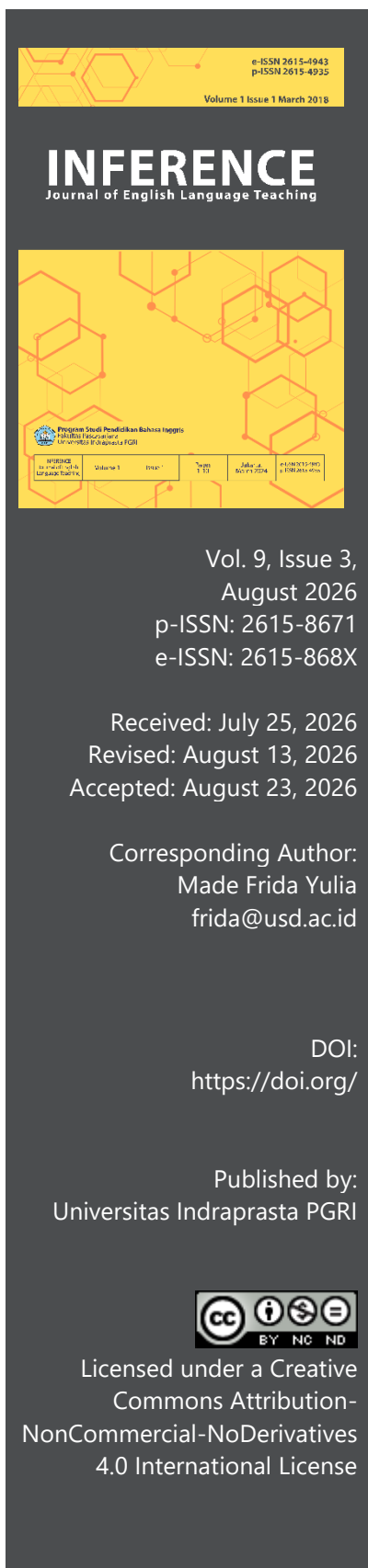




RESEARCH ARTICLE

SPEAKING ANXIETY AND ITS COPING STRATEGIES: A STUDY ON EFL STUDENT TEACHERS IN IMPROMPTU SPEECH

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Abstract: Speaking anxiety is one of the challenges frequently experienced by EFL student teachers, particularly in the context of spontaneous speaking. This basic qualitative research aimed to explore EFL student teachers' experiences of speaking anxiety in impromptu speech and how to overcome them. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations involving four EFL student teachers selected through purposive sampling, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that EFL student teachers experienced speaking anxiety manifested as physical symptoms and psychological responses. To overcome these problems, EFL student teachers used strategies to address the source of the problem and strategies that focused on regulating emotions. These findings offer practical applications for teachers to create a supportive learning environment and serve as a basis for further research involving different participant characteristics and testing the effectiveness of specific coping strategies for addressing speaking anxiety.

Keywords: speaking anxiety; impromptu speech; EFL student teachers; coping strategies

KECEMASAN BERBICARA PADA CALON GURU BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM BERBICARA SPONTAN DAN STRATEGI MENGATASINYA

Abstrak: Kecemasan berbicara menjadi salah satu tantangan yang sering dialami calon guru bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing, khususnya dalam konteks berbicara spontan. Penelitian kualitatif dasar ini bertujuan mengeksplorasi pengalaman kecemasan berbicara calon guru bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing dalam berbicara spontan dan cara mengatasinya. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi kelas yang melibatkan empat calon guru bahasa Inggris yang dipilih melalui purposive sampling, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa calon guru bahasa Inggris mengalami kecemasan berbicara berupa gejala fisik dan respons psikologis. Untuk mengatasinya calon guru bahasa Inggris menggunakan strategi mengatasi sumber masalah dan strategi yang berfokus untuk meregulasi emosi. Penemuan ini memberikan penerapan praktis bagi para guru untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung serta menjadi dasar bagi penelitian lebih lanjut yang melibatkan karakteristik partisipan yang berbeda dan menguji keefektifan salah satu coping strategies untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbicara.

