate, ad memory loss.” Students standing in front of the class easily spot this. Maybe they feel like their knees are like Gumby's when they get up and give a speech in front of audiences, or worry if the next words uttered become a stupidest word. Kondo (1994) stated some strategies to decrease emotional anxiety. He conducted a study to develop 6 strategies to reduce anxiety when speaking. There are six strategies of how to overcome anxiety when doing oral presentations:

1. *Relaxation*

Being relaxed in before delivering oral presentations is aimed at relieving the physical stress of anxious speakers.

2. *Preparation*

This point asks the speaker must be well prepared in everything they need to do oral presentations. Such as planning, writing a note, training, etc. it is determined whether the speaker is confident or not in their performance.

3. *Positive thinking*

Here, the speaker focuses on creating positive thoughts. Staying positive in speaking doesn't mean keep hard situations away. In this case, thinking positively are creating the most prospective obstacles, trying to watch the best among others, and looking at yourself and your competency in positively.

4. *Audience depreciation*

One should not take into account the presence of a listener, who is responsible for the nasty connection.

5. *Concentration*

Preparation and concentration are both cognitive factors when working in public. At this stage, the speaker should focus fully on the goal and speak cautiously.

6. *Resignation*

Giving a farewell speech doesn't have to be appropriate in every situation and setting, so consider how your time at the company has seen people in a similar role leave the company. and the company's farewell tradition.

However, nervousness for every people is normal, especially feeling anxious. Some students can experience it more, or some can be less. A successful speaker means when she/he has discovered some ways to look for space from these feelings. They might have uncovered ways in order to cause them “work” for them. Besides, the students should have strategies to cope with their foreign language anxiety to oral presentations effectively. That is why this research is important to do to identify the student's anxiety and the solutions to cope the anxiety.

METHODS

This research applies descriptive qualitative method. It is descriptively referring to a case study of student's view. Maxwell and Joseph (1996) argues that case studies are included in qualitative research. This is aimed at studying a person or people as a

portrait to build or to explain a certain case to make beneficial generalizations. This study is classified into qualitative research since there are some steps must be done like describing, analysing and interpreting data. The data are the scripts from first semester students in English for Interpersonal Communication course of English Literature Department, Faculty of Business and Language, Unipdu Jombang. Qualifications of the person concerned based on the student's ability (high speaking ability, average speaking ability and poor speaking skills). Hence, this study is focused on the students' perception of coping strategies for anxiety.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

After analysing the data by using the theory of (Kondo, 1994) there are four coping strategies to reduce the anxiety found. These strategies are applied by the students to cope their anxiety in doing oral presentation. The strategies applied are relaxation, preparation, positive thinking, and concentration. Each strategy was chosen by the students with the reasons on their perspectives. Based on the student's perspective, the detailed findings are below:

Relaxation

After analysis, it is found that some strategies coping with speech anxiety have been applied by some students. It is based on their opinions and experiences in performing oral presentations in English of Interpersonal Communication doing oral presentations to minimize their speech anxiety.

Student 1:

“Bismillah, saya harus ambil nafas dulu sebelum presentasi”.

“Bismillah, I have to take breath first before presentation”.

This script indicates that the student 1 used relaxation strategy to reduce their speech anxiety. for her, it is very important to feel relaxed in performing oral presentation because relaxation can make her feel calm or laid back during presentation.

Students 4:

“Saya harus menggosokkan kedua telapak tangan dulu supaya tidak keringetan dan terlihat gemetar.”

“I have to rub my palms first to lose the sweat on them and looks shaky.”

The student's statement above shows that he/ she choose relaxation strategy to lose his/ her speech anxiety. It is as a potential strategy chosen because it is an effective way to be ready and confident in performing oral presentations.

Preparation

The next finding of coping strategies is preparation. There are two students who chose preparation strategy in performing an oral presentation to cope anxiety. Being well

prepared before presentation was believed to reduce anxiety. it means that by being well prepared, as the speaker, they master all the thing presented well.

Student 6:

“Saya selalu menyiapkan materi dengan baik. Selain itu saya juga berlatih beberapa kali di depan cermin agar waktu presentasi, saya tidak gugup.”

“I always prepare the material well. Besides, I also practiced several times in front of the mirror to make sure that I will not feel anxious while presenting the material”.

Student 2:

“Sebelum presentasi, saya biasanya mencoba mempraktekkan presentasi saya di depan teman saya. Setelah itu, teman saya bias memberikan masukan untuk saya”.

“Before presentation, I usually try to present my material in front of my friends as the speaker. Then my friends will give some suggestions for me”.

