

PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS AND THEIR INFLUENCE TOWARDS STUDENTS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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Abstract

The purpose of the research was to find out the influence of psychological barriers experienced by the students towards their speaking ability. This research employed quantitative descriptive method. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaire and speaking test. The subjects of the research were the students of class VIII.4 academic year 2016/2017. The data analysis revealed that the students experienced the medium level of psychological barriers. It was shown by the average score of the questionnaire which was 47. Besides, the students' ability in speaking English need to improve. The average score of the speaking test was 45. The simple linier regression formula discovered that $t_{\text{count}} = 1,21 > t_{\text{table}} = 0,85$. Hence, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted which means that there was a significant influence of the students' psychological barriers towards their speaking ability.

Keywords: psychological barriers, speaking ability, reporting speech

Introduction

Speaking, among other skills, is considered to be the measure of someone's success in learning a language. As Richards believes that learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency (Richard, 2008). In other words, the more successful a learner in learning a language, the more fluent he/she is in speaking. This view is also supported by the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching Method in 1980 which emphasizes fluency in speaking rather than accuracy. According to this method, the primary function to language is for interaction and communication (Richard, et.al, 1999). Thus, language must be used actively to interact and communicate with others and most of those activities take place in the form of spoken language. One of the reasons underlining such view is from the demand to have good communication skills.

Nowadays, having good communication skills is a necessity for some people. It becomes one of the nine soft skills which make someone have a perfect personality (Rasmita, 2009). It is required particularly by those who are involving in social environment which requires a lot of interpersonal relationship. For instances, in workplaces and educational settings. In workplaces, good communication skills plays important role in determining one's success and achieving goals or targets. It is also required by businessmen to establish cooperation and to convince customers about their products or services. Meanwhile, in educational settings, good communication skills will help teacher to run the class effectively. Teachers can organize and deliver material in a communicative way so that students can easily retain the information. For students, it is useful for them to perform several tasks such as delivering a presentation and giving a speech. However, it seems that English language teachers in Indonesia are still facing difficulty to generate students who can use English communicatively.

According to the researcher, one of the factors contributing to the difficulty faced by the teachers comes from the students' perception towards English. Some students assume that English such a "night mare". It is very difficult to learn. It is a confusing subject with abundant grammatical rules and so on. Directly, those perceptions affect the students' psychological state when they are learning English. The students will experience the so-called psychological barriers such as fear and anxiety.

Fear means the disability to perform because the students are limited in ability in learning, and that will lead them to failure (Freeman et.al, 2000). According to some experts, fear such as feeling of incompetence, feeling of making mistake, and apprehension of that which is novel or unfamiliar will just hamper the learning process (Saepudin 2014).

According to Faradibah and Asrifan in their recent research, students of senior high school experience three kinds of psychological barriers in speaking. Each kind is described by the following indicators.

1. Anxiety

Anxiety is a subjective feeling of worry and nervousness. It is a kind of troubled feeling in the mind. It was clear that when students feel worried they cannot concentrate on speaking. It consists of some indicators that students feel and experience namely feeling nervous, worry, feel headache, feeling embarrassment, having dizzy attacks, trembling.

2. Low Motivation

Low motivation is indicated by having no self-confidence. Students who have no self-confidence cannot communicate well with others because they cannot focus on the conversation. The effect of this may cause the speaker to feel shy to speak English. The indicators of low motivation are feeling not interesting, showing no interest, having no energy, showing no enjoyment of lessons, feeling no benefit of knowing the language, avoiding asking other people question.

3. Emotional Distress

Students who are experiencing emotional distress tend to show their negative emotion due to avoidance of speaking with interlocutors. Some students feel afraid to speak, even they may become angry when they are asked to speak. The indicators of emotional distress are feeling afraid, showing no mood, feeling angry, having no self confident, having difficult to focus, going blank.

Based on the findings above, the researcher believes that it is essential to examine students' psychological barriers particularly in speaking English in order that it will help teachers to overcome those barriers. Finally, the researcher will carry out a research entitled "The Influence of Students' Psychological Barriers towards Their Speaking Ability at the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare". SMP Negeri

2 Parepare is chosen as the place of study because the use of English in the school among students in their daily interaction is more frequent than other schools.

Based on the background above, the researcher aims at elaborating the following three questions.

1. How is psychological barrier experienced by the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare?
2. How is the ability of the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare in speaking English?
3. Is there significant influence of students' psychological barriers to their speaking ability?

The researcher has three objectives to achieve after the research as follows.