Kata kunci: kecemasan berbicara; pidato dadakan; calon guru EFL; strategi mengatasi kecemasan

INTRODUCTION

In learning English as a foreign language, oral communication is a crucial aspect of language use because it requires meaningful interaction between individuals directly. In interactions, language is a crucial component of communication (Siregar et al., 2025). Particularly for EFL student teachers, Jaka and Javines (2020) state that oral communication is fundamental in academic and professional contexts because it enables EFL student teachers to present ideas, foster communication, and prepare for their careers as teachers. The most basic and efficient form of communication is speaking (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020). Therefore, good speaking skills are necessary to support effective oral communication in the learning process, public speaking events, and daily life. Speaking ability is a crucial skill in the communication process, encompassing four aspects: grammar, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension, especially in the use of foreign languages (Akhter, 2021; Qasim, 2021).

In foreign language learning, challenges often arise, both emotional and psychological, when learners lack sufficient speaking skills (Akbar et al., 2018; Masuud et al., 2024). This communication anxiety inhibits individuals from speaking and makes them afraid to communicate with others (Hanifa, 2018; Agata et al., 2019). Therefore, learners need to respond quickly and use language directly in various communication situations, especially spontaneous speaking situations. Arifin (2024) states that impromptu speech situations only provide limited space for students in preparing for speech, which requires quick thinking and adaptability. However, these situations can cause pressure that can affect students' performance or their psychology. This is in line with research by Handayani et al. (2025) which stated that impromptu situations often make students feel anxious. As a result, concentration is disrupted by thoughts or worries about social situations (Leigh et al., 2021).

Public speaking is a fear or problem that students often face at school (Hafifah & Anggraini, 2023). Public speaking anxiety is the feeling that arises when an individual feels nervous, tense, and worried while speaking English in a classroom environment. This can affect student confidence and performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Kasap & Power, 2019). This excessive anxiety can disrupt an individual's mood, thought patterns, behavior, and activities (Almeida et al., 2011). Alisoy (2024) also adds that this anxiety is often exacerbated by a lack of preparation, making it difficult to organize thoughts quickly, convey ideas effectively, and convey messages accurately, concisely, and clearly. These difficulties indicated that overcoming public speaking anxiety involves not only developing better speaking skills but also finding appropriate coping strategies to overcome it.

Coping strategies are efforts made by a person to reduce, minimize, or manage thoughts and behaviors arising from internal and external demands between an individual and their environment that are deemed to exceed their capabilities (Folkman et al., 1986). They also add that there are two main functions in coping strategies: problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. They define problem-focused coping as the use of strategies or treatments that focus on the problem, while emotion-focused coping is the use of techniques or treatments that focus on processing or regulating emotions. This is supported by the findings of Milanrianto et al. (2023), to overcome anxiety, there are two strategies, namely cognitive strategies which are useful for training the human brain in

solving problems, then there are social strategies which are useful for helping students relax and control their thoughts from anxiety.

Speaking anxiety can impact students' confidence and performance in the classroom, making it a widely researched issue. Previous research has shown that public speaking anxiety in EFL students is caused by factors such as shyness, trembling, and nervousness (Khafidhoh et al., 2023). Other factors such as language limitations, high self-expectations, and other factors are also experienced by EFL students during oral presentations (Mardiningrum & Ramadhani, 2022). Kembaren et al. (2022) also notes that higher education students experience various forms of public speaking anxiety and demonstrate various coping strategies, namely preparation, directed eye contact, and discussions with peers. Furthermore, during teaching practice and microteaching, EFL student teachers also experience anxiety caused by language limitations, student responses, and classroom management (Yetkin & Alagözlü, 2022). In addition, impromptu speaking activities can be a situation that can give rise to various obstacles that hinder the ability to communicate spontaneously, one of the biggest obstacles experienced by students is anxiety (Handayani et al., 2025).