From the result above, it is clearly to be seen that 2 students feel that having a good preparation is beneficial to cope speech anxiety to oral presentations. It is quite better to prepare thoroughly before performing presentation rather than to deliver the material without preparation. Preparing a good performance includes preparing well in front of an audiences, practicing your mouth in front of a mirror, or preparing materials for presentation.

Positive Thinking

After analysis, it is found that three of six students show positive thinking strategy of before giving a presentation. Positive thinking before giving a presentation has been shown to be one of the strategies to help with speaking anxiety. one of the example is shown below:

Student 3:

“Setiap akan presentasi, saya berusaha untuk positive thinking agar saya tidak gugup dalam menyampaikan materi. Dengan berpikir positif, saya lebih fokus dalam menyampaikan materi saya”.

“Once I will do my presentation, I try to always have positive thinking to reduce my anxiety in delivering my presentation. By having positive thinking, I will focus more in performing my presentation”.

Students explain that one should think positively before performing in public in English. Furthermore, concentration is also an important factor to support good English-speaking ability.

Student 5:

“Saya yakin teman- teman yang akan memberikan respon adalah yang mendukung materi saya, bukan mempertanyakannya.”

“I am sure the audiences who are giving feedback to me are supporting my presentation, not questioning it”

In this case, the result above indicates one of the student has positive thinking before delivering presentation in public in English. He/ She has assumptions in his/ her mind that the presentation is good, interesting and well easy understood. Thus, when some questions or comments come to him/ her, it will just to make the presentation better.

Concentration

Another coping strategy of speech anxiety in oral presentation appeared and applied by the students is concentration. This strategy is used by a student in English for Interpersonal Communication course. From his script indicates that he believes that a strong concentration strategy is effective way in conducting oral presentation.

Student 2:

“Menurut saya yang paling penting dalam presentasi adalah konsentrasi”.

“In my opinion, concentration is the most important thing in conducting oral presentations”.

This utterance in the script shows that focus or concentration has an important role. It means that when a student has a strong concentration to the material and to his presentation, they master the performance well.

Students 3:

“Saat presentasi, yang paling penting adalah fokus pada materi, bukan memikirkan hal lain diluar materi kita.”

“During presentation, the most important thing is focus on the material of presentation.”

The statement above is categorized into concentration strategy chosen by the students to cope speech anxiety. Once the speaker focus on the material of presentation, it means that the student has a full attention on his/her presentation. As the result, he/ she will feel easy to respond any feedback given by the audiences.

Discussion

Oral presentations are activities required to do by the students for almost courses at college to develop communicative competencies. It provides an experience of learning process to build proficiency and fluency in speaking. In addition, it will be very beneficial for students' future in their profession later. There are many causes of feeling anxiety. It is commonly found on the student's oral presentation. Some learners feel anxious in her/ his oral presentation as various causes. It can probably he/ she does his/ her first oral presentation. Speech anxiety can be a complex problem since it involves the speaker feeling, self-perception, beliefs during doing oral presentation. There are other ways to refer to it: anxiety, stage scary, affright of public speaking, or performance worries. This condition is commonly occurred in performing oral

presentation. Related to this, the delivery oral presentations should be done very well to create a good experience for students. The activity is expected not to be a source or cause of frightened anxiety.

After analysing the data, it is found that all four strategies proposed by Kondo (1994) are used by the students to cope speech anxiety in conducting oral presentations. Some students chose relaxation, is the best strategy to cope anxiety. Other students assumed that preparation or being well prepared will make the presentation runs well. Meanwhile, some students stated that having positive thinking in mind is the key of the successful presentation delivered. It means as a presenter, we should believe on ourselves, on the material, and in audiences. As the last strategy used, concentration is the big thing to be considered according some students to make the presentation successful.

Speech anxiety for English learners is assumed as the most influential aspect affecting their overall oral performance. Anxiety is clearly defined as an idea in learning language. It has a weakening effect on performing oral presentation for students. It is a normal problem happened. Although we may see English learners perform presentations that we reflect are faultless, they may report experience 'butterflies' in the abdomen and knees shaking during their speech because they are apprehensive. Many of them may feel nervous about their way of speaking (delivering their oral presentations), worrying they may shutter or forget their words.

According to Kondo (1994), there are some useful strategy to cope student's anxiety of oral presentation. Here are the discussion of some strategies used by the students in English for Interpersonal Communication course. They are relaxation, positive thinking, concentration, and preparation,

Relaxation

After doing analysis, the result shows that the students realized that relaxation is a strategy chosen by the student to reduce anxiety in performing oral presentations. It means, relaxation becomes a strategy to improve student's speaking skill. This strategy encompasses a way of increasing calm feeling and reducing stress or oppressions.

