FEAR FACTOR: EXPLORING STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN THE ENGLISH FRIDAY PROGRAM

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Abstract:

Exploring students' English language in the English Friday program is important for students' capability, especially in enhancing their vocabulary and their speaking. To decrease the students' anxiety, this study explores students' experiences and perceptions of English language anxiety within the "English Friday" program, utilizing a descriptive qualitative methodology with open-ended questions by using a case study approach. The research includes respondents from grades 7, 8, and 9, chosen based on their varying lengths of involvement in the program. Findings reveal that while many students appreciate the program and feel it enhances their English proficiency, anxiety remains a significant challenge. Students across all grades experience anxiety when speaking English, despite the program's benefits in providing consistent practice and fostering a supportive environment. The study underscores the need for more structured approaches to reduce anxiety, suggesting that building students' confidence through regular practice and a non-judgmental setting can be beneficial. These insights are crucial for developing more effective strategies to help students overcome English language anxiety and improve their speaking skills.

Keywords: *English Friday Program, English Language Anxiety, Speaking*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this rapidly developing world, mastery of English is not only a skill for each individual, but mastery of English has become a place of competition between countries or even parts of the world. There are four skills in English that at least the learners know how to implement those skills are; Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. And speaking is one of the abilities in which pupils struggle greatly. With English, every human being will easily convey something to another country. In Indonesia, English is a language that is required to be learned by anyone and knows no age as a door for better educational and career opportunities. Eri Cahyadi, the mayor of Surabaya, stated that all of the Junior High School must do the English Friday. English Friday is where the students must speak English every Friday in school. This program was developed to the students' advantage and also the teacher who doesn't really know English. So, all of the students, teachers, or even staff can speak English without having formal study. In SMPN 35 Surabaya English Friday Program has been ongoing since 2023 when Eri Cahyadi just stated the program. This program focuses on one of the essential English language skills, namely "speaking proficiency". It is hoped that this program will help students increase their confidence when speaking in English, both formally and informally. The government and the teachers hope this program will improve students' speaking ability. Students are expected to improve their speaking skills in addition to being more critical and creative in communicating. This program is expected to be one of the important efforts to build a generation that is better prepared to compete in the global arena where mastery of the English language is essential. For now, English Program is crucial for everyone, especially for students in Junior High School so that they can improve and explore their new vocabulary through this program.

One of the main ways by which we communicate messages, news, or information to others is through communication. Speaking performance is crucial to this process because it grows effective and efficient communication. To make sure that the recipients can understand the message clearly and accurately, it is vital to improve the aspects of speaking performance, such as articulation, intonation, gesture, and eye contact. Therefore, developing effective speaking skills can help in improving our ability to communicate, forge stronger bonds with others, and accomplish our communication objectives. According to Bozoglan and Yılmaz (2008) in research, to improve learners' speaking abilities. It may be separated into two primary components. First, grammatical rules, pronunciation, vocabulary, and other knowledge-related variables. Second, communication tactics, discourse structuring, and interaction management are all influenced by cognitive variables. Speaking is therefore a difficult talent to perfect, encouraging others who have suggested that research has also provided important insights into the intricacy of spoken interactions (Taqwa, 2022, p. 1). The teaching and getting of English as a foreign language presents challenges. English requires the development of several abilities in Indonesian. Writing, speaking, listening, and reading are the abilities involved in learning English. Each learner of English has to become effective in these areas. Speaking is a skill that students could struggle with (Putri et al., 2020, p. 36), and English learners often face speaking problems. According to Lai-Mei Leong and Seyedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi (2017, p. 35), many students say that they have spent years learning English, but they cannot speak correctly or understand others (Putri et al., 2020, p. 36). As an EFL, we understand that we have a lack of good pronouncing in English and in structuring grammar, so that we can speak without any correct pronunciation and correct structuring grammar, the important thing is they are able to be confident and brave about their pronunciation and their structuring grammar. Many students are actually afraid of making mistakes in their speaking, and from that their never do their practice, then from those the anxiety the anxiety is coming from.

