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## Presenting in International Conference: An Interview Study on the Students' Public Speaking Anxiety

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### Abstrak

This study aims to find out about the experiences of English students who have attended an International conference and how they can control their anxiety when they are going to present at an International conference. The research approach used is qualitative. This research took place at one of the universities in Banjarmasin. This research involved students and alumni majoring in English education to find out their experiences who have presented at the International Conference. This study uses an interview instrument to find out more about the data to be collected from all participants. The results of the interview confirmed that all participants were invited by the lecturer and asked to present papers that had been written into an article. All participants brought different topics according to the lecturer who invited them. There were several participants who attended the International Conference online, and some were offline during presentations at the International Conference. There were several participants felt very anxious, just worried, and there were even participants who said they were not worried. The results of interviews showed that they controlled anxiety before the presentation by practicing continuously, reading a lot of literature, being prepared, reading key points, and believing in themselves.

**Kata Kunci:** Public Speaking, International Conference, Public Speaking Anxiety

### Introduction

Public speaking is part of the art of delivering speeches in public and the art of effective oral communication by involving listeners. Public speaking

needs to be drilled so you don't get nervous (Huda, 2021). Speaking can be trained from an early age to be confident when speaking in public (Sabardila, et



al., 2020). In addition, public speaking is very useful in the world of work. Anyone must own Public Speaking to support or as a provision for success in the economic, social, political, even cultural and educational fields (Darmaliana et al., 2021). Therefore, the ability of public speaking supports success in the world of work.

Public speaking using English is more difficult than public speaking using Indonesian. Considering that English is a universal language used in a job or profession in Indonesia (Adnan et al., 2021). Therefore, in tertiary institutions, students are expected to be able to do public speaking in English, especially for students majoring in English education. To improve public speaking skills in English, students can be trained in both in-class presentations and participating in international calls for papers (Guntur et al., 2023). However, students who want to speak publicly at the International Conference experience anxiety, worry, and fear of dealing directly with an audience. According to Fauzi et al. (2021) who said that students often experience anxiety or nervousness when delivering a result in public using English. Thus, the feeling of anxiety will also be very influential in the presentation process in public, both offline and online.

Anxiety that comes suddenly can make students unable to do public speaking that has been prepared beforehand. In general, a person experiences anxiety about failing to

convey a message, so the anxiety that arises can affect the ongoing communication process (Siregar, 2022). They even emphasized that public speaking anxiety can cause physiological changes; shaking, sweating, increased heart rate, and psychological; panic, tension, confusion, unable to concentrate, uneasiness, and stutters in communication.

Mastering English is really important nowadays, not only for adults but also for young students (Kusumaningrum, et al., 2020). English is an international language that is widely used by people all over the world (Wulansari et al., 2023). Speaking English causes anxiety because when pronouncing a sentence, it must be pronounced correctly, and the grammar must be arranged according to the context in which it is used. This is supported by Fauzi et al. (2021), who say that the factors that make you feel anxious when speaking English are lack of preparation, fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at by friends, nervous when standing in front of people, fear of pronouncing the wrong word and choosing the wrong word said in English (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020; Nadia, Rafidiyah, Hermina, & Adhitama, 2023). Anxiety leads to mistakes that include misuse of the speaker's parts, sentence structure, choice of meaning, and voice intonation.

Many studies on public speaking use English, such as classroom action research on English presentations using



a self-reflection approach (Kurniawati & Kustini, 2022). The second study used an interview study about the factors that can cause students' anxiety about public speaking (Siregar, 2022). The third study using quantitative research with a questionnaire method that reported high levels of public speaking anxiety during EFL China graduate students presenting at international conferences, as measured by three categories of variables: fear of public speaking, self-management of behavior, and fear of negative evaluation (Wei, 2022).

### **Definition and Importance of Public Speaking**

Public Speaking is a pattern of oral communication such as presentations, lectures, speeches, or other types of public speaking to convey ideas, ideas, thoughts and feelings in a coherent, systematic, and logical manner to provide information, influence, and even entertain the audience (Rambe et al., 2023). At the same time, the goal is to convey thoughts and feelings to other people so that they understand what has been conveyed (Montes et al., 2019; Pebriano et al., 2023; Sarmila et al., 2023).