Dealing with nervousness in delivering an oral presentation, relax and self-encouragement are the best way. These help to remind students (presenter) remind herself/ himself that audiences are impressed to what you say. Therefore, when it goes blank, feeling relaxed and calm, just go on the presentation as like nobody notice it.

Students believed that a useful strategy to minimize speech anxiety when doing oral presentation is relaxation. In other words, relaxation is considered as a strategy to cope anxiety. Relaxation techniques include a range of strategies to increase calm feelings and decreasing stress feeling.

Based on the student's statement, Relaxation techniques won't cure our anxiety, but they do provide many of the tools needed to get rid of anxiety in a good way. First, they allow you to relieve your symptoms. Second, they can be used to help us calm down before activities or events. Later, it can reduce future mistakes and ultimately reduce future stress. Relaxation can cope speech anxiety and stress, relaxes muscles, relieves pain, and can improve your sense of hope. In other words, it's something that can be accomplished at any time and gives you the relief you need.

Preparation

Strategies to prepare students for public speaking anxiety were discovered by (Hamlyn et al., 2015) in one student. According to his theory and based on the opinions of some students, having a preparation before presenting can increase the competency of oral presentations. This strategy is applied because it can enhance students' English proficiency and fluency. If they are adequately prepared before presentation. This strategy makes the students as well prepared speakers to ensure you give an effective oral presentation. It includes organizing the speech material, practicing and rehearsing, and becoming familiar with the stage.

Positive Thinking

Some students believed that positive thinking is a proper strategy chosen to reduce speech anxiety in oral presentations. positive thinking is a strategy. Having positive thinking greatly affects mind concentration level. In addition, positive thinking is very useful to help students in reducing speech anxiety when conducting oral presentations. Repeat that statement to yourself and think about it for a minute. If you "believe you can," you look at something with optimism, whatever it may be at the time, and just say "you can," you will make the "impossible" possible power. However, if you "believe you can't", then unfortunately, you are simply closing the door on the possibility that it is possible. Reacting honestly, in a positive way is not only empowering, but liberating. This might be frustrating for some of you at first, but it will be easier and more pleasant later. Positive thinking is reinforced by positive talk. In addition, when some audiences gave question after presentation, we have to keep in our mind that they are not investigating us except they are interested in our presentation's material.

Concentration

Based on the analysis result, some students indicate that concentration strategy is the main thing that should be focused more in oral presentations. It is a proposition by (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017) in a case study of speaking skill. Such a strategy might conclude that in order to learn a new language, students must be able to concentrate.

Sometimes, the way a person present is the way your audiences will feel. Conducting oral presentations is like being an actor. It means that if a student doing the presentation feel enjoy, he/she will feel confident and relaxed. He/ she will not only have a good communication. Besides, he/ she is able to transfer the positive feeling to audiences. Showing our interest in certain topic will be delivered can influence the audience's vibe.

Anxious students are miserable from mental anguishing performing oral presentation. It includes, activity of speaking spontaneously, speaking with lack of confidence, having less ability to self-repair and look for language errors and are more likely to have avoidances strategies like skipping class (Tammy S. Gregersen, 2008). Anxious learners sometimes did not remember the previous material learned. They sometime are also less frequently. It means that and have a greater parameter to reduce students' passiveness. A higher step of language anxiety may concern with communication anxiety. It causes the student to be more confidence individuals to be more passive or less willing to have communicate.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of analysis, it can be concluded that problem statement of this study is solved. Students' anxiety in delivering oral presentation in English for Interpersonal Communication course have been copped by applying some strategies. Oral presentations conducted in this course become a frightening activity done by the students. Giving an oral presentation requires the students to arrange their presentation to deliver, to manage their anxiety, to present confidently, to use the visual aid of presentation, and finally to give feedbacks to the responds (questions and suggestions effectively, their talk, manage anxiety and present confidently. Speech anxiety is commonly occurred during oral presentation among English students when performing oral presentation nowadays. The results uncover coping strategies to reduce students' anxiety. The strategies applied are **preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, and concentration**. Some students chose preparation as the best strategy to cope speech anxiety since being well prepared will make them confident. Meanwhile, some students stated that positive thinking is an effective way to reduce speech anxiety. the assumed that by having a positive thinking when conducting presentation is necessary. When audiences ask them the questions, they believe in their mind if the audiences are interested in their presentation's material, not to investigate them. Next, relaxation and concentration are properly strategy to loose speech anxiety. it can be done by taking a breath before start performing presentation. This is consistent with the proposition used as the theory it is concluded four categories to deal with strategies to cope students' anxiety in oral presentation. in English, i.e. relaxed, prepared, positive reflection and concentration which are able to reduce students' anxiety in oral presentations.

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