While numerous studies have examined public speaking anxiety among EFL learners in general, existing literature remains limited regarding the speaking anxiety especially in impromptu speeches among EFL student teachers in Indonesia. Meanwhile, EFL student teachers are people that require a high level of spontaneous speaking proficiency. Furthermore, few studies in Indonesia combine an in-depth investigation of the experience of speaking anxiety with the coping strategies used to manage it. Therefore, to address this gap, this study aims to explore and examine the speaking anxiety experienced by EFL student teachers and the coping strategies they utilize in the context of impromptu speeches. This research enriches the literature and provides a deeper understanding of public speaking anxiety specifically within the realm of impromptu speaking. The findings are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding speaking anxiety in EFL education and offer practical insights for lecturers to develop instructional strategies that foster a positive learning environment for students to be actively involved and increase their confidence. This research focuses on the experiences of EFL student teachers' anxiety in speaking during impromptu and their strategies, but this research is still limited to the characteristics of diverse prospective teachers and the effectiveness of the coping strategies employed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a basic qualitative research design which serves to answer the research questions. Merriam (2009) states that basic qualitative research focused on “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (p. 23). Furthermore, “The primary goal of a basic qualitative study is to uncover and interpret these meanings” (p. 24). By adopting a basic qualitative research design, this research was able to explore the participants' personal experiences and perspectives in depth, which aligned with the aims of this research to investigate. This research focused on the experiences of speaking anxiety experienced by EFL student teachers and how they overcome them in impromptu speech.

The participants in this study were EFL student teachers selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-random method in which researchers deliberately choose individuals based on relevant experience, specialized knowledge, or specific characteristics to obtain rich, meaningful information from those best able to provide insights into the phenomenon under study (Etikan et al., 2016). There are three selection criteria for this study. The first is EFL student teachers who showed signs of speaking anxiety in impromptu speech and made attempts to overcome it. The EFL student teachers were recruited from a credible English teacher training institution. The second criterion concerns different academic achievement levels. This factor was included considering that anxiety can negatively impact students' academic achievement or performance (Awan et al., 2010). The differences in academic level would represent the EFL student teachers' diverse academic

abilities, even though they were at the same stage of their studies. The third criterion involves representation of gender difference. Gender was included in the study because research by Pristiya Putri et al. (2023) indicate that gender influences the anxiety experience among individuals with diverse levels of academic achievement. Selecting participants based on academic level and gender criteria aimed to capture a wider range of experiences among the EFL student teachers. Based on these criteria, the participants were four second-semester EFL student teachers. Second-semester students were chosen because their curriculum included a course that regularly incorporated impromptu speech activities.

This research used two instruments, in-depth semi-structured interview and observation. Semi-structured interview is generally used to explore the experiences or stories of individuals or groups (Ruslin et al., 2022). Observation, on the other hand, offer contextual understanding and help to highlight particular behaviors or events, which could be used as supporting references in the interview session (Merriam, 2009). These two instruments were used to obtain visible and more in-depth data on the experienced anxiety by EFL student teachers when speaking, as well as the coping strategies they used in impromptu speech. The interview utilized open-ended questions that lasted 30–45 minutes and were conducted in Indonesian, allowing participants to share their experiences, perspectives, and felt more comfortably and naturally without language barriers. Then, classroom observation was conducted before the interview to observe the EFL student teachers' behavior during impromptu speech. This classroom observation also aimed to identify participants who exhibited signs or characteristics that met the research criteria, namely speaking anxiety and their attempts to overcome it. Furthermore, the data obtained from this observation was used to support the interview findings.

After collecting the data, the data in this research were analyzed using thematic analysis. This thematic analysis technique was chosen because it is flexible and allow the researchers to identify, analyze, and interpret certain patterns of meaning, such as themes that often emerge from qualitative data, whether within or across data related to what participants feel, think, and experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They also add six stages in conducting this analysis: familiarized with the data, created initial codes, then categorized them into themes that align with the research questions, reviewed the themes by checking whether they are relevant to the data, define and name the themes clearly, and finally, produce the report by writing the findings and compelling examples from the data. To strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, this research applied data triangulation through prolonged engagement by conducting classroom observation more than once and using data derived from observation as support to confirm or strengthen the findings obtained through interview. Triangulation is the use of more than one data source or data collection technique to validate the accuracy of the findings. Thus, it can increase the reliability and richness of the findings (Merriam, 2009). This process not only enriched the findings with depth of meaning but also ensured the reliability of the research results using more than one instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presented the results of research on EFL student teachers' speaking anxiety during impromptu speech and how to overcome it. The research data were obtained from semi-structured interview supported by classroom observation. The data were analyzed and classified to identify key themes related to participants' experiences of speaking anxiety during impromptu speaking activities in class. To facilitate the analysis, the four EFL student teachers were divided into four codes. P1 referred to male EFL student teachers with a high academic level, while P2 referred to male EFL student teachers with a low academic level. Then, P3 referred to female EFL student teachers with a high academic level, while P4 referred to female EFL student teachers with a low academic level. The findings of this research could be explained as follows: **Speaking Anxiety**

