ANXIETY IN SPEAKING ENGLISH IN THAI STUDENTS: PHADUNG ISLAM KHLONG 22 SCHOOL

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk meneliti faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kecemasan berbicara dan tingkat kecemasan yang dialami oleh siswa Thailand di Sekolah Phadung Islam Khlong 22. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi penyebab spesifik kecemasan berbicara di antara siswa-siswa ini. Data dikumpulkan dari 15 siswa kelas 6 (11 perempuan, 4 laki-laki) berusia 17-18 tahun melalui kuesioner tertutup dan wawancara terstruktur. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dua faktor utama yang memengaruhi kecemasan berbicara: dukungan keluarga dan lingkungan. Dukungan positif dari keluarga dan lingkungan yang mendukung dapat mengurangi tingkat kecemasan, sementara kurangnya dukungan dapat memperburuknya. Tingkat kecemasan di antara siswa bervariasi, mulai dari ringan hingga berat. Siswa dengan kecemasan rendah atau tidak ada cenderung merasa nyaman dan percaya diri dalam berbicara di depan umum. Sebaliknya, mereka yang memiliki kecemasan ringan hingga berat sering menunjukkan gejala fisik seperti berkeringat, gemetar, atau serangan panik sebelum atau selama berbicara di depan umum. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya dukungan keluarga dan lingkungan yang positif dalam mengelola kecemasan berbicara.

Kata Kunci: Kecemasan, Kecemasan Berbicara, Studi Deskriptif

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the factors contributing to speaking anxiety and the levels of anxiety experienced by Thai students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study aimed to identify specific causes of speaking anxiety among these students. Data was collected from 15 grade 6 students (11 female, 4 male) aged 17-18 through closed questionnaires and structured interviews. The research identified two main factors influencing speaking anxiety: family support and environment. Positive support from family and a supportive environment can reduce anxiety levels, while a lack of support can worsen them. Anxiety levels among students varied, ranging from mild to severe. Students with low or no anxiety tend to feel comfortable and confident in public speaking. In contrast, those with mild to severe anxiety often exhibit physical symptoms such as sweating, shaking, or panic attacks before or during public speaking. This study highlights the importance of both family support and a positive environment in managing speaking anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety, Descriptive Study

1. INTRODUCTION

English is the most common language for communication globally (Thatchakon 2014), and it is the key to success in career and business (Thandarin, 2015). Most Thai people use English in daily life such as advertising on television, reading a newspaper, surfing the internet, and watching movies (Napamon, 2014). However, the ability to speak English varies depending on an individual's basic

knowledge, frequency of use, the environment, attitude, anxiety and frame of reference (Napamon, 2014 and Thatchakon, 2014). In today's globalized world, proficiency in English is crucial for communication across cultures. Recognizing this, Thailand has integrated English into its education system at various levels to prepare students for international interactions. However, despite the emphasis on English, Thai students often face challenges in communication due to a focus on grammar over practical usage (Chiramanee et al., 2014). This has led to a situation where students, though knowledgeable in grammar, struggle with fluency and confidence in speaking.

Thai students often have limited opportunities to practice English speaking due to an overemphasis on grammatical correctness. This focus on accuracy, driven by both Thai and foreign teachers, impedes their ability to engage in natural conversation and increases their anxiety about making mistakes (Ritthirat, 2014). Unlike native English speakers who prioritize effective communication over strict grammar rules, Thai students may excel in grammar but struggle with fluent, practical communication, resulting in challenges both academically and in real-world situations.

The importance of English is underscored by the increasing internationalization of education and the global exchange of cultures. Thai schools and universities are increasingly offering international programs and exchange opportunities, reflecting the global demand for English proficiency. As highlighted by UNESCO data, many students are now pursuing higher education abroad, further emphasizing the need for strong English skills (Prayau, 2014).

English has been a key component of the Thai national curriculum since 1980 and was made compulsory from primary education in 2001. Despite its significance, students often still struggle with speaking fluently even after extensive training throughout their schooling. This ongoing issue underscores the need for a shift towards more communicative and practical English instruction to better prepare students for global interactions (Akkakoson, 2019; Boonkit, 2002).

This research will examine the speaking anxiety experienced by Thai students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School when speaking English as their second language. Relevant studies have informed this research and highlight its novel aspects. For instance, Sundayanti et al. (2023) conducted a study titled "An Analysis of Students' Speaking Anxiety in English Foreign Language (EFL)," which explored anxiety levels among students at SMP Negeri 3 Sungai Raya. This study categorized anxiety into severe, moderate, and mild levels, finding that 19 students experienced severe anxiety, 88 moderate anxiety, and 15 mild anxiety. The study also identified strategies students used to manage their anxiety, such as regular practice and self-encouragement. Additionally, Laia (2022) investigated "Students' Anxiety In Speaking English at Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 3 Dharma Caraka Telukdalam," analyzing the anxiety students faced when speaking English. This research used a

qualitative and descriptive approach, contributing valuable insights into the nature of speaking anxiety among students.