Spielberger (2010, p. 96) stated that trait anxiety is thought of as a relatively stable personality trait, while state anxiety is seen as a reaction to a specific stimulus that causes anxiety, such as an important test (Cassady, 2010). This theory introduces the concept of state and trait, both of which have different levels of anxiety, so that the dimensions of trait anxiety and state anxiety can be identified and measured. Trait anxiety is when a person experiences anxiety that appears in various situations, while state anxiety is where a person is experiencing anxiety in certain situations such as exams or just going to speak in public, generally this state anxiety appears before doing something, but when it is in the situation, the state anxiety will fade by itself. This state of anxiety is fluctuating and dynamic which means it can change with changes in the context or situation at hand. According to Aida et al. (2001) in the article entitled "Language Anxiety and Achievement" Studies on language anxiety consistently show that concern can negatively affect the ability to communicate in L2 (Horwitz, 2001, p. 117). Many people have their own anxiety according to their personality, but they actually can decrease their anxiety over the time by doing the activities that make them

anxious frequently for instance, there is a student who has anxiety about his/her speaking abilities in front of the whole class when the teacher wants she/her to come forward even though for saying something, doing a presentation, or reading a book, then the teacher wants she/her do it again and again and it makes student feels better to decrease their anxiety level. So, by doing that activity it hopes that the anxiety will fade away by its selves. Furthermore, studies have indicated that using specific coping mechanisms might help manage and lessen anxiety. It has been demonstrated that methods including deep breathing, visualization, and relaxation exercises may effectively reduce both state and trait anxiety. For instance, students who experience anxiety when speaking in front of an audience might control their stress reaction by practicing relaxation techniques both before and during the event. Another effective technique is visualization, in which the person sees themselves finishing the work effectively and anxiety-free. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that increasing self-confidence by practice and preparation lowers state anxiety in circumstances like public speaking or tests. People who learn healthy coping strategies are able to handle stressful situations with resilience and control, which eventually improves performance and reduces anxiety. Additionally, it's critical for both individuals and educators to understand the differences between trait and state anxiety. When it comes to helping pupils deal with language anxiety, teachers in particular may be quite helpful. They may help students overcome fears by creating a safe, encouraging environment, offering helpful criticism, and progressively raising the bar for speaking assignments. By emphasizing positive reinforcement and introducing anxiety-inducing tasks gradually, one may greatly reduce both state and

The author suggests that an organized strategy to reduce students' fear be incorporated into the English Friday program as a solution to this problem. Students' confidence might be progressively increased by, for example, enforcing them to acquire and commit to memory at least three new vocabulary terms every Friday. Further assisting in the reduction of anxiety may include providing a safe, encouraging, and judgment-free setting in which kids may practice speaking without worrying about making errors. The program can become more successful in improving students' English-speaking talents and lowering their anxiety related to speaking a foreign language by offering constant practice and positive reinforcement. Students' performance levels varies because they struggle much when speaking. Their understanding varies, as do the ways in which they take in and interpret information. They also range in their personality features (Kurniasy & Susan, 2019, p. 26). Therefore, we cannot impose what they cannot, just a desire to learn is good. The nature of speaking anxiety is reflected in students' speaking ability, and the purpose of this study is to identify students' level of awareness of their speaking anxiety. By increasing this awareness, students can find ways to overcome and improve their speaking ability (Suadnyana & Nova, 2021, p. 2). Peer group activities might be included as a way to further improve the English Friday program's efficacy. Students' anxiety of speaking in front of bigger groups may be lessened and a more relaxed setting for interaction may result by encouraging them to practice in pairs or small groups. Learning may also be

made more fun and less intimidating by introducing games, role-playing, or other interactive exercises that put students in authentic situations. Students may be able to engage actively if the activity is enjoyable and cooperative, which over time may result in better speaking abilities and less nervousness. Additionally, students may have a better understanding of their strengths and areas for development by participating in frequent feedback sessions where they can share their difficulties, reflect on their progress, and get helpful criticism from professors. Their self-confidence may be increased and the fear they feel while speaking English can be progressively reduced with this continuous coaching and feedback.