Physical Symptoms

Body

Based on the interviews, participants recognized certain physical signs that occurred in their bodies when they had to speak spontaneously. These signs included heart pounding, random gestures, trembling hands and feet, and sweaty foreheads and hands. All participants mentioned various physical symptoms they experienced during impromptu speech, as indicated by the following quotation,

“Saat saya berbicara, dahi sama tangan saya berkeringat, dan kaki saya sedikit gemetar.” (As I spoke, my forehead and hands were sweating, and my legs were trembling slightly). (P1, interview)

Furthermore, participants also experienced random gestures during impromptu speech. This was echoed by another participant,

“Saat menyampaikan pidato dadakan, saya lebih banyak melakukan gerakan refleks, seperti kopekin kuku atau memegang ujung baju karena saya merasa gugup.” (When delivering an impromptu speech, I tend to make reflexive movements, like picking at my nails or holding the hem of my shirt, because I feel nervous) (P3, interview)

Classroom observations also supported these interview findings. During the performance, several participants were seen holding the hem of their shirts and their hands appeared to be trembling slightly. These findings suggested that impromptu speech could trigger physical symptoms of anxiety that were both visible and felt during performance. These symptoms might arise from reactions to feelings of nervousness, anxiety, or pressure that could interfere with their performance. This aligned with research findings that physical symptoms of anxiety have a significant impact on student performance, weakening or diminishing their ability and desire to actively engage in speaking activities during their learning process (Siregar et al., 2025).

Voice

Data analysis showed that during impromptu speech performances, participants experienced changes in their voices due to feelings of anxiety. Anxiety while speaking can affect participants' voices during impromptu performances, consequently impacting the quality of their performance. These effects or changes in their voices included trembling, no change in voice, a soft voice, and rapid speech. As one participant stated,

“Saya tidak menyadari betapa pelan suara saya terdengar oleh orang lain, dan saat merasa gugup, saya cenderung berbicara dengan cepat supaya cepat selesai.”

(I did not realize how quiet my voice sounded to others, and when I felt nervous, I tended to speak quickly just to get it over with.) (P1, interview)

Meanwhile, another participant stated,

“Pada saat saya berbicara secara spontan, tidak ada perubahan pada suara saya.” (When I speak spontaneously, there is no change in my voice) (P3, interview)

This was supported by classroom observations, which showed that during performances, participants were heard speaking rapidly, with a trembling voice, and a soft voice. These findings suggested that although not all participants experienced changes in their voices during spontaneous speech, their voices could still be influenced by their feelings and situations, which could interfere with their speaking performance. These changes in their voices were a response to their feelings or level of

anxiety. This supported the findings of research by Almeida et al. (2011), which reveals that high levels of anxiety can affect a person's communication style and voice.

Psychological Responses

Emotional Symptoms

The findings of this research indicated that all participants experienced a variety of feelings when performing impromptu activities in front of peers and lecturers. These feelings arose because participants had to discuss random topics and speak spontaneously in front of a large audience. During the impromptu activities, participants felt awkward, lacked confidence, felt empty, did not know what to say, were nervous, afraid of making mistakes, and panicked about the random topics. One participant stated,

“Pada saat impromptu, saya merasa gugup karena awalnya tidak mengenal siapa pun dan saya panik karena tidak memahami topiknya.” (At the impromptu, I was nervous because I did not know anyone at first and I panicked because I did not understand the topic). (P1, interview)