1. To describe the extent of psychological barrier experienced by the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare.
2. To describe the ability of the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare in speaking English.
3. To find out whether there is significant influence of the students' psychological barriers to their speaking ability.

Method

In this research, the researcher employed quantitative descriptive. Hence, statistic descriptive was applied to analyze the data. Statistic descriptive is a process of analyzing research data through description and elaboration (Siregar, 2015). Simple Linier Regression was used to find out the influence of variable x (psychological barriers) to variable y (speaking ability). The data of this research were resulted from a speaking test and questionnaire. The data taken from a speaking test and questionnaire were analyzed by using statistical formulas.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Parepare which is well known as the most prominent junior high school in Parepare. One of the factors contributes to the prominence of the school is the use of English in the school among students in their daily interaction is more frequent than other schools. The time allocated to carry out the research is two months. The population of the research is the students of the eight grade of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare academic year 2016/2017.

In selecting the sample, the researcher applied Simple Random Sampling Technique which is of Probability Sampling Technique. After following the procedures, class VIII.4 was selected to be the sample. The total of the students from the class is 36 consisting of 21 males and 15 females.

In collecting data, the researcher administered two instruments i.e a speaking test and questionnaire.

Results

Psychological Barriers Experienced by the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare

To identify psychological barriers experienced by the students, the researcher used questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) constructed by Kriangkrai Yaikhong and Siriluck Usaha. The questionnaire consists of 17 items with five scales showing the degree of psychological barriers encountered by the students. The students answered them according to their experiences in the field and their feelings when they took part in the speaking activity. Students measured themselves by choosing one from five scales available. Students who chose strongly agree and agree will be categorized as “Yes” which means they experienced the barriers. Conversely, students who chose strongly disagree and disagree will be categorized as “No” which means they did not experience the barriers. Undecided answer is ignored in this research because it does not belong to either category previously mentioned. The table showing the students’ answers can be seen in Appendices. Below is the result of validity test for the questionnaire.

Table 1. The frequency and category of the students’ scores

Range	Category	Frequency		Total	Percentage (%)
		Male	Female		
63 – 85	High Level	1	1	2	5,56
40 – 62	Medium Level	17	8	25	69,44
17 – 39	Low Level	3	6	9	25
TOTAL		21	15	36	100

Table 2. The frequency and category of the students' scores

Range	Category	Frequency		Total	Percentage (%)
		Male	Female		
63 - 85	High Level	1	1	2	5,56
40 - 62	Medium Level	17	8	25	69,44
17 - 39	Low Level	3	6	9	25
TOTAL		21	15	36	100

Table 3. Indicator 1: Students never feel quite sure of themselves when they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	6	16,7
Disagree	14	38,9
Undecided	12	33,3
Agree	4	11,1
Strongly Agree	0	0
Total	36	100

Table 4. Indicator 2: Students start to panic when they have to speak English without a preparation in advance.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	8,3
Disagree	10	27,8
Undecided	8	22,2
Agree	14	38,9
Strongly Agree	1	2,8
Total	36	100

Table 5. Indicator 3: Students forget things they actually know when they get so nervous.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	1	2,8
Disagree	8	22,2
Undecided	18	50
Agree	7	19,4
Strongly Agree	2	5,6
Total	36	100

Table 6. Indicator 4: Students feel less confident when they speak English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	13,9
Disagree	9	25
Undecided	10	27,8
Agree	9	25
Strongly Agree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

Table 7. Indicator 5: Students feel shy when they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	8	22,2
Disagree	11	30,6
Undecided	9	25
Agree	7	19,4
Strongly Agree	1	2,8
Total	36	100

Table 8. Indicator 6: Students are afraid that their friends will laugh at them while they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	13,9
Disagree	11	30,6
Undecided	7	19,4
Agree	10	27,8
Strongly Agree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

Table 9. Indicator 7: Students perform speaking English in the class.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	9	25
Disagree	12	33,3
Undecided	7	19,4
Agree	4	11,1
Strongly Agree	4	11,1
Total	36	100

Table 10. Indicator 8: Students feel fear of speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	9	25
Disagree	12	33,3
Undecided	11	30,6
Agree	2	5,6
Strongly Agree	2	5,6
Total	36	100

Table 11. Indicator 9: Students' heart beats fast when they are going to be called to speak English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	4	11,1
Disagree	9	25
Undecided	6	16,7
Agree	12	33,3
Strongly Agree	5	13,9
Total	36	100

Table 12. Indicator 10: Students' are panic when they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	7	19,4
Disagree	11	30,6
Undecided	13	36,1
Agree	3	8,3
Strongly Agree	2	5,6
Total	36	100

