

Teacher's Strategies To Overcome The Students Mental Block In Speaking English

Laila Nurizmi¹

Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia

Ahmad khatami²

Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia

Sulastri³

Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia

Lalu deni Kurniawan⁴

Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia

Selamet Riadi Jaelani⁵

Hamzanwadi University, Indonesia

E-mail :¹ lailanurizmi1@gmail.com

Abstract. *This study was to find teacher's strategies to overcome the student mental block in speaking English. The participants of this article were tutor at Linkage, Bale Beleq, Best One and FLC. The data were collected by using questioner and interview from 5 tutor at course. The result is to find various strategies to slove the mental block student such as student center learning (SCL), pair teaching, gaming, and limited practice. the result also to implementing a combination of supportive teaching strategies and creating an encouraging classroom environment, so teachers can help the students to overcome their mental blocks and become confident and proficient English speakers. the good implementation of these strategies can make the students be better prepared to in an interconnected society that requires excellent communication skills by successefully implementing these tactics.*

Keywords: *Teacher strategies, student mental block, speaking english*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan strategi guru untuk mengatasi hambatan mental siswa dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris. Peserta artikel ini adalah tutor di Linkage, Bale Beleq, Best One dan FLC. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara dari 5 orang tutor kursus. Hasilnya adalah ditemukan berbagai strategi untuk mengatasi mental block siswa seperti student center learning (SCL), pair teaching, gaming, dan limited practice. hasilnya juga untuk menerapkan kombinasi strategi pengajaran yang mendukung dan menciptakan lingkungan kelas yang menggembirakan, sehingga guru dapat membantu siswa mengatasi hambatan mental mereka dan menjadi penutur bahasa Inggris yang percaya diri dan mahir. implementasi yang baik dari strategi ini dapat membuat siswa lebih siap dalam masyarakat yang saling berhubungan yang membutuhkan keterampilan komunikasi yang baik dengan berhasil menerapkan taktik ini

INTRODUCTION

The English language has emerged as the top worldwide language of communication in the constantly changing environment of our linked world, English has made a name for itself as the language that unites individuals from all linguistic backgrounds, facilitating seamless communication and building a sense of global togetherness. This is true in many fields, from commerce and diplomacy to academics and technology. Knowledge of English is very important for those who want to expand their educational and career opportunities,. However, many students often experience mental blocks when it comes to speaking English fluently and confidently. According to Department Pendidikan Nasional (2004) in carrying out speaking, students face some difficulties, one of them is about language its self.

furthermore In fact, most students are not good at speaking, even if they have a large vocabulary, grammar and write well. Hieu (2011) states that some students understand English grammar very well, and even score high marks in examinations, but their communication skills are very poor and they are often too shy to even attempt to strike up a conversation. Indriyanti (2016) in her study, she found that lack of vocabularies and lack of preparation have also contributed to students' anxiety in speaking.

The problem student has mental block in speaking is students are afraid of making mistakes and being judged by others when they speak. This fear of failure often stems from the perfectionistic mindset that pervades many educational systems, where students are conditioned to value correctness over experimentation and growth. As a result, they become reluctant to engage in impromptu conversations and express their thoughts openly, which ultimately hinders the development of effective communication skills. In addition, Tanveer (2007) says that learners of English language often express a feeling of stress, nervousness or anxiety while learning to speak English and claim to have a mental block against learning English.

These feelings of stress, nervousness, and anxiety experienced by learners of the English language are not uncommon. Many individuals face challenges when it comes to speaking English fluently, especially if it is not their native language, This can lead to mental blocks that impede progress in language learning. According to Hermaliani (2016) "Mental block is a mental condition that often becomes a factor in a barrier for a person to achieve the ideals as well as his wish that actually comes from limiting beliefs".

