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# Psychological Problems Faced by Nautical Students of Politeknik Bumi Akpelni Semarang in Speaking Maritime English

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| | This study aimed to explain: (1) psychological problems faced by nautical students in speaking maritime English and it causes, (2) the effects of psychological problems to speaking maritime English, and (3) the class situation that expected by the students. This study employs a qualitative case study. In order to collect the data, the researchers used classroom observation, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview. This study revealed that: (1) There were only four of five prominents pychological problems faced by nautical students in speaking maritime English, they were; fear of mistakes because most of the students were afraid if they could not deliver the message clearly, mispronounced, and then being laughed by their friends; shyness because they felt that their friends had better ability rather than themselves; anxiety because they did not understand English well and some of them were lacking of vocabularies, grammar, and they were afraid of being negatively evaluated by their friends or lecturers; lack of confidence because they felt that their English were bad and other friends were better than themselves, so they did not believe in themselves and felt insecure. However, they did not have problems regarding their motivation because they really wanted to sail abroad. (2) There were effects of psychological problems because it made the students' performance was not maximal yet. (3) Most of students wanted a relaxed, happy, and supportive speaking class situation, while some of them expected that speaking class was not too relaxed because they have to be forced in learning. |

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## INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that English is an international language and it is used as a lingua franca for all of people around the world, therefore, English is important to learn as a bridge of communication between people in the world. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. In learning English language, students have to master communicative competence both in spoken and written form, which is manifested in four language skills; they are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking skill is considered as the most important skill among four skills. According to Al-hosni (2014), speaking is a medium for the students to understand materials taught by teachers and it becomes the top source of learning a language for the students. Therefore, it could be said that speaking as a skill plays a significant role for the learners who studied English especially as a foreign language (Kayi, 2006). However, many students feel difficult in learning English especially speaking. They are afraid of making mistakes, feeling shy and anxious. Speaking needs confidence. Unfortunately, many people understand English language, they know the meaning when people speak in English, or understand when read an English text but they are difficult to speak or deliver the message. Many reasons underlie this phenomenon and one of them might be a psychological problem.

Indonesian students learn English for various purposes and many of them are learning English to get a better job since international companies usually require job seekers with excellent English language ability. Politeknik Bumi Akpelni Semarang is a marine merchant college which produces seafarers in Indonesia. English is considered really important for them because in the future they will be seafarers and if they want to sail abroad, of course English skill is a must. It is not enough if students only understand and master receptive skills of English. Also, they have to master the productive skills. Speaking is the most important skill for them because in the future they will use it to communicate actively during their work on board. The problem found based on the interview with the lecturers of Politeknik Bumi Akpelni Semarang is that the students sometimes still get difficulties in speaking English. Besides, they are sometimes lack of confidence, feeling anxious or afraid of making mistakes.

Basri (2019) conducted a study that tries to explore the factors of anxiety faced by students in speaking English. The subject of the research was third-semester students of Universitas Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta. From the data collected, the result showed that the factors of anxiety were shyness, lack of confidence, afraid of making mistakes, and lack of grammar and vocabularies.

While according Juhana (2012), there are some psychological factors that hinder students in speaking English in class they are 1) fear of mistake, 2) shyness, 3) anxiety, 4) lack of confidence, and 5) lack of motivation. The following part explains each of them.

According to Krismanti and Siregar (2017), the main cause of fear in making mistake is their worrisome of getting negative responses from their peers. Students are worried that they will be mocked by their friends when saying wrong words or mispronounce something.

Shyness is a psychological state that causes a person to feel discomfort in social situations in ways that interfere with enjoyment or that cause avoidance of social contacts altogether (Arifin, 2017). Many students who struggle with making themselves heard or participating in class discussions, these students are usually called "shy". Students with shyness are usually good in written assignment but in speaking activities, they less participate.

Anxiety is a natural psychological aspect containing feeling of fear that sometimes cannot be controlled (Javed et al., 2013). In line with Javed, Budianto (2010) stated that sometimes extreme anxiety occurs when English Foreign Language (EFL) learner becomes tongue-tired or lost for words in expected situation, then leads to discouragement and general sense of failure. Subekti (2018) and Anandari (2015) also conducted study related to anxiety in Indonesian students who are learning English as a foreign language and how they reduce their anxiety.

