

The Relationship Between Students' Level of Positive Thinking and Their English Speaking Anxiety

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to investigate whether there is or not a relationship between students' level of positive thinking and their English speaking anxiety. The present study employed a quantitative approach, wherein a questionnaire was administered to a sample of 67 second-semester students enrolled in the English Education program at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA. The sample was collected with the use of the purposive sampling method. The result shows that the data calculated were $r_{value} = 0.315$, $r_{value} \geq N.Sig$ 5% ($0.315 \geq 0.01$), and it was $r_{value} \geq r_{table}$ ($0.315 \geq 0.240$) and $t_{value} \geq t_{table}$ ($2.673 \geq 1.996$). As a result, there was a negative significant correlation between students' level of positive thinking and their English speaking anxiety, so the proposed research hypothesis is accepted. It means that the higher level of positive thinking can lower English speaking anxiety, and vice versa.

Keywords: Positive Thinking, Speaking Anxiety

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1. Introduction

Language serves as a means to influence an individual's cognitive and emotional processes, as well as their behavioral tendencies. It facilitates interpersonal communication and enables individuals to articulate their viewpoints. English is widely recognized as one of the most commonly spoken languages worldwide. As an international language, English has a vital role for various of purposes and activities. As a result, English has become a required subject in Indonesian secondary schools and universities. The target of English teaching at schools and universities in Indonesia is to achieve communicative competence in the English language.

The global spread of English has increased the need for English instruction. English did not just use for international communication anymore; it is also used for communication with people in the same country. As a result, the focus has changed from imitating the speech patterns of native speakers to developing an English speaking innovatively. In countries where English is taught as a foreign language, such as Indonesia, individuals tend to engage in English communication more frequently with their fellow non-native speakers rather than with individuals who are native English speakers. The importance of possessing effective oral communication skills in Indonesia has experienced an upward trend, particularly in the context of English as a foreign or second language (EFL). The frequency of interpersonal communication among Indonesians using the English language is low.

Speaking is considered one of the fundamental skills in language acquisition due to its role as a means of communication between individuals. Despite the difficulties associated with verbal communication, it is imperative for individuals to engage in it as it enables them to express their thoughts and ideas in an open and honest way (Najiha, 2021). The mastery of speaking skills in English is crucial for students, as it serves as a means to establish effective communication. The utilization of language is employed to convey significance and communicate ideas. This implies that verbal communication is a common practice in everyday activities, serving as a means for students to express their understanding and convey their emotions.

According to Sookermany's (2011) research, the acquisition of speaking skills remains crucial as it serves as an indicator of an individual's competence. In addition, although speaking plays a crucial role in the process of acquiring language, achieving a high level of proficiency and mastery in English remains a challenging task for learners. It is imperative that students possess proficient English speaking abilities. The findings of a study titled "EFL Student Perception of English Speaking Anxiety" conducted by Anggraeny (2020), indicate that students encountered challenges in comprehending the skill of English speaking. The phenomenon of language acquisition difficulties in students is marked by a limited

vocabulary, apprehension towards grammatical errors, and challenges with pronunciation. The previously mentioned challenges can trigger feelings of anxiety during speaking.

Anxiety is a commonly recognized psychological disorder. Anxiety usually appears as a physiological response to a particular circumstance within the human body. Anxiety is commonly characterized as an emotional state marked by apprehension, unease, stress, or nervousness. Researchers have identified multiple definitions of anxiety. Mohtasham & Maryam (2017) assert that anxiety is a psychological state characterized by feelings of unease, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry, which are similar to those experienced in other forms of anxiety. Furthermore, as per Sutarsyah's (2017) statement, anxiety, also referred to as angst or worry, is a multifaceted psychological and physiological state that encompasses somatic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. It refers to the unpleasant emotional state characterized by apprehension and unease.

Anxiety is a psychological condition characterized by a state of uncertainty regarding one's abilities or intentions. The matter at hand is of significant importance to instructors of language at the university level, and warrants further investigation and earnest attention, as noted by (Liu, M., & Wu, 2021). Numerous students encounter challenges when communicating in English as a foreign language. The phenomenon of speaking anxiety is a commonly encountered challenge among students who engage in verbal communication in a language that is not their native tongue.

Anxiety can be influenced by various factors, including apprehension towards communication, anxiety test, and the feeling of negative evaluation (Horwitz, 1986). Foreign language learners frequently experience anxiety regarding their proficiency in a foreign language during speaking. According to Horwitz's (1986) findings, individuals who are typically talkative may experience a sense of silence in a foreign language classroom due to their speaking anxiety.