Not just no self-confidence that can cause mental block, one of which is due to the existence of anxiety in themselves. Anxiety is reaction to stress that has psychological or

physical symptoms. Excessive self anxiety will cause someone to be mental block. As a result of the mental block, a person feels that he is not possible or cannot achieve something. According Yusnitasari and Pertiwi (2018), the impact and influence of this mental block would make a person, especially a teenager during the process of development into a human being pessimistic, always afraid to fail, afraid to try, and ultimately failed to be successful.

Anggraeni et al. (2020) argued that the lecturer needed to know speaking anxiety factors so further researcher or lecturer who was interested in this study could overcome foreign language anxiety, especially in English speaking class. here are Several factors contribute to these feelings, including fear of making mistakes, fear of pronunciation, and fear of being judged by others. Learners worry that their grammar and vocabulary are wrong, which can make them feel embarrassed and lose confidence. This fear creates a mental barrier that can prevent you from participating in conversations and expressing yourself freely. Indeed, understanding the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among students is crucial for lecturers and educators. By having this knowledge, they can play a pivotal role in helping learners overcome foreign language anxiety, particularly in English speaking classes. Nevertheless, there are tangible steps that educators and educational institutions can take to cultivate a growth mindset among students and create a supportive atmosphere for language development. By nurturing an environment that embraces mistakes as natural stepping stones to improvement, students can feel more at ease in practicing their spoken English without the fear of judgment or embarrassment. As educators, it is important to recognize and address this challenge by implementing effective strategies that help students overcome mental blocks and develop strong speaking skills.

The aim of this study is to explore and identify effective strategies that teachers can employ to help students overcome their mental blocks and develop confidence in speaking English. By investigating the underlying factors contributing to students' fear of speaking and understanding the impact of a perfectionistic mindset, this research aims to equip educators with practical tools and methods to create a supportive and encouraging environment for language practice.

METHOD

To achieve the goal, a case study was designed to gather qualitative data because this study was exploratory in nature. According to Yamagata-Lynch (2010), a case study is especially compatible with the theoretical claims of a theory since it enables a thorough description of the natural process being studied. A case study can also present a holistic viewpoint by probing “situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis” (Cohen et al., 2017, p. 376).

The study involved students who were enrolled in the General English language course during the last semester of 2023. This course aimed to enhance the students' language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The study took place a month in four different English courses in Lombok timur, including Bale Beleq, Bestone, Linkage, and Foreign Language Center. The respondents were 20 students with an age ranging from 15 to 21 years old and 5 tutors with an age ranging from 20-30, This study adopted a questioner and interview to collect the data Participants have experienced discussions using a face-to-face system.

This research is to identify teacher strategies in teaching speaking in courses and find out various kinds of teacher strategies in teaching speaking. It was found that some of the tutors from the sample stated that the student center was a good method to overcome mental block problems when students were learning speaking. Other strategies were also found such as learning using modeling, self projects and increasing practice.

Simple random sampling was taken into consideration using the definition of “randomly selects a subset of participants from a population” provided by Lauren Thomas (2020), "each member of the population has an exactly equal chance of being selected". The participants were selected based on their knowledge, experience, and relevance to the research question.

Thorough analysis of the phenomena, a structured individual interview and naturalistic observation were conducted to identify the student's mental block in speaking english and teacher's strategies in teaching during the learning process. According to Tegan George & Julia Merkus (2022), a structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions in a set order to collect data on a topic. While naturalistic observation is a research method that involves observing subjects in their natural environment, provided by khendra Cherry (2022). This observation's approach is often used by psychologists and other social scientists, It is a

form of qualitative research, which focuses on collecting, evaluating, and describing non-numerical data. The development of the interview questions began with an extensive review.