Public Speaking is important in the development of teaching and learning (Obidina et al., 2020; Maulana et al., 2023; Al Febi, Al Farhan, Sutopo, & Mukhlisin, 2023). Much literature focuses on the importance of charisma in Public Speaking (Obidina et al., 2020). Appropriately, charismatic speakers tend to be genuinely interested in other

people and so better engage, connect, and interact with audiences (Tanveer et al., 2018). Public Speaking in English is becoming a very influential and necessary skill. Many people are in various positions, especially in their studies and academic success professional career (Nesrine, 2020).

Public Speaking with this charismatic speaker can be used as a learning reference that can be further developed. As stated by Yang & Pan (2020), in recent years, more and more teachers and scholars in China have put more and more effort into public speaking teaching and research to meet students' growing needs for effectiveness, as well as the ability to communicate. To develop public speaking, it is necessary for course instructors to know the pedagogical tools and processes of public speaking education.

Public Speaking in the Industry 4.0 era, speaking about a particular subject or issue and explaining it, is very important because of the facts. Information can no longer be restricted (Amelia et al., 2022). They also support that information is primarily available on the Internet in social media. The writer also said that in this modern era, many women and men worldwide spread their ideas and influence through public speaking. Therefore, speaking skills are needed to understand the content of information (Yang & Pan, 2020). The ability to speak also teaches



you how to persuade people, so it is also useful for those who work to find a job.

### **Public Speaking Anxiety**

Speaking is one of the basic skills that everyone has so that everyone can communicate and interact with others. However, not everyone knows how to present themselves well in public, especially in English. There are several reasons why people are afraid of public speaking in English, such as: lack of confidence, fear of misdirection, and fear of the stage (Islamiah, Aprizani, & Murtiningsih, 2023). Sometimes, this causes them to forget the topics they need to cover (Nadia & Yansyah., 2018).

Fear, happiness, pain, and joy, is a natural part of human life, and as long as it is within the average range, it positively affects people (Bektas & Baykara, 2021). In this respect, it can be considered a healthy emotion. However, anxiety turns into an avoidable emotion when it interferes with life, and anxiety has been featured in psychological research to explain human behavior (Bektas & Baykara, 2021). When someone speaks in public, their habits can make them feel insecure. Feelings of anxiety can be recognized by signs such as trembling, facial pallor, excessive sweating, and nervousness when speaking (Fauzi et al., 2021). Students who fail to speak choose silence rather than risk failing again.

One of the most valuable and endless human behaviors, the effect of fear on learning has aroused curiosity

and has been analyzed from multiple perspectives (Bektas et al., 2021). Public Speaking can also experience anxiety. Public Speaking anxiety is a special form of communication anxiety. It is thought to be a situation-specific social anxiety that arises from giving or being expected to give an oral presentation (Zheng et al., 2023).

According to Lindner et al. (2019), Public Speaking Anxiety is a common condition that can be treated effectively with exposure therapy. However, the difficulties inherent in presenting stimuli and control limit their spread and therapeutic potential. Fear of Public Speaking is one of the most common forms of social anxiety and a component of social anxiety. Therefore, Public Speaking anxiety has become a form of communication fear or communication anxiety, according to Dewaele and Moskowitz (2020). The type of communication considered is public speaking. Whenever people with public appearance anxiety are asked to speak in public, they suffer from nervousness, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes.

Public speaker is anxiety before or during a presentation is best defined as anxiety talk. Anxiety is characterized by sweaty hands, trembling voices, dry throat, difficulty breathing, and memory loss. Public speaking anxiety is identified in the following categories, internal discomfort, avoidance of communication, withdrawal, and excessive communication (Attanayake, 2019). In other words, a person has



public speaking anxiety when he doubts his ability to manage the speaking situation and, as a result, cannot concentrate and becomes restless.

Even though there has been much research on public speaking anxiety, no research still focuses on English students presenting at International conferences and how to control anxiety before or during presentations. This is a supporting factor so that English students are enthusiastic and motivated to participate in carrying out presentations at the International conference. The questions of the present study are 1) how is the experience of English students when they have presented at an International Conference? and 2) how do English students control anxiety when they want to present at an International Conference?

### **Metode**

The research approach used was qualitative. This study presents the results and analysis of an interview study according to (Colliers et al., 2020) conducted directly with English students who have made presentations at the International Conference. The interview was being conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of public speaking experience when making presentations in English at the International Conference. The participants consisted of three batches of 2017, 2018, and 2019 English students who had made presentations in English at the International Conference. Participants were alumni and active students of

English, totaling five people. Each of the participants studied were students from the English Language Education study program, where they often used English in the form of men or women per class of each course they took.