The purpose of this research is to talk about how students may get over their fear of speaking English, especially in relation to the English Friday program. As part of this project, students are encouraged to practice speaking English every Friday. The author decided to research this subject after seeing that there were very few students speaking English during the English Friday in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. The only times that English was really spoken were when instructors were communicating with the central education authority. The author started doubting the success of the English Friday program as a result of this observation. After more research, it was shown that a large number of students struggle with extreme anxiety while trying to talk in English, whether it be when formulating phrases or even just saying words. Students were supportive of the school's attempt to include English practice in their daily routines and reported a great desire to improve their English despite their nervousness. Lack of peers to practice with restricts students' chances to get better at speaking, which is one of the primary causes of their anxiety. Their low vocabulary is another important problem. Because teachers do not regularly introduce new terms in class, whether in everyday sessions or even in English subject-specific classes, the majority of pupils struggle with vocabulary. Students' inability to communicate clearly and confidently is hampered by this lack of vocabulary education, which also makes them more nervous while speaking in English. By addressing these problems such offering more organized vocabulary training and establishing peer-supported speaking opportunities programs like English Friday may become more successful overall and help students feel less anxious.

Based on the statements above, we can arrange two questions below:
1. What are the factors that influence students' English language anxiety during the English Friday Program?
2. How do the students get over their fear of speaking English in the English Friday Program?

2. METHOD

Qualitative data collection is more than just deciding whether you will observe or interview people; you also need to identify your participants and location, gain access, determine the type of data to be collected, create data collection forms, and conduct the process in an ethical manner (Creswell, 2013a, p. 204).

This study used a descriptive qualitative methodology with a case study approach because the researcher wants to have in-depth research. The method's suitability for enabling a thorough comprehension of intricate phenomena, such as anxiety related to

the English language, was determined by the respondents' firsthand accounts. By using this strategy, the researcher allows students to freely and in-depth share their experiences while also capturing context and subtleties that may be missed using quantitative methodologies. The research was collected using interviews to investigate the experiences and explore the anxiety of English language learners within the framework of the English language learning framework of the "English Friday" program. Observation was engaged in this research, this study seeks to investigate in-depth how students perceive and respond to their fear in English-speaking circumstances, as well as how their experiences vary depending on the degree of engagement in the "English Friday" program.

When researching something, often when authors use qualitative methods they collect data through observation in a particular school environment. Undoubtedly, observation is the most common method of data collection, and researchers can play a variety of roles during the process (Spradley, 2016) . The process of collecting information directly and openly through observing individuals and places at the research site is known as observation. There are advantages and disadvantages to observation as a data collection method. Advantages include the opportunity to record events happening in the background, study actual behavior, and study people who have difficulty conveying ideas (such as preschoolers). One of the disadvantages of observation is that you will be limited to places and situations where you can gain access, and you may have difficulty building relationships with people in those places. This can happen when one is unfamiliar with formal research; this can happen in environments outside of universities(Creswell, 2013b, p. 266). There are some types of gathering the observations' data, such as; (1) Conducting an observation as a participant; (2) Conducting an observation as an observer; (3) Spending more time as a participant than observer;(4) Spending more time as an observer than a participant; (5) First observing as an "outsider," then participating in the setting and observing as an "insider" (Creswell et al., 2007). In this situations, the researcher will gather the data by the second point (Conducting an observation as an observer) and of course equipped with the use of fieldnotes and drawings, and the researcher will collect the data by using unstructured text data and pictures taken during observations (Creswell, 2013b) by the researcher during the MBKM program at SMPN 35 Surabaya, especially in English Friday Program.