Another participant added,

“Saya merasa gugup dan takut saat harus berpidato secara mendadak; rasanya saya tidak tahu harus berkata apa dan pikiran saya menjadi kosong karena harus berbicara secara spontan.” (I feel nervous and afraid when I have to give an impromptu speech; I feel like I do not know what to say and my mind goes blank because I have to speak spontaneously) (P4, interview)

These findings demonstrate how individuals experienced different feelings or moods when they experience the same thing but interpreted it differently. These feelings arose from the pressure felt in the situation and influenced by anxiety about language and audience factors during the performance, especially in situations requiring spontaneous speech. This was a response to the random and unplanned nature of impromptu speech, which required a good understanding and language skills. It could affect their fluency in speaking, their confidence, or the quality of their performance. These findings supported the research of Siregar et al. (2025), which identify that emotional moods or feelings are interconnected with emotional symptoms, which can create a complex experience of anxiety and reduce confidence, fluency in speaking, and the desire to engage. This aligned with previous research by Rajitha and Alamelu (2020), which demonstrate that anxiety contributes to users' lack of confidence due to a lack of confidence in their language skills. This could impact their performance during spontaneous performances or activities.

Self Perception of Ability

Interview results revealed varying levels of self-perception of ability, which was a factor influencing participants' experiences of anxiety during impromptu performances. Some participants reported moderate self-assessments, while others reported low self-assessments. Participants (P1; P3) showed relatively positive self-assessments, but still needed improvement. Meanwhile, other participants (P2; P4) expressed a lack of confidence in their abilities or rated themselves very low and revealed their limitations. One participant stated,

“Untuk pidato dadakan, saya merasa kemampuan saya sudah cukup baik, namun saya belum mencapai target durasi bicara spontan dan cenderung berbicara terlalu cepat, jadi saya masih perlu melakukan perbaikan.” (Regarding impromptu speeches, I feel my ability is

quite good; however, I have not yet met the target duration for spontaneous speaking and tend to speak too fast, so I still need to make improvements) (P1, interview)

Conversely, another participant stated,

“Mengenai kemampuan saya sendiri, saya merasa masih memiliki banyak kekurangan karena kemampuan bahasa Inggris saya kurang baik saat berbicara secara spontan, jadi banyak tidak tahu nya.” (Regarding my own abilities, I feel I still have many shortcomings because my English skills are not strong when speaking spontaneously, so there is a lot I do not know) (P4, interview)

This statement indicated that despite individual variations in self-perception within the same context, self-perceptions of ability still influence performance because how they viewed themselves reflects how participants approach challenges in their performance. Participants with low self-perceptions tend to experience anxiety due to concerns about being unable to cope with challenges or fearing the opinions of others, and vice versa. This finding supported previous research by Masuwd et al. (2024), which shows a relationship between self-perception and anxiety. Individuals with positive self-perceptions were better able to face challenges, while those with negative self-perceptions may develop feelings of insecurity or anxiety that could interfere with performance.

External and Internal Factor of Disrupting Concentration

Thematic analysis showed that participants experienced both internal and external issues related to impaired focus or concentration during impromptu performances. Participants perceived negative thoughts that arose during impromptu performances as an internal factor hindering their concentration. Furthermore, other participants felt their focus was disrupted by the influence of the audience, particularly the gaze of the audience, which was an external factor disrupting their focus during impromptu performances. One participant reported,

“Yang biasanya membuat saya sulit fokus adalah pikiran negatif saya sendiri, tapi biasanya saya cepat pulih.” (What usually makes it hard for me to focus is my own negative thoughts, but I usually bounce back quickly) (P1, interview)

While another participant reported,

“Jika terlalu banyak orang di ruangan yang menatap saya, saya menjadi gugup atau cemas, itulah yang membuat saya kehilangan fokus.” (If too many people in the room are staring at me, I get nervous or anxious; that is what causes me to lose focus) (P4, interview)

These results indicated that during performances, participants experienced impaired focus because their focus was diverted by their own thoughts and the audience's reactions. They were more concern about the mistakes they face and how others will react or judge their performance than focusing on the task at hand. This finding was supported by previous research by Leigh et al. (2021), who discovers that anxiety can make someone tend to shift their focus or attention to negative thoughts and anxious feelings, so that they think about these thoughts or worries more often than the learning tasks or activities being carried out.