This study used an interview instrument to find out more about the data to be collected from all participants. When carrying out the interview stages, there were several things, namely ensuring the participants' willingness without any compulsion to convey a statement (Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2020). There were several questions asked to get valid data that can be reviewed. Totaling five participants from three batches majoring in English education were contacted to conduct interviews. Several stages of analysis can be used in different types of qualitative research. The following is a series of sequential analysis stages (Miles, Huberman, & Johnny, 2014). 1) Data compression is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, transforming data appearing throughout a body of field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical material. 2) The second major flow of analysis activity is data display. Generically, a display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action. Looking at displays helps us understand what is happening and to do something either analyze further or take action based on that understanding. 3) The third stream of analysis activity is conclusion drawing and verification. From the start of data collection, the qualitative analyst interprets what things mean by noting patterns, explanations, causal flows, and propositions.



### Hasil dan Pembahasan

#### Student Presentation Experience at the International Conference

Everyone's experience is different, especially when people have the opportunity to present the results of writing scientific papers in front of a large audience; of course, you have your own way of controlling your own strategy in order to give your best. Talking about the experience, the researcher interviewed the participants about their experiences when participating in International conference activities in different years. Based on the results of interviews with all participants, all of them stated that they took part in International conference activities because they were invited by lecturers. This is what made the participants interested in participating in the International conference activities. They were invited to participate in presenting the results of the proposals that had been made.

Several students expressed their interest in participating in the International Conference. Some of these statements are the same and some are different. The following is the explanation that was said by the participants, and the first was stated by the participant AD regarding his participation that:

"I was invited to be invited by my lecturer to participate in international conference activities offline, because it was to

complement my coursework given by the lecturer." (Participant AD, Google meet Interview, May 28,2023)

The participant JL also stated that he was invited by the lecturer and the reasons for his different interest through the statement that the participant conveyed were,

"I was invited to be invited by my lecturer to participate in International conferences, at that time I was interested because I thought this International Conference would be a lot of outsiders who participated so I thought there would be a lot of learning I got." (Participant JL, Google meet Interview, March 18, 2023).

This statement gives us an illustration that it is not only one campus that participates in International conference activities, but many state and private campuses that are involved, and even the outsiders referred to here are foreigners. Meanwhile, participants SL and AP were interested in joining the International conference after they were invited by their lecturers when they finished the debate competition and then accepted the offer from the lecturer. They simultaneously accepted the offer because they were interested when they heard that the International conference could be obtained, namely a certificate and could develop themselves such as



learning from others and reading a lot of literature from the research of other people who participated in International conference activities.

The International conference is held offline and online depending on the implementation situation. There are two conference implementation techniques, namely offline presentations and online presentations. The offline implementation technique is held directly by two participants, namely AD and JL at one of the universities in Central Kalimantan, namely in the second International conference ON ELT International Conference on English Language Teaching (INACELT) November 16-17 2018. After that all participants will be divided into several groups and will be asked to enter the room that has been provided. After everything has been divided into several rooms, all participants who are tasked with presenting the results of their research will be asked to come forward and present them directly using English.

Each participant explained several different topics, because the research was also with different lecturers. Here, we will start with an offline presentation held at a university in Kalimantan. Participants AD and JL made an offline presentation at a university in Central Kalimantan. The AD and JL turned out to be different groups, therefore the topics they presented were different for each of them. Participant JL stated that he presented the topic of how to play games in English. This was stated by the

participants through JL's answers namely:

"This research on game play that uses instructions in English to play the game must first understand the storyline of the game being played." (Participant JL, Google meet Interview, March 18, 2023).

Games that use instructions in English will also help children learn English even though they are playing on cellphones or other technology. This aims to teach that learning English using games can also be used when learning is carried out in class by practicing together and learning to understand the flow using English.

Participant AD presented different topics with their lecturers, namely learning English through children's storytelling. This was stated by participant AD that children really like fairy tales, that is what made the writer try to research English learning using storytelling media which can be practiced directly with movements or using other media teaching materials.

Participants SL and AP are in the same activity online. The research carried out by SL and AP participants was held online through a zoom meeting which examined SMK learning as stated by SL and then continued by AP. Therefore this study illustrates that games are often used by children, especially teenagers to fill their free time. The segmentation of this research is about the phenomenon that occurs in the



surrounding environment. Every student who plays games and uses English, this will make them learn English by themselves, because the clues are in English, inevitably they have to read and understand the game.