Qualitative research has advantages and disadvantages. Some of the advantages of interviews are that they allow participants to explain their personal details and provide useful information when you cannot see the participants in person. Interviewers also have more control over the type of information they receive compared to observers because they can ask specific questions to get that information. One drawback of interviews is that they only provide information that is "filtered" from the interviewer's perspective; in other words, the participant's perspective is incorporated into the researcher's research report. Interview data can also be deceptive and provide the perspective that the interviewee wants the researcher to hear, as happens with observation. Another disadvantage is that the presence of the researcher may influence the interviewee's responses. Also, the interviewee's responses may be vague, unperceptive, or unclear. Also, equipment issues can be a problem; if you use it, you

should set up the device for recording and transcribing before the interview. (Creswell, 2013b)

This research will be conducted through interview and conducted by semi-instructured interview. This is done so that the researcher knows more details related to what they are worried about when entering the "English Friday" program and their anxiety when speaking English even with friends and the public. To help students overcome their nervousness in speaking English and increase their confidence when speaking, it is hoped that this research will provide in-depth information and can motivate them to be more confident and learn more about English. Each representative of each batch conducted interviews one by one, which were used to collect data. The purpose of these interviews was to investigate different aspects of the students' experiences. Three randomly selected respondents from each junior high school class-grade 7, 8, and 9-participated in the study. The researcher hopes that by using this method, the researcher can deeply explore what they feel and what they want for themselves.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This study sheds light on the experiences and perceptions of anxiousness among students participating in the "English Friday" program when speaking English. The results show the program's beneficial effects as well as the continuing difficulties that students encounter. There are some benefits of the English Friday that cause many students noted how much the English Friday program helped them enhance their language proficiency and displayed passion for learning the language. Students in grade 9, who had been involved in the program for three years, benefited most from the regular practice since it made them feel less nervous and improved their speaking skills. Based on the varying lengths of involvement in the "English Friday" program, the following sample was chosen:

1. Students in grade 9: Respondents from this grade have taken part in "English Friday" for a complete three years. Their experiences will provide light on how the program has affected them in the long run and how their fear in English has evolved.
2. Students in Grade 8: Participants in the program for two years were respondents in Grade 8. Their experiences will aid in the understanding of the program's impacts following the intermediate phase and the ways in which their varying participation durations impacted their anxiety levels.
3. Students in Grade 7: Participants in grade 7 have only been enrolled in the program for a single year. Understanding the early difficulties and reactions to the "English Friday" program, as well as how their anxiety levels relate to those of students who have been involved for a longer period of time, depends heavily on their experience.

The survey participants exhibited a range of perspectives and encounters about English language proficiency and the "English Friday" initiative. A few respondents said how much they liked English and how excited they were to study and use it. This illustrates their innate desire to get better at speaking English. Furthermore, a few participants mentioned that the English Friday initiative really aided in the improvement of their English language proficiency, offering chances for consistent practice and fostering an inclusive educational setting. Nevertheless, several

respondents acknowledged experiencing worry when asked to speak in English, indicating that students may still experience anxiety in spite of the training.

The results of the respondents' varied experiences and perspectives show how difficult it is to help pupils who are anxious about their use of the English language. One of three students are do not really like in English, so during interview session they have not interest at all. But two of them are really interest in English because they realize that English is the most crucial language in nowadays. They like being corrected if they made mistakes and they hope that the teachers can bring them into specific English learning especially in giving vocabulary.

Speaking in English can still be difficult and cause anxiety for some people, even while others find the "English Friday" program to be encouraging and helpful. However, it's critical to recognize that the program has had some success, particularly in offering organized and encouraging practice opportunities. The alterations seen by certain participants also validated the significance of persisting in motivating and aiding learners as they progress in their acquisition of English language proficiency. Therefore, the study's findings lay the groundwork for the creation of more potent techniques to deal with students' anxiety related to the English language in the hopes of boosting their self-assurance and proficiency in the language.