2. METHOD

Foreign language is not easy to speak fluently, and there are more problems that prevent Thai students' speaking skills, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical problems. This research used descriptive qualitative method. Based on Sugiyono (2010) who states that qualitative research is descriptive. It means that collected data was in the form of words rather than number. the researcher used Thai grade 6th students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School aged 17-18 years, consisting of 15 students (11 female students and 4 male students). The data of this research are some information in word taken from the interview and questionnaire. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the Miles and Huberman flow model analysis (1984:10). There are three streams of activities carried out simultaneously as follows, Data Reduction, Data Display, and Drawing Conclusions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

The factors causing speaking anxiety in Thai students studying at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School were analyzed based on data obtained from six questions. These questions were: What factors affect your English language skills? (Q1), Does your family affect the development of your language skills? (Q2), Do you think vocabulary is important for speaking skills? (Q3), Does the pressure in class affect the way you speak? (Q4), Do your surroundings affect your language practice? (Q5), and How do you deal with English anxiety? (Q6). The result data is recapitulated in the following table.

Table 1. Recap of Data on Speaking Anxiety Factors

Student	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
1.	Personal Experience and Self-Confidence	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice and Preparation
2.	Personal Motivation and Interests	No	Yes	No	No	Not Feeling Anxious
3.	Study Methods and Exercises	Little	Yes	Yes	Yes	Talk To Friend
4.	Learning Environment and Learning Media	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice At Home
5.	Experience Speaking With Native Speakers	No	Yes	No	No	Not Anxious

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6.	Teaching Materials and Exercises	Little	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice In Front of A Mirror
7.	Bad Experiences In The Past	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Avoiding Speaking Situations
8.	Learning Motivation	No	Yes	No	No	Not Anxious
9.	Classes and Teaching Methods	Little	Yes	Yes	Yes	Talk To A Friend
10.	Negative Experiences In The Past	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Avoid Speaking
11.	Motivation and Practice	No	Yes	No	No	Not Anxious
12.	Classroom Experience	Little	Yes	Yes	Yes	Practice At Home
13.	Negative Experiences In The Past	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Avoid Speaking
14.	Bad Experiences In The Past	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Avoid Speaking Situations
15.	Bad Experiences In The Past	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Avoid Speaking Situations

The level of anxiety experienced by Thai grade 6th students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School was assessed using a questionnaire containing twenty (20) questions with three answer choices: agree, neutral, and disagree. The level of anxiety is determined based on the following table of categories (Shives &; L.R., 2012):

Table 2. Anxiety Level Categories

Number of Answers Agree	Category
1 – 4	Ordinary Anxiety
5 – 8	Mild Anxiety
9 – 12	Moderate Anxiety
13 – 16	Severe Anxiety
17 - 20	Panic state

The results of the questionnaire recap of Thai grade 6th students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School are presented below:

Table 3. Questionnaire Results

Student	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Type of Anxiety
1.	15	3	2	Severe Anxiety
2.	0	1	19	Ordinary Anxiety
3.	12	7	1	Moderate Anxiety
4.	14	2	4	Severe Anxiety

5.	0	0	20	Ordinary Anxiety
6.	8	8	4	Mild Anxiety
7.	20	0	0	Panic State
8.	0	0	20	Ordinary Anxiety
9.	12	7	1	Moderate Anxiety
10.	18	1	1	Panic State
11.	0	1	19	Ordinary Anxiety
12.	15	3	2	Severe Anxiety
13.	20	0	0	Panic State
14.	20	0	0	Panic State

3.2. Discussion

Based on the results of anxiety assessment from the questionnaire and answers to initial questions, various factors causing speaking anxiety in Thai 6th grade students at Phadung Islam Khlong 22 School were identified. Family influence plays a significant role, with students showing low anxiety levels (Students 2, 5, 8, and 11) feeling little impact from family support, while those with high anxiety levels (Students 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) often find family influence limited or unsupportive, exacerbating their anxiety. Learning experiences and environments also differ, with low anxiety students (Students 2, 5, 8, and 11) benefiting from positive experiences and supportive settings, whereas high anxiety students (Students 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) face stress or negative past experiences affecting their comfort in speaking. Techniques for dealing with anxiety vary; low anxiety students (Students 2, 5, 8, and 11) may not need special techniques, while high anxiety students (Students 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) use methods like avoiding situations or practicing at home, though these may be insufficient. Personal motivation and interests also affect anxiety, with low anxiety students (Students 2, 5, 8, and 11) feeling confident due to high motivation, whereas high anxiety students (Students 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15) may struggle despite strong motivation. For levels of anxiety, students with low anxiety (such as Students 2, 5, 8, and 11) show confidence, mild anxiety (such as Student 6) has slight physical symptoms, moderate anxiety (such as Students 3 and 9) presents more noticeable symptoms requiring structured strategies, severe anxiety (such as Students 1, 4, 12, and 15) involves intense symptoms needing comprehensive support, and panic states (such as Students 7, 10, 13, and 14) experience severe panic attacks that disrupt normal functioning. Understanding these anxiety levels helps educators and parents provide appropriate support to improve students' English speaking skills.

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4. CLOSING

Factors influencing public speaking anxiety show that a supportive family environment can reduce anxiety, while a lack of support can worsen it. Positive learning experiences and supportive environments boost confidence and reduce anxiety, while negative experiences increase it. Effective coping techniques can manage anxiety, but some students need more tailored strategies. High motivation and interest in English can enhance confidence, though strong anxiety may hinder expression. Educators and parents should recognize these factors and apply suitable strategies to support students. Students vary in anxiety levels from mild to severe, with some experiencing physical symptoms like sweating or panic attacks. Identifying anxiety levels accurately is crucial for providing effective support.

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