Indrianty (2016) stated that language anxiety is one of the obstacles of learning a new language is the nervousness of performing errors in that language. An argument can be made that anxiety represents a significantly detrimental emotional factor that limits the successful acquisition of a foreign language by students. According to McCrockey in Byers & Weber (1995), a person with a high degree of speaking anxiety is frequently seen negatively by others. They are seen as unresponsive, uncommunicative, difficult to comprehend, inept, disorganized, and unproductive (McCrockey, in Byers & Weber, 1995). Therefore, they indicate that it has a significant impact on the acquisition of a second language (Ozturk et al., 2014).

Students in the English Education Study Program at Universities in Indonesia are thought to experience the most anxiety regarding the skill of speaking. According to Gardner and Macintyre as cited in Nimat (2013) speaking anxiety refers to the experience of fear or

apprehension related to communication that arises when a learner is required take part in oral performance in a second or foreign language context. MacIntyre states that anxiety plays an essential part in determining the result of language acquisition, particularly in the area of speaking. The present study by Syahfutra & Wibowo (2021) examines the phenomenon of speaking anxiety among English language learners, specifically focusing on education students enrolled at UIN Suska Riau. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of participants experienced nervousness and difficulty with idea delivery during speaking in English.

Sardi et al. (2017) have identified several factors that may induce anxiety in students when speaking, including the choice of words used in their utterances. The Affective aspect is considered to be one of the contributing factors. The affective dimension is a factor that pertains to the experience of feeling and emotion. The affective aspect encompasses mental health. According to Afebri et al. (2019), affective factors encompass low motivation, negative thinking, and anxiety. Anxiety significantly impacts the speaking performance of students.

According to Al Munajjid (2010), anxiety is usually linked to a person's use of positive thinking as a means of self-motivation. Anxiety is a normal response to dangerous or unpleasant situations, but it may be channeled into productive action with the right frame of mind (Adrian, 2020). The human mind and body, including the ability to relieve anxiety and stress, may directly benefit from the practice of positive thinking (Faculty of Humanities Binus, 2020). Seligman (2006) also mentioned that people who are initially anxious would have less stress symptoms if they change a negative thinking or style of thinking into a positive one. This is something that may be done consciously or unconsciously. A positive frame of mind has a tendency to see every difficulty as something that will only last momentarily and can be managed.

According to Chatton (2016), positive thinking refers to an individual's perspective on perceiving situations from a positive perspective and seeking positive aspects in every occurrence. This approach encourages individuals to adopt positive actions. According to (Rosmaulina; & F., 2021), positive thinking is a cognitive approach that enables individuals to perceive all life events through a positive lens. Therefore, positive thinking can be considered as a mindset whereby an individual approaches a problem by focusing on its positive aspects.

Ilhammudin (2019) proposed that positive thinking is a cognitive approach that prioritizes and focuses on constructive aspects, enabling individuals to confront obstacles. Arifin in Anggraeni et al. (2020) define positive thinking as a cognitive approach that involves initiating one's thought process with positive aspects of oneself. The focus of positive thinking involves the cognitive processes and mindset of individuals who possess optimistic and affirmative attributes. Positive thinking is commonly defined as a cognitive process that

involves focusing on positive thoughts in order to generate a sense of enthusiasm and optimism within oneself (Supraminto, 2022).

According to Peale (1996), altering one's mindset is the greatest challenge on the road to inner calm. His definition of positive thinking is the use of spiritual practices in everyday life to deal with challenging circumstances and build up one's self-assurance in order to bring about positive changes. Ananda, L.R & Suprihatin (2019) conveyed the notion that individuals who are capable of positive thinking may approach challenges and discouraging ideas in an optimistic way, which in turn can assist in reducing anxiety related to speaking.

In a study conducted by Koteikova, D (2013), the researcher tried to develop new pedagogical approaches that have the potential to improve and increase students' comprehension of their personal identities, as well as their ability to overcome anxiety when speaking in a foreign language. The research demonstrated that a positive thinking might give learners with enthusiasm and a desire to be involved in speaking. Research results Anggraini et al. (2017) revealed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between students' positive thinking and their speaking anxiety. As well as a research by Ananda, L.R & Suprihatin (2019) explain that there was a significant negative relationship between positive thinking and public speaking anxiety.