Cognitive Difficulties and The Influence

Most participants experienced cognitive difficulties that affected their thinking or thought processes when speaking spontaneously. These cognitive difficulties included going blank while speaking, difficulty verbalizing thoughts, information overload that prevented key points from being conveyed

effectively, disorganized ideas, grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and unfamiliarity with the topic. One participant reported,

“Saya tidak terlalu memahami topiknya dengan baik, penguasaan tata bahasa saya kurang memadai, dan kosakata saya masih terbatas.” (When it comes to topics, I do not really understand them well, I do not have a good grasp of grammar, and my vocabulary is still limited) (P2, interview)

In this case, these challenges affected their speaking performance, including going off-topic, ideas not conveyed well, needing more time, and code-switching. One participant said,

“Saya terkadang merasa malu ketika saya tidak tahu kata-katanya dalam bahasa Inggris, saya menggunakan bahasa Indonesia untuk kata itu.” (I sometimes feel embarrassed if I do not know the English word, so I speak in Indonesian) (P3, interview)

This demonstrated that pressure from cognitive factors could impact an individual's feelings and the quality of their speaking performance. These cognitive difficulties could trigger feelings of anxiety. This could occur because participants feel less capable of performing well in impromptu tasks, leading to feelings of worry, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes. Therefore, the greater the cognitive difficulties or pressure, the greater the likelihood of someone experiencing anxiety when speaking. Cognitive factors have the potential to trigger anxiety when speaking in a foreign language, where feelings or symptoms of anxiety can influence thought processes and interfere with clear communication of an individual's thoughts (Hanifa, 2018; Siregar et al., 2025).

Reactions of Performance Outcomes

One participant reported their experience responding to the possibility of a grade as follows,

“Saya khawatir mendapat nilai rendah karena melakukan banyak kesalahan saat penilaian dadakan.” (I was worried about getting a low grade because I made a lot of mistakes during the impromptu assessment) (P4, interview)

This statement indicated that participants experienced anxiety when thinking about the outcome of their performance, which was influenced by thoughts or concerns about their own performance. This anxiety manifested itself in feelings of worry and fear when faced with the possibility of a grade they might receive for making a mistake that could potentially reduce their score during the impromptu assessment. This increased their anxiety when they thinking about it. In contrast, another participant stated,

“Saya tidak terlalu takut mendapatkan nilai rendah karena para dosen dan lingkungannya sangat menyenangkan.” (I am not too afraid of getting a low grade because the lecturers and the environment are very nice) (P1, interview)

This indicated that not all participants experienced the same fear of failure. Some participants expressed acceptance of the possible outcome, while two others reported concerns about receiving a low grade. Worry about the consequences of academic or performance failure can lead to increase anxiety and a greater fear of making mistakes (Akbar et al., 2018). However, the results of this study showed that each individual's response to the possibility of failure could vary depending on how they interpreted and handled the situation or environment they face.

Reactions of Others' Evaluation

The results of the research showed that participants had varying thoughts about evaluation or judgment from others during impromptu speech. Some participants viewed evaluation as a source of pressure that

increased their anxiety, while others viewed evaluation as a positive experience that helped improve their impromptu speaking skills. One participant stated,

“Saya merasa senang karena saya sedang dinilai dan ada seseorang yang peduli terhadap saya, dan hal ini bisa menjadi pengalaman belajar untuk masa depan.” (I feel happy because I am being evaluated and that someone cares about me, and this can be a learning experience for the future) (P2, interview)

Meanwhile, another participant revealed,

“Saya merasa malu saat bersama orang-orang yang tidak terlalu saya kenal, dan saya takut dinilai negatif oleh orang lain jika saya melakukan kesalahan.” (I feel shy when I am with people I do not know well and am afraid of being judged negatively by others if I make a mistake) (P3, interview)

These findings suggested that while not all participants experienced a fear of evaluation, evaluation by others remains a concern for some. This may stem from a desire to make a positive social impression in evaluative and social situations in the foreign language classroom. The evaluative and social situations inherent in speaking activities in foreign language classes make individuals more sensitive to peer evaluations because they want to make a positive social impression (Horwitz et al., 1986; Agata et al., 2019).