Table 13. Indicator 11: Students feel reluctant to be volunteer to speak

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	2	5,6
Disagree	8	22,2
Undecided	21	58,3
Agree	4	11,1
Strongly Agree	1	2,8
Total	36	100

Table 14. Indicator 12: Students face every chance to speak English with low confidence.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	4	11,1
Disagree	12	33,3
Undecided	7	19,4
Agree	10	27,8
Strongly Agree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

Table 15. Indicator 13: Certain parts of students' body feel very tense and rigid when they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	9	25
Disagree	8	22,2
Undecided	6	16,7
Agree	11	30,6
Strongly Agree	2	5,6
Total	36	100

Table 16. Indicator 14: Students feel anxious when they are waiting for their turn to speak English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	8,3
Disagree	12	33,3
Undecided	8	22,2
Agree	9	25
Strongly Agree	4	11,1
Total	36	100

Table 17. Indicator 15: Students dislike their voice when they speak English

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	7	19,4
Disagree	12	33,3
Undecided	10	27,8
Agree	5	13,9
Strongly Agree	2	5,6
Total	36	100

Table 18. Indicator 16: Students feel uncomfortable to control their movements when they are speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	13,9
Disagree	8	22,2
Undecided	15	41,7
Agree	5	13,9
Strongly Agree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

Table 19. Indicator 17: Even if students have been well prepared, they still feel anxious about speaking English.

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	6	16,7
Disagree	10	27,8
Undecided	6	16,7
Agree	7	19,4
Strongly Agree	7	19,4
Total	36	100

Speaking Ability of the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare

A speaking test was given to the students to assess their speaking ability. The students were invited to perform in front of the class. They were asked to report their last holiday. The speaking activity is called reporting speech. It is a common

speaking activity which is frequently found in daily communication. The researcher chose reporting speech because the students have studied the use of simple past tense to talk about something happening in the past. Based on the findings, half of the students were categorized as poor in speaking English.

Table 20. The frequency and percentage of the students' scores

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Good	0	0
Good	0	0
Satisfying	3	8,33
Needs Improvement	33	91,67
Total	36	100

Table 21. The students' achievement in term of pronunciation

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	19	52,8
Satisfactory	10	27,8
Good	6	16,7
Excellent	1	2,8
Total	36	100

Table 22. The students' achievement in term of grammar

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	18	50
Satisfactory	15	41,7
Good	3	8,3
Excellent	0	0
Total	36	100

Table 23. The students' achievement in term of vocabulary

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	14	38,9
Satisfactory	14	38,9
Good	8	22,2
Excellent	0	0
Total	36	100

Table 24. The students' achievement in term of fluency

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	18	50
Satisfactory	11	30,6
Good	6	16,7
Excellent	1	2,8
Total	36	100

Table 25. The students' achievement in term of content

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor	17	47,2
Satisfactory	11	30,6
Good	8	22,2
Excellent	0	0
Total	36	100

The Influence of Students' Psychological Barriers towards Their Speaking Ability

To discover the influence of students' psychological barriers towards their speaking ability, the researcher applied Simple Linier Regression.

By following the procedure of Simple Linier Regression taken from the book written by Syofian Siregar, the results of calculation can be seen as follows.

Counting the value of constantan b

$$b = \frac{n \cdot \sum XY - \sum X \cdot \sum Y}{n \cdot \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2} = \frac{36 \cdot 14248 - 1686 \cdot 309}{36 \cdot 82228 - (1686)^2} = 0.06811$$

Counting the value of constantan a

$$a = \frac{\Sigma Y - b * \Sigma X}{N} = \frac{309 - (-0.06841) * 1686}{36} = 11,7873$$

Deciding equation of simple linier regression

$$Y = a + b * X = 11,7873 + (-0.06841) * X = 11,7873 - 0,06841 * X$$

The equation can be analyzed as follows.

If the students do not experience any barriers in speaking English ($X = 0$), it can be estimated that the students will get 12 or 60 $((12/20) * 100)$ for their speaking ability. Coefficient $b = -0,06841$ indicates the reduction of students' score in speaking for every increase of psychological barriers they experience.

Counting the average of X and Y

$$X = \frac{\Sigma X}{n} = \frac{1686}{36} = 46,8333 \quad Y = \frac{\Sigma Y}{N} = \frac{309}{36} = 8,58333$$

The average score of psychological barriers is 47 which is categorized as medium level, while the average score of speaking test is 45 $((9/20)*100)$ which is categorized as poor.