This study was undertaken by the researcher because it is important for the students to have a positive thinking before they speaking in English. The researcher believed that positive thinking influences students' English speaking anxiety and plays an important role for reducing students' discomfort and anxiety. Therefore, considering the above context, the main objective of this research was to find out whether there is or not a relationship between students' level of positive thinking and their English speaking anxiety. Besides, this study also purposed to study more deeply the relationship between students' level of positive thinking and their English speaking anxiety.

2. Method

The present study employed a quantitative approach to investigate the correlation between students' positive thinking levels and their English speaking anxiety. A correlational design was utilized, which is a commonly employed method for assessing the relationship between multiple variables. The variables under consideration pertain to the level of positive thinking exhibited by students and the degree of anxiety experienced by them while speaking in English. The variables were obtained through a survey distributed to the student population. The present investigation employed purposive sampling and systematic data collection instruments to distributed a questionnaire to 67 second semester students enrolled in the English Education Study Program at University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA during the 2022/2023 academic year.

The instrument utilized to measure anxiety in English speaking was adapted from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). Meanwhile, the questionnaire utilized to assess the level of positive thinking among students was adapted from (Abdelrahim & Humaida, 2013). In order to minimize ambiguity, the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. The data obtained for this investigation underwent statistical analysis using SPSS software, and the following statistical tests were employed: (1) statistical descriptive test; (2) assumption test; (3) hypothesis test.

3. Findings

The following findings are an explanation of the findings of research data that has been analysed based on the results of data collecting.

3.1. Statistical Descriptive Test

The descriptive statistics for the Positive Thinking and English Speaking Anxiety variables are shown below.

3.1.1. Positive Thinking Variable

The maximum value of 135 is used to classify the positive thinking variable, while the minimum value is 35. This scale has an internal consistency of 25, and its four levels are very high, high, low, and very low.

Table 1. Positive Thinking Variable

Interval	Category	Mean	N	Percentage
$111 < x \leq 135$	Very High		26	38,8
$86 < x < 110$	High	105,24	36	53,7
$61 < x < 85$	Low		3	4,5
$35 \leq x < 60$	Very Low		2	3
Sum			67	100
SD = 17.21 Min = 35 Max = 135				

The tabulated data indicates that a significant proportion of the sample, specifically 38.8% of 26 participants, attained a score in the highest category, 53.7% of the sample numbers (36 subjects) achieved a high category score, 4.5% of the sample numbers (three subjects) achieved a low category score, and 3% of the sample numbers (two subjects) achieved a very low category score. With a mean score of 105.24, positive thinking is often very high. The range of respondents' scores was from 35 to 135, with a standard deviation of 17.21. It can be inferred that students enrolled in the English education department at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA during their second semester exhibit a significant level of positive thinking, as evidenced by the aforementioned data.

3.1.2. English Speaking Anxiety Variable

The level of anxiety experienced by individuals when speaking in English was quantified using a scale ranging from 0 to 109, where a score of 109 indicated the highest level of anxiety and a score of 30 represented the lowest level. The scale exhibits a high level of internal consistency, with a value of 19.75. It comprises four levels, namely, very high, high, low, and very low.

Table 2. English Speaking Anxiety Variable

Interval	Category	Mean	N	Percentage
89.26<x<109	Very High		12	17,9
69.51<x<89.25	High	72,86	27	40,3
49.76<x<69.5	Low		22	32,8
30<x<49.75	Very Low		6	9
Sum			67	100
SD = 18.02 Min = 30 Max = 109				

According to the table, the category with the highest score has a percentage of 17.9% and a sample number of 12. For the high category score, it has a percentage of 40.3% with a number of samples 27. For the low category score, it has a percentage of 32.8% with the number of samples 22, and for the very low category score of 9% with the number of samples 6. Based on an average of 72.86, it can be said that the average anxiety of speaking in English is in the high category. The subjects scored from a minimum score of 30 to a maximum score of 109, with a standard deviation of 18.02. Based on the aforementioned facts, it can be inferred that students enrolled in the English education department during their second semester at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA may exhibit a significant level of anxiety when it comes to speaking in English.

3.2. Assumption Test

The assumption test that was executed includes a normality test as well as a linearity test, which are as follows:

3.2.1. Normality Test

In order to assess how the variables are distributed, a test of normality is carried out. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was the methodology that was used as the basis for this study's normalcy test. When the Sig. value exceeds 0.05, it is possible to characterize the data obtained from the study as having a normal distribution. Conversely, when the Sig. value of the study data is below 0.05, it suggests that the data deviated from a normal distribution. The subsequent table presents the results of the normality assessment that was performed:

Table 3. The Result of Normality Test
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

N		67
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	17.10959760
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.061
	Positive	.061
	Negative	-.052
Test Statistics		.061
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

Based on the the SPSS output table, it is indicates that the significance value (Sig.) exceeds the alpha level of 0.05, with a value of 0.2. Based on the decision-making framework outlined in the previously presented Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, it can be inferred that the data shows a normal distribution.