Coping Strategies

Speaking Performance Strategies

The research findings showed that participants had a variety of strategies to overcome challenges or problems, especially their experiences of speaking anxiety that hindered their performance during impromptu speeches. All participants used various speaking performance strategies, namely helping from others, organizing their ideas, using simple words, and connecting topics to personal experiences. As reported by one participant,

“Agar dapat berbicara dengan lancar, saya biasanya mengaitkan topik pembicaraan dengan pengalaman pribadi serta mencari atau menggunakan kosakata yang tepat dan sederhana untuk menjelaskannya.” (To speak fluently, I usually connect topics to my experiences and find or use appropriate and simple vocabulary to describe them) (P2, interview)

Then another participant added,

“Saya biasanya mengaitkan topik dengan pengalaman pribadi agar bisa berbicara lebih lancar.” (I usually connect topics to what I have experienced to make speaking more fluent) (P3, interview)

These results indicated that all participants had specific strategies to overcome problems or challenges in performance, particularly the anxiety they experienced, to improve their preparedness for impromptu speeches. By trying to use simple words, organizing their ideas, asking for help from others, and connecting topics to their experiences, they focused more on solving the problems they were experiencing. This is in line with research by Folkman et al. (1986) and Handayani et al. (2025), who find that students use techniques of speaking at a slow tempo, connecting topics to what they had experienced, asking for help from others, organizing ideas in their minds before conveying them, and

searching for or using easier vocabulary that focuses more on overcoming the challenges or problems they faced in speaking spontaneously.

Speaking Practice Strategies

The thematic analysis revealed that all participants used strategies to improve their spontaneous speaking skills and reduce their anxiety. These strategies included preparing topic knowledge through reading, conversations with partners, and using media. One participant stated,

“Saya biasanya menggunakan Discord atau Roblox untuk mengobrol dengan teman-teman penutur asli dan menggunakan AI untuk melatih pelafalan.” (I usually use Discord or Roblox to chat with native-speaking friends and use AI to practice pronunciation) (P1, interview)

Another participant reported,

“Saya biasanya mengobrol dengan teman-teman agar lebih percaya diri saat berbicara di depan kelas, serta memperkaya kosakata dengan membaca informasi atau cerita.” (I usually chat with my friends to feel more confident speaking in front of the class and expand my vocabulary by reading information or stories) (P4, interview)

These statements indicated that each participant used specific strategies to improve their spontaneous speaking skills. These strategies include regular practice, namely chatting or speaking spontaneously with native speakers or peers, using media or AI, and expanding their knowledge of the topic through reading. This aligned with previous research by Handayani et al. (2025), which reveals that individuals who struggle to generate ideas can use reading strategies to expand their knowledge, help them explore unexpected topics, and practice speaking about random topics with friends. Unfortunately, one participant used Discord and Roblox as tools to learn vocabulary and accents, or chat about random topics with international friends. This strategy has not been widely found in previous research. This suggested that technology and media can be a learning resource for improving speaking skills.

Calming Techniques

Interview results showed that all participants had their own self-calming strategies to overcome the anxiety they experienced during impromptu speeches. These strategies were useful for reducing anxiety during the performance, thus helping participants regain their focus and continue with the task at hand. To calm themselves, participants employed strategies such as talking to themselves, breathing deeply, pausing, and speaking slowly. One participant stated,

“Saat merasa gugup, saya biasanya tidak berbicara terlalu cepat dan cenderung berhenti sejenak untuk menenangkan diri.” (When I am nervous, I usually do not speak too fast and tend to pause to calm myself) (P2, interview)

While another added,

“Saya biasanya menarik napas dalam-dalam dan berhenti sejenak saat berbicara untuk menenangkan diri.” (I usually take a deep breath and pause while speaking to calm myself) (P3, interview)

This was supported by classroom observations, which showed that during performances, participants were speak at a slow pace and pause briefly to compose themselves. These results indicated that all participants had their own strategies to reduce and control their anxiety, focusing on managing their emotions to improve their performance. These self-calming strategies align with previous theory and research by Folkman et al. (1986) and Handayani et al. (2025), which indicates that emotion regulation strategies are techniques that focus on managing an individual's emotions.