Counting the value of correlation.

$$r = \frac{n * \Sigma XY - (\Sigma X) * (\Sigma Y)}{\sqrt{(n * \Sigma X^2 - (\Sigma X)^2) * (n * \Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2)}} \\ r = \frac{36 * 14248 - 1686 * 309}{\sqrt{(36 * 82228 - (1686)^2) * (36 * 3025 - (309)^2)}} = -0,203$$

The correlation between variable X and Y is $-0,203$. The correlation value is categorized as weak. Minus indicates that the correlation is negative which means if variable X increases, variable Y decreases and vice versa.

Counting t_{count} and t_{table}

$$t_{count} = \frac{r * \sqrt{(n-2)}}{\sqrt{(1-r^2)}} = \frac{0,203 * \sqrt{(36-2)}}{\sqrt{(1-(0,203)^2)}} = 1,21102 \\ t_{table} = (t / 2) * (n-2) = (0,05 / 2) * (36-2) = 0,85$$

The results of t_{count} and t_{table} will be compared to make decision whether H_0 is accepted or rejected.

Making Decision

Based on the calculation above, it is found that $t_{\text{count}} = 1,21 > t_{\text{table}} = 0,85$. It means that H_0 is rejected. Because H_0 is rejected, H_a is accepted. The researcher concludes that there is significant influence of students' psychological barriers to their speaking ability.

Discussion

Psychological Barriers Experienced by the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare

Regarding the results of the data analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher discovered that the students encountered medium level of psychological barriers. It was indicated by the average score of the questionnaire which was 47. There were 25 students who included in this category. They represented 70% of the class. It consists of 17 male students and 8 female students. In the other hand, there were only two students who experienced high level of psychological barriers consisting of one male and one female. The male students got very poor score in the speaking test while the female got good score. It can be said that the psychological barriers affected the students' ability in speaking English.

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire, the researcher also found the kinds of psychological barriers experienced by the students. They are as follows.

1. Feeling anxious

According to Longman Dictionary, anxiety is defined as the feeling of being very worried about something that may happen or may have happened, so that someone think about it all the time; or something that makes someone worry (Longman, 2017). The indicators which measure students' anxiety are 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 17. Based on the indicators, the students were easy to be panic when they were asked to speak English. They were also easy to forget things they actually know when they got so nervous. Besides, the students felt fear and experienced heart-beating fast. Then, the students felt that certain parts of their body were very tense and rigid when they were speaking English.

2. Lacking of self-confidence

Confidence is the feeling that someone can trust something or someone else to be good, work well, or produced good results (Longman, 2017). Students who have self-confidence are sure that they can do things well, that people have a good opinion of them, and not shy or nervous in classroom situations. The indicators which measure students' self-confidence are 1, 4, 5, 12, and 16. Based on the indicators, the students had low confidence in speaking English. They were shy and felt uncomfortable when they were speaking English.

3. Lacking of self-esteem

Self-esteem means the feeling that someone deserves to be liked, respected, and admired. The indicators which measure students' self-esteem are 6 and 15. Based on the indicators, the students were afraid that their friend would laugh at them and they disliked their voice when they were speaking English.

4. Having low motivation

Motivation is defined as eagerness and willingness to do something. The indicators which measure students' motivation are 7 and 11. Based on the indicators, the students had low motivation to speak English. They were reluctant to go out first to speak English and they assumed that speaking English was a burden for them.

Speaking Ability of the Eight Grade Students of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare

The finding shows that the majority of the students need to improve their speaking ability. There were 33 (92%) students who were in that category. The average score of the students was 45. The percentage revealed that the students were poor in each component dominate. There were 19 students who were poor in pronunciation or 53% of the class. There were 18 students who were poor in grammar or 50% of the class. There were 14 students who were poor in vocabulary or 39% of the class. There were 18 students who were poor in fluency or 50% of the class. The last, there were 17 students who were poor in content or 47% of the class.

In addition, it is found that in the speaking test, the students faced some problems and made numerous mistakes and errors. However, errors are a natural and important part of the learning process (Broughton, 2003). Hence, the students must not be forced to speak perfectly. The teachers should let them speak without worry too much with the correctness of their utterances.

Below are the mistakes that the students made are exemplified in the following description.