Many students are afraid to make mistakes when speaking English for fear of being ridiculed or evaluated by others. They often step back during discussions or in-class exercises as a result of this nervousness, which reduces their opportunity to practice and get better. They missed out on important opportunities that might boost their confidence and linguistic proficiency if they stay silent. Overcoming the fear of making mistakes is necessary for improvement since it enables pupils to grow and learn from their failures. When students accept that making errors is a necessary part of learning, they start to take more chances and, over time, their confidence and speaking abilities grow dramatically. Even though learning English is difficult or probably cannot perfectly correct in speaking, analyzing the grammar, pronunciation, and listening. This statement is quiet relate to the theory of Bozoglan and Yılmaz (2008), they stated that to improve learners' speaking abilities. It may be separated into two primary components. First, grammatical rules, pronunciation, vocabulary, and other knowledge-related variables. Second, communication tactics, discourse structuring, and interaction management are all influenced by cognitive variables. Speaking is therefore a difficult talent to perfect, encouraging others who have suggested that research has also provided important insights into the intricacy of spoken interactions (Taqwa, 2022, p. 1). As students some people think that it's normal for the students because they still in learning process and the school is not like an international school that make them more fluent in speaking. This thing is relevant to the theory of Lai-Mei Leong and Seyedeh Masoumeh Ahmadi (2017, p. 35) that talk about students can have spent years learning English, but they cannot speak correctly or understand others.(Putri et al., 2020)

When speaking in English, many students lack confidence because they are anxious about their skills and fear judgment from others. This nervousness sometimes causes people to avoid engaging in conversations or speaking up in class, which limits their chances to practice. This statement is related to the theory of Spielberger (2010, p. 96) which stated that trait anxiety is thought of as a relatively stable personality trait, while state anxiety is seen as a reaction to a specific stimulus that causes anxiety, such as an important test. (Horwitz, 2001) So, they need more practice to get trait anxiety in their personality so that they can have state anxiety rather than trait anxiety in their speaking anxiety through practice consistently. Their linguistic abilities therefore do not advance as quickly as they may. Increasing self-assurance is crucial for development

since it motivates pupils to take chances and use the language more actively. With continued practice and motivation, their confidence increases with time, allowing them to speak English more fluently and comfortably. According to Aida et al.(2001) Studies on language anxiety consistently show that concern can negatively affect the ability to communicate in L2 (Horwitz, 2001). So, students must do their practice to decrease their anxiety.

For many students, not having partners with whom to practice English might be a major obstacle. Without consistent discussion partners, people lose out on chances to improve their public speaking abilities and boost their confidence. In addition, the feeling of being alone can add to the difficulty and discouragement of language acquisition. Students can practice with friends or a supportive group and become more proficient in casual conversation. They feel less nervous about making errors and more driven when they have someone to practice with. If the teacher pushes students to study and use English on a daily basis, they will be able to speak it more fluently. They are encouraged to push themselves into their comfort zones and practice more often in a setting that is both encouraging and challenging. Students who interact with the language on a regular basis gain confidence and get more used to its usage. Actively encouraging pupils to speak English develops accountability and improves motivation. Their general language ability and speaking abilities improve noticeably as a result of this ongoing support over time.

To improve language acquisition, they advise implementing the "one day, one vocabulary" strategy. By encouraging children to focus on learning one new word per day, this method helps to make the process easier and less stressful. Without feeling forced, kids can progressively increase their vocabulary by continuously memorizing one word. Because students may take their time to comprehend the definition, application, and context of each term, this strategy also promotes improved recall. This regular commitment eventually results in a more extensive vocabulary and more self-assurance when speaking English.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that English speaking anxiety among students attending the "Friday English" program is complicated. Although the program helps students improve their language proficiency and provides opportunities for regular practice, most students experience anxiety when speaking English. This fear persists at all levels of involvement in the program, from those just starting to those who have participated for three years. The diverse experiences of the students indicate the need for a more organized approach to reducing this anxiety. Over time, building students' confidence can be aided by methods such as memorizing new vocabulary every Friday and creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment. This research shows that students who thrive and appreciate this program have difficulties, but others are still able to thrive.

Overall, this study shows that the "English Friday" program has potential but requires changes to address students' emotional challenges more effectively. The program can help students improve their confidence and English speaking proficiency by incorporating techniques to reduce anxiety and create a more supportive atmosphere. These insights are crucial for developing more efficient approaches to help students overcome fears and improve their English speaking.

As a writer who has provided recommendations on the questionnaire given to students in the form of the question "Do you agree if every Friday is required to memorize at least three vocabulary?" and 3 of them said they agreed. The author's suggestion is, teachers should pay more attention to this program if indeed this program still wants to be continued, so that students also feel that they have made progress while studying at SMPN 35.

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