This strategy aimed to control panic and anxiety by using techniques such as speaking slowly and taking deep breaths to calm yourself.

Positive Self-talk

From the data analysis, participants revealed their experiences of overcoming speaking anxiety, such as using positive self-talk,

“Biasanya saya mengatakan ke diri saya bahwa ini demi nilai yang bagus; teruslah berusaha dan selesaikan saja, ini kan cuma kelas berbicara.” (It is for a good grade, just keep trying, and just get it done; it is just a speaking class) (P1, interview)\

Then, another participant added,

“Kata-kata penyemangat seperti “Kamu pasti bisa”, tinggal ngomong aja. Setelah tampil nanti, kamu akan bisa melakukan yang lebih baik daripada hari ini.” (Motivation like, 'You can do it,' just say it. After you perform, you will be able to do better than you did today) (P3, interview)

These statements indicated that all participants had several methods or personal motivations that helped them reduce their anxiety. Personal motivation was important when participants faced immediate challenges that required their own efforts to overcome. This motivation includes self-esteem, acceptance of mistakes, the urge to act, motivation for improvement, positive thinking, and a "just do it" mindset. The findings also showed that each participant used positive self-talk to reduce anxiety, build confidence, and maintain a calm atmosphere during impromptu speeches. This positive self-talk also helped participants practice emotional regulation and reduced negative thoughts that arose during impromptu speeches. This was in line with previous research by Milanrianto et al. (2023), which find that self-talk can reduce anxiety, create a sense of calm or control, and build self-confidence through visualizing fluent speech and striving to appear confident.

Receiving Social Support

The research revealed that all participants needed support from others to reduce anxiety and gain confidence. Support from others was crucial when experiencing speaking anxiety, especially during impromptu speeches. During impromptu speeches, participants received verbal appreciation from friends, encouragement from friends, applause from friends, audience attention, feedback from lecturers, and applause, all of which helped reduce their anxiety. As one participant expressed,

“Saat teman-teman memberikan apresiasi dengan bertepuk tangan atau mendengarkan saat saya berbicara, serta adanya masukan dari dosen.” (When my friends give me appreciation by clapping or listening while I speak, and feedback from lecturers)(P2, interview)

Then, another participant added,

“Biasanya dari teman-teman saya memberikan kata-kata dan isyarat yang menenangkan atau menyemangati, lalu mereka juga memberikan tepuk tangan setelah pertunjukan.” (While my friends usually give me reassuring or encouraging words and gestures, they also give me applause after the performance) (P3, interview).

The results of this study indicated that the social support they receive from their environment, such as friends or lecturers, is an important aspect in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence in speaking English. Furthermore, social support also provided a sense of security and made participants feel less alone when facing challenges, thus reducing their anxiety. Confidence in speaking English is gained through interaction or assistance through support or encouragement from those closest to them

when facing difficulties, so that they feel less alone in facing their problems (Hafifah & Anggraini, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

This research examined the speaking anxiety experienced by EFL student teachers during impromptu speech and how they overcome it. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that EFL student teachers have varied speaking anxiety experiences in impromptu speech, including physical symptoms and psychological responses. Therefore, to address the speaking anxiety, they experience during impromptu speech, EFL student teachers employed coping strategies that focused on problem-solving and emotional regulation, namely speaking performance strategies and speaking practice strategies. Other strategies focused on emotional regulation include calming strategies, positive self-talk, and gaining social support.

The findings of this research indicated that students, especially EFL student teachers, still experienced speaking anxiety during impromptu speech. However, they actively engaged in various coping strategies. These findings further enriched the existing literature on speaking anxiety by contributing to knowledge about how EFL student teachers experienced and overcame speaking anxiety, particularly in the context of spontaneous speaking. This research also highlighted the importance of a positive classroom environment that supported and helped students gain confidence and improve their impromptu speaking skills. However, future research can involve different characteristics participants and examine the effectiveness of a specific coping strategy for addressing speaking anxiety.

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