1. Mispronunciation

Some mistakes that the students made when pronouncing English words are:

- a. English words are pronounced based on the written print. Examples are title /taitel/ became /title/, know /nou/ became /kenow/, many /meni/ became /mani/, arriving /e'raiv/ became /arriving/, day /dei/ became /dai/, temple /tempel/ became /temple/.
- b. The substitution of phonemes. Examples are fell /fel/ became /fil/, crush /krash/ became /krush/, want to /wont tu/ became /went tu/.
- c. The omitting of phonemes. Example is experience /ekspiriens/ became /eksprens/.
- d. The addition of phonemes. Example is asked /aesk/ became /askid/.

One of the simple ways to deal with the students' mispronunciation is by applying repetition method. Repetition can make students' pronunciation conscious by getting them to repeat all the new words they learn as well as the words they find tricky (Maxom, 2009).

2. Grammatical Errors

Most of the grammatical errors made by the students were the use of to be and verb, subject-verb agreement, and prepositions. Below is the grammatical errors the students made.

a. The use of to be and verb

Most of the students were still confused about the use of to be and verb in the past form. Some of them even used the present and perfect form. This is because of the students are lacking of exposure to the past form of verbs and to be. Examples are:

"We are so happy there because we meet our family." (*We were so happy there because we met our family.*)

"My friend and I are going camping in the real fields near my house." (*My friend and I were going camping in the rice field near my house.*)

"On the way, I never sleep ..." (*On the way, I never slept ...*)

"I done many things with my cousin." (*I did many things with my cousin.*)

b. Subject-verb agreement

Some students put verbs after to be. The students are facing difficulty in differentiating verbal and nominal sentences. Examples are:

“My parent and all my family are go to dinner without us.” (*My parents and all my family went to dinner without us.*)

“I was only stay ...” (*I only stayed...*)

“I am decided to find them.” (*I decided to find them.*)

c. The inappropriate word choice

The inappropriate use of English words is due to the students selected wrong diction and wrong class of words. The students' mistakes were caused by the lack of English vocabulary and the non-mastery of word usage. Example is:

“I visited my grandmother's bury ...” (*I visited my grandmother's cemetery.*)

The Influence of Students' Psychological Barriers towards Their Speaking Ability

Regarding to the data analysis, the students mostly experience the medium level of psychological barriers. It was shown by the average of the students' score from the questionnaire which was 47. In the other hand, the students' speaking ability was categorized as poor. The average of the students' score was 45. It can be said that one of the causes contributing to the students' deficiency in speaking is the psychological barriers. The simple linier regression formula revealed that $t_{\text{count}} = 1,21 > t_{\text{table}} = 0,85$. Hence, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. It means the psychological barriers had significant influence to the students' speaking ability. The barriers hampered the students to perform well in the classroom because they felt anxious, worry, shy, nervous, having low motivation, and lacking of confidence as well as self-esteem. Due to this condition, it is important to make the students feel secure in the classroom. Once the students feel secure and content in the classroom, they can be encouraged to become independent and adventurous in the learning of the language. Security can enhance the students' motivation in learning English. Highly motivated students do better than ones without any motivation at all (Harmer, 1988).

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, the researcher concluded that the students of class VIII.4 of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare experienced the medium level of psychological

barriers. The average score of the questionnaire was 47. The psychological barriers experienced by the students were feeling anxious, lacking of self confidence, lacking of self-esteem, and having low motivation. The ability of the students of class VIII.4 of SMP Negeri 2 Parepare in speaking English need to improve. The average score was 45. The students were poor in every component of speaking i.e pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and content. The students made numerous mistakes during the speaking test such as mispronouncing the words, making grammar errors, and selecting inappropriate words. The simple linier regression formula revealed that $t_{\text{count}} = 1,21 > t_{\text{table}} = 0,85$ which means that H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the psychological barriers had significant influence towards the students' speaking ability. The barriers affecting the students' speaking ability were anxiety, lacking of self-confidence, lacking of self-esteem, and having low motivation. Due to those barriers, the students could not perform well in the speaking activity.

To improve the students ability in speaking English, the students must be exposed to speaking activities as many as possible. The speaking activities should be varied and cover all speaking purposes. Besides, the teachers should provide clear guidance about pronunciation because pronunciation is considered to be the most important component of speaking. Then, the teachers need to introduce more vocabulary to the students and their usages to avoid misuse of words. Most of importantly, the teachers must give extra attention to correct students' mistakes in appropriate way to prevent them from being accustomed.

To reduce the students' psychological barriers, the researcher recommends the teachers to use the easy, real, and authentic material which is not beyond the students' capacity. In order that the students can feel at ease in learning. Besides, the teachers must create a fun leaning environment so the students will be comfortable during the learning process. The students should be provided with a language environment where they can use the language to express themselves without worrying too much about the correctness.

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