Subsequent research is also being conducted online through a zoom meeting about anxiety when speaking in public in English. Participant AZ presented at International Conference about anxiety of public speaking and using English. This presentation was held online through a zoom meeting. Participant AZ presentation in the form of video and asked directly at the International Conference.

Participants came from three different class batches starting in 2017, 2018, and 2019. All participants stated that they had attended an International Conference. The results of the experience interview stated that all participants were invited by the lecturer and asked to present papers that had been written into an article. All participants expressed interest in participating in the International Conference. There were several participants who attended the International Conference online, and some were offline during presentations at the International Conference. All participants brought different topics according to the lecturer who invited them.

How students control anxiety during presentations at International Conference

In the next sub-topic, researcher was interview participants controlling anxiety when they want to present at the International Conference. Even from one participant there was a statement that he managed to control his anxiety when he was about to start the presentation and that stated that he when he started the presentation did not feel anxious anymore. This makes researchers interested in discussing participants who are very anxious to participants who are not even anxious at all.

Talking about anxiety is very much researched by many people which this will be discussed further in the discussion in the next discussion. Humans are naturally social creatures who live in large groups where each individual must adapt to different roles and blend in different groups. Each cooperative group will allow each individual to learn public speaking on its own. Everyone has their own life and has different anxiety. In this sub topic will be in the language of how participants control their anxiety when they want to speak or present in general in front of many people.

How to control anxiety during a presentation also affects the results delivered. Communication strategy is inseparable from the planning process or steps in delivering something. Communication strategy is a combination of the design of important elements in communication so that these elements can help in providing precise and accurate information delivery. The





first thing that will be discussed is about students who are initially very anxious and then their anxiety is slightly reduced when there is encouragement from the closest person, namely the lecturer himself. This was stated by the participants of the AD, Class of 2017

“At first, I was very anxious when I was presenting, there happened to be a lecturer from UIN who invited me to chat with me and he asked me. "You're Mr. Y's subordinate, huh?" Then I replied "Yes mam". Then Mam N came to her and grabbed her by the shoulder, kept saying "It's okay, as much as you can, don't have to force it". So finally just relax and explain what the method is, continue to directly conclude it's done. At first, I was really anxious until I was so tired, but when the presentation was safe). (Participant AD, Google meet Interview, May 28, 2023).

Through this statement that makes researcher asked about how to control anxiety. Even from all participants who have been interviewed, the AD participant is one who expressed extreme anxiety when entering the room until the start of the presentation. It turned out that after echoing the results of statements by anxious AD participants. Making a learning that the people around you will have a positive impact when the support comes and calm down will reduce our anxiety when we want to present in front of many people. JL participant who also stated

that he was very anxious when presenting offline at the International Conference.

Participant JL statement is that when you want to speak or present in public, the preparation must often be trained in the vocabulary to be delivered so that it will make you feel less nervous. The next participant statement by participants who felt anxious when presenting online via zoom meeting, namely there were two participants who felt anxious, namely participants SL and AZ. Further statements by participant AZ who felt anxious when speaking in public using English directly. This was stated by participant AZ directly and directly conveyed how to control their anxiety before starting the presentation.

Among all participants who felt very anxious, even just anxious. There was one participant who stated that he was not anxious at all during the presentation of the International conference because for reasons of how to control it during preparation so as not to feel anxious when in front of a crowd.

All of five participants who mentioned being very anxious, just anxious, and not anxious, they talked about strategies to control their anxiety in various ways according to each participant's personality. Some say that when anxious once, the people around us will be very influential in making our anxiety feel reduced. AD participants stated this. JL participants also said that they were very anxious, and the strategy



to control their anxiety was that before the presentation, they would practice continuously until the paper's content had been mastered.

The strategy employed by anxious participants were practicing English more with correct pronunciation. At the same time, one participant who felt no anxiety at all had a strategy to be more courageous and confident when speaking in public and thought that when the script was ready, it would help the presentation become smooth.

The study was conducted to find out the research question of this study entitled Presenting in International Conference an interview study on the students' public speaking anxiety. The study's main research questions are; "How is the experience of English students when they have presented at an International Conference?" and "How do English students control anxiety when they want to present at an International Conference?"

According to the interviews, all participants said they had spoken publicly during presentations at the International Conference. Public speaking is a pattern of oral communication such as presentations, lectures, speeches, or other types of public speaking to convey ideas, ideas, thoughts, and feelings in a coherent, systematic, and logical manner to provide information Rambe et al., (2023). According to the experience of the participants, all participants presented their ideas in the form of PowerPoint

sourced from articles together with the lecturers. All participants presented the results of research that they had written in public. AD and JL participants attended the International Conference offline. Meanwhile, SL, AP, and AZ participants were at the International Conference online via Zoom meeting.