The principal researcher then created an initial set of interview questions. These questions aimed to capture the information related to the student's mental block and strategies to overcome the anxiety in speaking English. The interviews were carried out using face to face system. Each interview had a duration of approximately 10-15 min per participant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed word-for-word. The interview questions are:

A. Interview for tutor/teacher

1. Have you ever found students who experience mental blocks when you teach speaking in class?
2. What strategies have been taught when teaching speaking?
3. What causes students to experience mental blocks?
4. Is the strategy that you use able to overcome students' mental blocks when speaking?
5. What are the most effective strategies for overcoming students' mental blocks when speaking?

B. Interview for students

1. Have you ever had trouble thinking of something to say in English? If so, tell us about your experience.
2. Are there any particular circumstances or subjects that give you a mental block?
3. Do you believe that stress or anxiety contribute to the development of mental blocks?

After a couple of weeks, the researchers were conducting an observation to review immediately the difficulties experienced by students when speaking English. The steps for making observations are as follows:

1. Select the observational object.
2. Compile information about the subject.
3. enhancing reports to include data from observations.
4. Making notes on observations.
5. Gather the findings of the observation reports.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The findings are organised based on five different research Questions, such as question 1: Have you ever found students who experience mental blocks when you teach speaking in class? This is followed by question 2: What causes students to experience mental blocks And question 3: What strategies have been taught when teaching speaking? The interview data from

the participants were presented as how it was transcribed and no changes were made to grammar and sentence structures.

First of all, the interview in this study refers to tutor's experience in finding students' mental blocks in general english course. The detailed information of interview session is as follows:

"While instructing in classes, I frequently encounter pupils who have mental obstacles"

(Respondent 1)

"Every month, I discovered several pupils who had mental barriers out of 20 students"

(Respondent 2)

"Students who struggle with speaking anxiety must be present in every course" (Respondent

3)

"There are still some students who struggle to speak English in my group of advanced pupils"

(Respondent 4)

"I frequently see pupils who struggle to articulate their thoughts in English when I'm teaching in a classroom" (Respondent 5)

According to the results of the interview, every pupil has had difficulty speaking. Respondents 1 through 5 all agree that it is becoming more difficult for their students to generate or pronounce certain words when speaking English.

The second interview refers to the causes of "communication apprehension" that faced by students. Communication apprehension was simply students' shyness (Akkaş et al., 2020). The detailed information of Communication Apprehension is as follows:

"Anxiety, limited vocabulary, fear of mistakes, all of these can make students experience a mental block in speaking English." (Respondent 2)

"lack of confidence is the main factor of student's mental block in speaking english"

(Respondent 1 & 3)

"One of the issues that causes pupils to encounter a mental block is a lack of practice"

(Respondent 4)

"Students who are getting difficult in speaking usually have a negative experience"

(Respondent 5)

The interview session shows that the student's mental blocks in speaking english can result from various factors including Anxiety, limited vocabulary, fear of mistake, lack of confidence, limited practice, and past a negative experience.

A. Anxiety

Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is defined as “situation-specific social anxiety arising from the environment of real oral presentations” (Bodie, 2010, p. 72). As a socio-psychological factor, language anxiety can reduce the effectiveness of presentation preparation, impede second language oral performance (MacIntyre, 2017, pp. 11–30; Woodrow, 2006) and adversely impact cognitive processing, self-efficacy, motivation, language communication, and class participation (eg, Liu & Jackson, 2008; Teimouri et al., 2019).

While fear of mistake is an obsessive fear of imperfection, someone with this condition is terrified of making mistakes, state by Cleveland Clinic (2023). Other typical ideas connected to this subject include worries about speaking and saying something harmful, worries about saying the incorrect thing, and worries about unintentionally offending someone.

B. Limited practice and vocabulary

Speaking is one of four skill in English language after writing, reading, and listening. Speaking is essentially a talent or ability as well as a knowledge-based activity. Since "practice makes perfect," students who desire to master the English language must be persistent and diligent in their practice. Conversely, it will be challenging for him to master English if there is a lack of practice.