Ningsih (2017) tries to explain how anxiety affects the students' speaking ability in teaching and learning. This research used the descriptive qualitative method. The subjects of the study were fourth-semester students of Akademi Bahasa Asing Balikpapan. The participants were 31 students consist of 21 women and ten men. The results showed that there is an anxiety of language in most students who are learning English.

According to Brown (2001), the teacher also influences students' confidence in speaking. Teacher who does not give encouragement to his/her students can possibly make students have low confidence when speaking English. It could be said that building students' confidence is an important part of teacher's focus of attention to make students comfortable when they speaking English.

Motivation is considered significant in its role in language learning success. In addition, Zua (2008) states that motivation is an inner energy. She says that no matter what kinds of motivation the learners have, it will enhance their study interest. Jindathai (2015) also stated that motivation could be a factor affecting English speaking especially in second and foreign language learning. Lukito (2013) and Ruchajat (2018) conducted study by using game and making videos to improve students' motivation in speaking English. By applying those techniques, the result showed that students' motivation were improved through that activities in speaking English. It could be said that motivation is one of psychological factors that can affect teaching learning process.

Ariyanti (2016) conducted the research about psychological factors affecting EFL students' speaking performance. The result showed that the students tend to feel anxious when performing their speaking because they are afraid of making mistakes. The feelings of making mistakes somehow related to students' lack of self-esteem in using English so that they often communicate by code-switching English with their mother tongue. Another study was conducted by Jannah and Fitriati (2016). It studied the psychological problems faced by

eleven grade students in speaking English. The findings revealed three results. First, most of the students were afraid of making mistakes. Second, most of them were shy and the third, most of them were anxious.

However, this research is different from those previous studies because the study was conducted in semi-military college system which has very discipline rules. It was assumed that a psychological aspect plays an important role that can affect the students in teaching learning process. Speaking context is selected as the present study focus because English speaking skill is very important and one of the applicable skills to my research subjects. The novelty of this study does not only identify the psychological problems faced by the students but also provides the analysis of causes, effects and students' need of class design for teaching learning process.

Therefore, the researchers intend to conduct a study dealing with "Psychological Problems Faced by Nautical Students in Speaking Maritime English" to find out the psychological problems that hinder the students in speaking. By knowing the result of their psychological problems toward English speaking, the causes, the effect, and students expectation related to speaking class sitaution, it is expected that the result could be a guidance for lecturers how to improve the students' feelings, needs, and motivation in learning English especially in speaking skill. Besides, it can be an evaluation for the lecturers to provide various strategies in teaching and learning process of speaking.

**METHODS**

This study is a qualitative case study. The subjects of this study were the first semester nautical students of Politeknik Bumi Akpelni Semarang. The participants were two classes which were taken by purposive sampling, they were 1 Nautica Alfa and 1 Nautica Delta. The total number of the participants were 56 students. The instruments used in this study were; classroom observation to identify the psychological problems faced by the students and explain the effect to their speaking activity,

questionnaire to support the data related psychological problems faced by the students, and semi-structured interview to answer the causes of students' psychologcal problems and what students expect of speaking class design. Besides, the interview results also as support the data obtained to answer all research questions to get deeper information.

The researchers used five prominents of psychological problems as the indicator, they were fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. Classroom observation were conducted in two classes, and the questionnaires were distributed to 56 students. While the semi-structured interview were conducted to 10 students as the representative from 56 students. It will be used to get deeper information and as supporting data for the observation and the questionnaire. The data gained from the research would be analyzed in an elaborated explanation in the form of words and sentences. Those were described based on related literature, while the inferences were made based on the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. Therefore, it is not as easy as learning the first or second language. After gaining the data from the classroom observations, questionnaires and interviews, the findings are presented based on the objectives of the study as follows:

### Psychological Problems Faced by Nautical Students in Speaking and its Causes

To identify psychological problems faced by nautical students in speaking maritime English, classroom observation was carried out and the questionnaires were distributed to the students to gain the research data. The classroom observation was conducted in two classes on maritime English subject, they were 1 Nautica Alfa and 1 Nautica Delta. The findings were divided into five main aspects following the indicators: fear of mistake, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. The

findings showed that there were still many psychological problems faced by the students. The detail of each problem will be described as follows:

1) Fear of mistake

Based on the finding of the classroom observation, the researchers found that many students were afraid of making mistakes. They spoke in English softly and unclear. The students showed that they were afraid and not cofident. The students were fear of mistake because they felt that English was difficult. Some students felt that they did not understand when others was speaking English, so they were fear in making mistake when they were trying to speak. Besides, the students said that they were lack of vocabularies and felt difficult to develop and arrange the sentence. They were also worried in pronouncing words so they were afraid of making mistake when they spoke. In addition, they were afraid of making mistake when they spoke and other friends would laugh at them. They also said that they were fear in making mistake because they did not understand English well, so they were afraid if miscommunication happened and it would hurt the hearer.

This was in line with Haidara (2016) who stated that one of the students' psychological problems in speaking English is making mistake. They were afraid if their friends would laugh at them if they did mispronounciation or did any other mistakes. It makes the students felt pressured because they were laughed at by their friends if they made any mistake in speaking English. It was in line with Horwitz as cited in Indrianty

(2016) who stated that students fear negative evaluation.

Learning by mistake could be one of evaluation to improve the ability, so making mistake when the learning process was a reasonable thing as long as it would make a good improvement to the learner. In this case, the lecturer also has to create a good class situation, and give positive feedback such as appreciation to the students, so that the students would feel comfortable during the teaching-learning process.

2) Shyness

The result of the classroom observation showed that some students bowed their face when they spoke English. The students were feeling shy because they were not confident enough. They also felt that they were left by other friends in English speaking ability and it made them shy. Another cause was that they only understood English but could not speak so they preferred to keep silent in discussion time or let others become volunteer during speaking class. Speaking in front of people becomes one of the common phobias faced by the students Baldwin (2011). It was caused by their nature or many other factors such as not confident and fear if making mistake. That made the students prefer only being silent to speaking up.

3) Anxiety

This was one of the biggest psychological problems that was found in speaking English. The students were anxious when perfom in front of class. They looked like tremble, panic, forgot what they want to say, nervous and worried when speaking English. The students weere feeling anxious because they were feeling nervous when speaking English. They were afraid if they made a mistake and it made them nervous. In addition they felt that they were not good enough in speaking English and they were not confident to themselves so they felt anxious. They also felt pressured when other people looked at them when they spoke English. The anxiety also made the students were suddenly forgot what they wanted to say when they spoke English in front of the class.

This was in line with (Sulastiani, 2020) who stated anxiety as one of psychological problems faced by the students in speaking English and the factors were fear, feeling that friends would laugh at them, audiences' eye contact, and students did not have good preparation to perform.

4) Lack of confidence

The findings of the classroom observation showed that most of studenst were lack of confidence, and this was the biggest problems faced by most of students. They looked like did not believe to themselves when speaking English, did not fluently and did not feel sure, and they looked like did not relax when they spoke English. The students said that they were lack of confidence because they felt that they were not good in speaking English and did not really understand of English speaking. They were not believe to themselves when speaking English because they were afraid in making mistake. They also felt that other friends was better in English speaking and they were left behind so it made the students not confident. This was in line with (Dornyei, 2005) who stated that "the concept of self-confidence is closely related to selfesteem, both share a common emphasis on the individual's

perception of his or her abilities as a person." It meant that when students felt that they were not good enough on their ability, they were not confident enough to show up. They would feel uncomfortable, and think that other friends spoke English better than themselves.