3.2.2. Linearity Test

Linearity tests are performed to determine the linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. The condition in the linear test is that there is a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable with a significance value (Sig.) of less than 0.05. The results of the linearity test can be explained in the following table:

Table 4. The Result of Linearity Test

			F	Sig.
English Speaking Anxiety * Positive Thinking	Between Groups	(Combined)	1.341	.203
		Linearity	7.683	.009
		Deviation from Linearity	1.149	.348

The research data is said to be linear if the significance value of linearity is less than 0.050 and if the deviation value from linearity is more than 0.050. Based on the results of the linearity test, the data show the linearity significance value of the dependent variable with the independent variable of 0.009, which means less than 0.050, and the deviation value from linearity of the dependent variable linearity test with the independent variable of 0.348 or greater than 0.050. According to the findings shown above, the distribution of this research is linear.

3.3. Hypothesis Test

A hypothesis test was performed with the objective of establishing the correlation between positive thinking and anxiety levels when speaking in the English language. The present

investigation involves the utilization of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Test for the purpose of conducting data analysis. Regarding the theoretical basis of decision-making in the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Test, it is determined that if the significance value (Sig.) is less than the probability of 0.05, this indicates a significant relationship between positive thinking and English speaking anxiety. On the other hand, in cases where the significance value (Sig.) is higher than the probability threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that there is no significant correlation between the level of positive thinking showed by students and their level of anxiety when it comes to speaking English. The following are the hypothetical findings related to the correlation between students' positive thinking levels and their English speaking anxiety.

Table 5. The Result of Hypothesis Test

Correlations			
		Positive Thinking	English Speaking Anxiety
Positive Thinking	Pearson Correlation	1	-.315**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	67	67
English Speaking Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.315**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	67	67

The table data presented reveals a statistically significant correlation between Positive Thinking and English Speaking Anxiety. Specifically, the Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.010, indicating a significance level of less than 0.050. Additionally, the correlation coefficient is -0.315, indicating a significant negative relationship between the two variables. Moreover, the correlation coefficient of -0.315 is categorized as "low" as it falls within the range of 0.200 to 0.399. Given the negative result of the correlation test, the rtable has been converted to a negative value of -0.24, following a computation of -0.315. This value is subsequently contrasted with the adjusted rtable value, which is derived from a sample of 67 participants and may be equivalent to 0.24. Through the utilization of rtable, it is apparent that the value of -0.315 surpasses that of -0.24. As a result, it can be inferred that the null hypothesis (Ha) remains valid while the alternative (Ho) is dismissed. This outcome suggests that a significant correlation exists between positive thinking and English speaking anxiety among second semester students enrolled in the English education department at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the correlation between the level of positive thinking and English speaking anxiety among second semester students enrolled in the English Education department at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between the students' level of positive thinking and their English speaking anxiety. The outcomes of the correlation calculation test reveal that both positive thinking and English speaking anxiety indicate a statistically significant negative correlation, as evidenced by their respective correlation coefficients of 0.315 and significance levels of 0.01. To clarify, individuals with elevated levels of positive thinking prove reduced levels of anxiety during English speaking activities, or vice versa. Thus, it can be inferred that a high level of positive thinking among students is inversely related to their level of speaking anxiety.

This is in agreement with the results of Anggraini et al. (2017), who discovered that there is a negative correlation between positive thinking and speaking anxiety. The findings indicate that the independent variable's presentation had a significant impact on the contribution to the dependent variable, with a positive thinking influence on communication anxiety representing 41.1%. However, the study also revealed that the remaining 58.9% of the dependent variable was influenced by other factors not considered in this research, such as self-confidence, communication skills, and experiences of success or failure in interpersonal communication.

Aligns with the research conducted by Christininingsih & Widyana (2017), which showed a correlation between positive thinking and public speaking anxiety. There are internal factors that influence an individual's anxiety levels when speaking in public, such as positive thinking and self-efficacy. According to Christininingsih & Widyana's (2017) explanation, positive thinking has the potential to reduce and control anxiety, as well as being a treatment for negative thinking such as fear of failure, fear of being laughed at, shame, and a sense of feeling powerless. Machmudati & Diana (2017) argue that the adoption of positive thinking may give individuals the ability to build confidence and optimism, thereby reducing negative emotions such as anxiety. According to Christininingsih & Widyana's (2017) research, individuals who have a positive mindset show strength in the face of challenges and are better equipped to manage stress. Additionally, positive thinking can help individuals reduce anxiety in public speaking.