Vocabulary knowledge is arguably the most important factor determining how well student's comprehending in speaking. Generally, Knowledge about the use of words in foreign language learning is very significant. Information obtained for language learners indicate so many effects on their performance during testing (Pishghadam, 2008). Without any vocabulary, students Will not able to speak English well.

C. Lack of confidence

For many students, speaking in a foreign language without hesitation might be a major problem. For a student to properly understand the material and regularly advance in language proficiency, communication with other students and the instructor in the language being studied is essential. However, Fitriani (2015) notes that students who struggle to communicate in English and have a tendency to withdraw from conversations may show a drop in their learning progress as well as a lack of the crucial interpersonal contact. In light of this, educators should focus more on pupils who lack the self-assurance to talk in class in English and incorporate

self-assurance-boosting techniques for them. Speaking well in a foreign language could be difficult for many pupils.

D. Past negative experience

The average individual becomes traumatized in action as a result of negative events. Trauma is a condition that develops as a result of negative experiences or occurrences, such as car accidents, physical abuse victims, or victims of natural disasters. Similar to the trauma of speaking a foreign language, when you make a mistake, you immediately receive sympathy from others, which depresses you mentally. According to Dr. Jiemi Ardian (2015), trauma is a condition that can impact a person's mental and emotional state when recalling a traumatic experience.

All of these things can obstruct effective communication and make it challenging for people to adequately express themselves. Therefore, there is a need for specific strategies to help students overcome their obstacles and enhance their English-speaking skills. The purpose of the interview was to discover more strategies for overcoming the student's mental block . The following provides the interview's specific information:

"Pair teaching, student's center, and gaming are the right way to overcome the student's problem when they experienced a mental block" (Respondent 1, 2 & 3)

"When we faced the student who are getting difficult in speaking English, collaborative learning and approaching are the right way to overcome that problem" (Responden 4&5)

After speaking with five tutors for a few interviews, the researchers observed the 20 students being taught. When they were given lessons on "daily activity" and used pair teaching strategies, the students were very enthusiastic and active in class. Additionally, their conversation with other classmates helped them become more aware of their own identities while in class.

the student has mental block in peaking English because many reason, according to Yusnitasari & Pertiwi (2018) investigate that mental block is a belief that is inhibiting one's self in the optimal use of the potential barriers both mentally or psychologically that surrounds a person's mind. Astari nurul (2020) in their study ,The impact and influence of this mental block would make a person, especially a teenager during the process of development into a human being pessimistic, always afraid to fail, afraid to try, and ultimately failed to be successful.

The provided data revolves around a research study aimed at understanding the factors contributing to mental blocks experienced by English language learners during speaking activities and identifying strategies to overcome these blocks. The methodology used in the study involved case study design, qualitative data collection through structured interviews and naturalistic observation, and simple random sampling for participant selection. The data also presents various teacher strategies to help students overcome their mental blocks in speaking English.

The choice of a case study methodology is discussed in the data as it allows for a thorough description of the natural process being studied. This approach is especially compatible with theoretical claims, enabling a holistic viewpoint that goes beyond numerical analysis. Participants in this study were students enrolled in General English language courses, and the use of qualitative data collection methods like interviews and naturalistic observation helped gain insights into the students' experiences and teacher strategies. The study's primary aim was to answer two research questions related to mental blocks in English language learners during speaking activities and strategies to overcome them. Understanding the factors contributing to these blocks is essential for developing effective teaching strategies.

The study involved students and teachers from different English language courses in Lombok Timur. Simple random sampling was used to ensure fair representation of participants from the population. Both students and teachers were involved in the study to gain a comprehensive perspective on the issue. The data collection tools consisted of structured individual interviews and naturalistic observation. Structured interviews allowed researchers to collect data on specific topics in a set order, while naturalistic observation provided insights into students' behaviors in their natural environment. The use of these qualitative methods enhanced the understanding of mental blocks and teacher strategies.