5) Lack of motivation

The findings from the classroom observation related to students' motivation showed that they were motivated enough in speaking English. They showed their interest, concentration, they paid attention well. The students did the task that had been given by the lecturer, and they prepared it as well as they can do. It was because most of them wanted to become a sailor that worked in international company, sailing abroad, and got high salary. It made the students interested in learning English because English will be one of the requirements for working in international company. According to Zua (2008) cited in Juhana (2012), motivation is a basic part in learning activities. Students' interest in learning will be enhanced through motivation. In this case, the lecturer should take a chance to improve students' ability because they have high motivation to learn English.

**The Effect of Psychological Problems Faced by Nautical Students in Speaking Maritime English**

The findings of the research revealed that students' psychological problems affected teaching learning process. Although it was not that worst as they have good motivation in learning, but many of them were still anxious, fear, shy, and not confident in speaking English. The lecturer should be aware of the fact that students were still facing psychological problems in speaking English. It was supported by the result of the research from Anugrawati (2015)

who investigated the correlation between psychological factors and speaking skill, and the findings showed that the higher psychological problems belong to students, the worse of ability in speaking English was achieved. It meant that the lecturers should pay attention more about students' psychological problems because it has significant role in improving students' speaking skill.

However, the lecturer could take a chance to engourage the students because the students showed good interest, attitude and desire in learning English speaking so it will make the lecturer easier to improve their ability because the students have a big willingness. As mentioned before in the background of the research that English speaking was very important and will be very useful for the students in the workfield, the lecturer need to solve the problems faced by the students to maximise the learning process. In speaking, it was important to give competence then performance. It meant that the lecturer needs to feed up the students by the competence first then let the students to perform it by practicing.

**Maritime English Speaking Class Situation that were Expected by the Students to Study**

Based on the findings, most of students expected an enjoy and happy speaking class situation which has relax atmosphere. By those situation, they were not feeling pressured and they would be happy so the confidence will be increased. This in line with Ihsan (2016) who stated that it is important for the lecturers to organize and manage the classroom as an effective learning environment. Regarding students' anxious, it is important that teaching learning process occurs within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Another strategy can also be applied by the lecturer to reduce students' anxiety such as making jokes and stories, appreciating students' answer, showing positive gestures, and not calling the students' name instead of asking the students to become volunteer (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013).

However, every student was not the same. Some students expected that English speaking

class situation should be quiet because they will difficult to learn and focus if the situation was noisy. In addition, there were also students said that they have to be forced in learning to make them become more motivated. From those findings, as the facilitator, the lecturer should consider and apply variety techniques and strategies to cover the students' need. This in line with (Arifin, 2017) that the lecturer needs to adapt appropriate technique in teaching which suite to the class situation. The lecturer demanded not only to be able in transforming knowledge of language but also have to be able to create good classroom atmosphere to craete a better chance and the students' problems could be solved.

## CONCLUSIONS

After conducting the research and analysing the result, I got some conclusions concerning the psychological problems faced by nautical students of Politeknik Bumi Akpelni Semarang in speaking maritime English. There were four of five prominent problems faced by the students, they were; fear of mistake because they were afraid they cannot deliver the message clearly, mispronounce, and then being laughed by their friend. Shyness, because they felt that their friends have better ability rather than themselves, so they were shy especially if they have to perform in front of class. Anxiety, because they do not understand English well and they afraid by negative evalutaion from their friends or the lecturer. Lack of confidence, they were feeling insecure because they felt that their English were bad and other friends were better than themselves, so they do not believe in themselves. However, most of the nautical students did not have problem regarding their motivation because they wanted to work in international company to get high salary so they work really hard in learning English. Consequently, there were effect of psychological problems for the students, or their performance. It made students become nervous and suddenly forgot what they wanted to say, hence, their performance was not maximal yet. In addition, it was important for the lecturer to create good atmosphere in teaching learning process. The finding of psychological problems faced by the students could be a guidance for the lecturer to evaluate the students by encouraging them to achieve better speaking abilities. The students also have to support each other friends to create a comfortable feeling in learning to speak English by helping each other, cooperative, and showing a good attitude in correcting their friend if making mistake. Besides, students' need should be taken into consideration because every student was unique and has different learning style, therefore, the lecturer should apply variety techniques or strategies which appropriate for the students.

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