According to Prakosa (2015), individuals who have a positive mindset have the ability to deal with challenges with optimism, which can potentially reduce anxiety in public speaking. However, according to Prakosa (2015), the practice of positive thinking has been found to potentially decrease anxiety levels by 34.7%. The discovery has led to the promotion of positive thinking among students as a means of preparing them to effectively handle challenges both within and outside the classroom. Even though this way of thinking

oversimplifies the causes and effects of speech anxiety, it seems fair to think that positive thoughts will lead to less anxiety (Ayres, 1988).

According to Ardani (2004), the level to which a person thinks positively is inversely correlated to the level to which they experience anxiety while speaking, and vice versa. On the other hand, the more the level to which a person thinks negatively, the higher their anxiety when speaking. This is due to the fact that people, as a consequence of how they interact in communication exchanges, create negative messages and make negative predictions about the world.

The phenomenon of anxiety in dealing with the English language is impacted by a multitude of factors, including sociodemographic, situational, teacher-related, and psychological factors (Hidayati, 2018). English speaking anxiety is a phenomenon that can be affected by a range of sociodemographic factors, such as age, gender, academic achievement, experiences abroad, and multilingualism. The current investigation explores situational variables that are related to class and social contexts. The factors that relate to the characteristics of a teacher are associated with the behavior or traits demonstrated by an individual in the field of education. Psychological variables refer to a range of internal factors that contribute to an individual's mindset, self-esteem, and self-concept (Hidayati, 2018).

According to a study conducted by Cridder et al. (as cited in Wulandari & Ayuni, 2019), individuals who adopt a positive outlook towards a given situation are more likely to maintain positive emotions, avoid negative emotions, and effectively cope with situations that raise anxiety. Widarso in Kurniawan (2019) identified various factors that have an impact on positive thinking with dealing with speaking anxiety. Initially, the concept of optimism is to be considered. It is imperative to possess an identifying awareness of one's actions and consistently perceive their positive aspects. The second aspect under consideration is creativity. The capacity of an individual to cultivate their personal growth and generate unique creations distinct from others. Thirdly, it is imperative to exhibit confidence. Self-confidence refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully execute tasks and achieve desired outcomes. This mindset allows individuals to engage in activities without excessive concern, express themselves freely, take responsibility for their actions, exhibit warmth and politeness in social interactions, and acknowledge their strengths and limitations.

5. Conclusion

The computed data revealed an r -value of 0.315, which more than the non-significant levels of 5% ($0.315 \geq 0.01$). Additionally, the r -value was higher than the r -table value of 0.240, and the t -value was higher than the t -table value of 1.996 ($2.673 \geq 1.996$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_i) was accepted. According to the findings, there is a statistically significant negative correlation between the level of positive thinking showed by students and their level of anxiety when speaking in

English. Specifically, in the low category, this correlation was observed to be 0.315. The findings of the study indicate that there is a negative correlation between English speaking anxiety and positive thinking among students. Specifically, students who show high levels of positive thinking tend to experience lower levels of English speaking anxiety. Hence, it can be argued that a positive thinking is a crucial element in lowering the levels of anxiety experienced during English speaking.

The limitations of this research are this study is applied to the sample, which was focused on second semester students enrolled in the English Education program at the University of Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA, the data collection method relied on just questionnaires, and the variables included in the study may not have fully took all the factors that contribute to anxiety in speaking English. Hence, the authors have suggested that further research should be carried out to identify additional variables that may contribute to English speaking anxiety. The researchers have proposed that additional investigations could be conducted utilizing interview or observation methodologies in order to better represent the circumstances within the population and sample.

Drawing from the findings and corresponding conclusions explained, potential recommendations may be posited for students and educators. It is recommended that students enhance their mindset in accordance with the provided material. In addition, students may seek out training in positive thinking. Thus, students may reduce their anxiety towards speaking. Teachers can help solve English speaking anxiety in students through the encouragement of positive thinking and providing support and motivation. This study can be considered as a fundamental starting point and a significant reference for upcoming researchers who are interested in conducting additional investigations. Conducting such measures is crucial to facilitate a more innovative learning process that is in line with the current rapid pace of progress.

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