This theoretical description emphasizes that the more time develops, the more information comes from the outside. Participants AD and JL have found that participating in the activities of International conferences is not harmful but rather very beneficial. This statement is in line with the result of a study from Salem (2019). Ideas can be illustrated from essays published in papers and book chapters, and many people can use them as educational references.

Public speaking is the key to success for everyone in all walks of life. Public speaking is important for the development of teaching and learning Tanveer et al., (2018). The evolution of English teaching and learning was also discussed by several participants who reported their first writings in the form of storytelling by AD participants. This is also evident from storytelling research focused on developing storytelling-based learning models to improve early childhood English learning outcomes (Setyarini. 2018).

Participant JL topic in the form of game instructions in English. SL and AP attendees also talked about action games



for professional students. This study is similar to one of the references that also investigated games taught in vocational high schools. According to Hyono Pasumah et al. (2021), this English learning game is presented in a game format with bright colors and attractive animated illustrations to arouse students' interest and help them remember what the teacher has taught them easier.

While according to Yeny and Rahma (2021) there are seven elements in public speaking: Speaker, Message, Channel, Listener, Feedback, Interference, and situation. These elements are not all used when participating in International Conference activities. There are only a few elements used, including speakers, namely all participants who are presenting their papers in front of many people. The second component is the message for the reason that the message written through a paper will be conveyed during the presentation. The Listener component is used when all participants who are listening get useful new information. The feedback component is used when the presentation is finished and then continued to provide input to the parties who presented the results of the paper in public. However, other components such as channels, interference, and situations are not used when speaking in public at the International Conference.

Speaking of anxiety, four people out of five participants experienced anxiety during presentations at the

International Conference in English. The fear of public speaking is one of the most common forms of social anxiety and a component of social anxiety Dewaele and Moskowitz (2020). Therefore, public speaking anxiety is a form of communication anxiety.

The anxiety that arises makes all participants control their anxiety before starting the presentation in front of many people. Participant AD, who said they were very anxious, subsided when they received support from others. This was also found in another study that proved that one student also experienced anxiety when speaking in public during a presentation (Fitri, 2017).

Participants SL and AZ who felt anxious only how to control their anxiety by practicing continuously how to pronounce English before the presentation was carried out. Public speaking has also been experienced by researchers who said that novice graduate students totaling 137 people, experienced anxiety when speaking in public while attending international conference activities in China (Wei, 2022). Participant AP said he wasn't worried because he has a mindset that public speaking online wouldn't make him anxious. Because one of the participants said, he was anxious that he attended the International Conference activities online and not in front of other people directly.

This was also experienced by two different participants during



presentations at the same International conference. Participant SL experienced anxiety, while Participant AP did not experience anxiety. These two participants controlled their anxiety in different ways. SL participants learn and read power points continuously, while AP participants practice and continue to practice. In the study of Zheng et al. (2023), public speaking was divided into two groups; both groups were asked to complete three formal public speeches in English. Quantitative and qualitative findings showed that learners in the SAI group showed significantly lower public speaking anxiety than those in the PAI group, whereas learners in the PAI group showed significantly better public speaking performance (Zheng et al., 2023).

### **Simpulan**

The results of the experience interview stated that all participants were invited by the lecturer and asked to present papers that had been written into an article. All participants expressed interest in participating in the International Conference. There were several participants who attended the International Conference online, and some were offline during presentations at the International Conference. All participants brought different topics according to the lecturer who invited them. Each participant controlled his anxiety before presenting in English at the International Conference. Each participant felt very anxious, just worried, and there were even participants who said they were not worried. The results of interviews with

Participant AD control anxiety with the influence of the surrounding environment, which has a positive impact, so AD participants can control anxiety until the presentation at the International Conference is over. As a general rule, the effects of sensitization decay rapidly, while habituation to a previously feared stimulus tends to disappear gradually (Zheng et al., 2023). Supported by Zheng et al. (2023), feelings of anxiety can be controlled through changes in environmental conditions by supporting behavioral approaches once anxiety levels increase. This is also experienced by AD participants when experiencing anxiety during presentations at the International Conference.

participants showed that they controlled anxiety before the presentation by practicing continuously, reading a lot of literature, being prepared, reading key points, and believing in themselves

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