The data lists several strategies that teachers can employ to help students overcome their mental blocks in speaking English. These strategies include creating a positive and supportive learning environment, implementing student-centered learning, role-plays and simulations, using speaking buddies or language partners, providing constructive feedback, integrating technology, and gradually exposing students to speaking tasks of increasing complexity. The data emphasizes the importance of effective communication in English and the role of teachers in equipping students with the necessary skills. By understanding and

addressing mental blocks, teachers can create a more conducive learning environment that fosters language development and enhances students' speaking skills.

Overall, the data provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by English language learners during speaking activities and offers practical strategies for teachers to address these issues. It highlights the significance of qualitative research in exploring complex phenomena like mental blocks and suggests how teachers can play a crucial role in helping students overcome these barriers and become confident English speakers. Implementing these strategies can lead to better language learning outcomes and prepare students for success in a globalized world where effective communication in English is crucial.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the significance of effective communication in English in today's globalized world. By implementing a combination of supportive teaching strategies and creating an encouraging classroom environment, teachers can help students overcome their mental blocks and become confident and proficient English speakers. The strategies identified in the study can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how to enhance language learning experiences for English language learners. Ultimately, the successful implementation of these strategies can better prepare students to thrive in an interconnected world that demands effective communication skills.

REFERENCES

- Astari, N. (2020). Identifying Factor Influencing Students' mental Block In Public Speaking.
- Tanveer, M. (2007). Investigation of the factors that cause language anxiety for ESL/EFL learners in learning speaking skills and the influence it casts on communication in the target language. *University of Glasgow, Scotland*.
- Sholikhi, F. (2022). Communication Students' Anxiety in Speaking Skill Practice. In *ELT Forum* (Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 31-40). State University of Semarang.
- Annamalai, N., Eltahir, M. E., Zyoud, S. H., Soundarajan, D., Zakarneh, B., & Al Salhi, N. R. (2023). Exploring English language learning via Chabot: A case study from a self determination theory perspective. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 100148.
- Thomas, L. (2023, June 22). *Simple Random Sampling | Definition, Steps & Examples*. Scribbr. Retrieved July 19, 2023, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/simple-random-sampling/>
- Degelo, G. (2022). *Socio-Economic Impact Of Unemployment In Wolaita Zone, In Case Of Areka Town* (Doctoral dissertation, uog).
- Cherry, Kendra. Naturalistic Observation in Psychology.” *VerywellMind*, 1 October, 2019. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-naturalistic-observation-2795391>

- Cozby, Paul C. *Methods in Behavioral Research*. 10th ed., McGraw-Hill. 2009.
- McLeod, Saul A. "Observation Methods." *Simply Psychology*, 6 June 2015. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/observation.html>
- Bodie, G. D. (2010). A racing heart, rattling knees, and ruminative thoughts: Defining, explaining, and treating public speaking anxiety. *Communication education*, 59(1), 70-105.
- Gao, F., & Tay, D. (2023). Metaphor use in describing English public speaking anxiety by Chinese university EFL learners. *System*, 103091.
- Zhou, S., Chiu, M. M., Dong, Z., & Zhou, W. (2022). Foreign language anxiety and foreign language self-efficacy: a meta-analysis. *Current Psychology*, 1-15.
- Ahmad, I., Gul, R., & Zeb, M. (2022). A qualitative inquiry of university student's experiences of exam stress and its effect on their academic performance. *Human Arenas*, 1-11.
- Genelza, Genesis, et al. "Problems in Speaking Performance of Grade 8 Jade of Tagum City National High School." (2022).
- Pishghadam, R., Barabadi, E., & Kamrood, A. M. (2011). The differing effect of computerized dynamic assessment of L2 reading comprehension on high and low achievers. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(6), 1353.
- Wäljas, Minna, et al. "A prospective biopsychosocial study of the persistent post-concussion symptoms following mild traumatic brain injury." *Journal of neurotrauma* 32.8 (2015): 534-547.