

**THE LEVEL OF ORAL COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AMONG ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS IN PRESENTATION CLASS AT RIAU ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY**

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***ABSTRACT***

The successful English learners are determined by their ability to communicate in English in daily activities, especially in the teaching and learning process. However, it is not a simple task. Some English learners are still struggle to use English to communicate since English is used as Foreign Language in Indonesia. It is experienced even the students have learned English for long years. The university students, English Department students also need struggle to communicate in English. One of the handicaps in acquiring the ability to communicate in a foreign language is called communication apprehension. The individual's fear in facing the communication either real or anticipated causes the students to avoid the communication activity. Then, it resulted the less progress of the students in using the language. Oral communication apprehension is experienced by everyone, especially foreign language learners. It seems as a potential inhibitor for the students to develop their competence and skills in communication. In fact, the existence of communication apprehension are not realized. Unfortunately, the foreign language learners are not consider on it.

**Keyword:** *Foreign language Learners, Oral Communication Apprehension.*

**Introduction**

English is one of the Foreign Language that has been taught from the elementary students up to the university students in Indonesia. It was taught since the role of English as the medium of communication in the International scale. It is expected that English learners are able to compete in the International forum for kinds of purposes. In the elementary level, it is the beginning of the introducing English in the learning process. The elementary students are engaged to know the things around them by communicate it in English. English is used for interaction. In the senior and high school level, English is taught as the compulsory subject. The students are required to communicate the English in daily live. For the university students, the English Department students, they are not only demanded to be able to communicate the language, but also have to be able to master all of the components of the language.

Even the students have been taught English for long years, the university students, English learners are still struggle to use English to communicate. It is often found that the

students tended to be a passive learners. However, as it is known that the successful language learners are those who are able to use the language in written as well as in oral communication.

It has been experienced for English learners that communicating in a foreign language is not a simple task, at least not for everyone. For many, it is not only a matter of occasional uneasiness or mild discomfort. They may have communication problems that have much more extensive ramifications. One such condition is Communication apprehension, or CA. CA is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey 1977: 78).

Communication Apprehension has been broadly discussed in term of educational context. It has been regarded as one of the most important factors influencing language acquisition. It seems as a reasonable thing that inhibit the individual to acquire the language, even the native language. It will be relatively hard for the individual to acquire the foreign language since the existence of apprehension has been exist while acquiring the native language.

Communication apprehension is closely related to the achievement in the learning, especially foreign language. Horwitz (1986) found that the apprehension and the students' achievement are correlated each other. In other words, the students' achievement depends on the existence of the apprehension in the students themselves. Even, Mc.Croskey (1978) states that communication apprehension is a common phenomenon that experienced by language learners, especially foreign language learners, it becomes a serious problems for those students who suffer high and moderate-level of apprehension. The students become more difficult to achieve the learning goal since they are afraid to engage themselves in the learning process.

### **Communication**

Communication enables people to share everything in order to make the others understand the individual's intention. As Masterson and Steven (2006:4) states that communication is the process of acting information that is conveying a meaning through the messages. It means that communication helps people to share the information to others. It has been regarded as the basis human interaction. It cannot be denied that all facets of human life involve communication. It can be said that it is a must for individual to communicate with others.

As it is known that communication is a basis for human interaction. It is also function in the classroom context. Communication also plays the role in transferring the material form the teacher to the students. It is also used for the students to share the information among them. Collin (1996:15) states that communication in the classroom context is viewed as the two way process, the teacher to the students or among the students themselves to acquire the material

given. The teacher and the students are the two prime components of the communication in the classroom. The role might be change for a certain situation. The teacher might become the speaker, who share the ideas to the students as the receiver or the students might become the speaker, who share the information to the teacher or the other students as the receiver.

Implicitly, communication involves a process. In the process of communications, some elements are involved. Koehlr (1981:18) argues that there are five components of communication, they are sender, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. Furthermore, Kory (2015:6) adds two components involve in communication, namely coding and decoding. These two components are involved simultaneously in the process of the fifth component. Encoding is involved in the process of delivering the message, while decoding helps the receiver in understanding the message given.

Koehlr (1981:18) states that sender is known as the prime mover in the communication process. Sender takes role as determiner in order to make the communication smoothly. He or she delivers the intention that is going to be shared. It can be said that sender is determiner in selecting the appropriate way to deliver the information or intention. In the process of delivering the message, it involves encoding process. Kory (2015:6) states that encoding is a process of translation the idea into a perceivable form that can be communicated to others. It is a simultaneous process that is occur through the process of delivering message.

The second element is message. Message is the product of the encoding. It can be in form of information, ideas, or thought. To deliver the message, the verbal and nonverbal symbol is included. It is used in order to make the receiver be easier to interpret the message given.

The third element is channel. Channel is also known as the medium of transmission (Koehlr,1981:18). It is the form of the carrier of communication, such as face-to-face, telephone call, e-mail, letter, etc. It is important to select the appropriate channel to do the communication. It is used in order to deliver the message effectively. It can be said that, determining the channel of the communication is a crucial decision.

The fourth element is receiver. Kory (2015:6) states that receiver is the individual to whom the message is sent. It seems that the receiver has a simple role in communication. Besides, receiver is not only play the role as a receptable message. The receiver have to see the components involved, such as the message and the sender. A receiver must be able to correlate each components in order to make the message is interpreted as it is. It means, both of the sender and receiver are in the same understanding on the message given.

During the process of understanding the message sent, there is a simultaneous process, namely decoding. Kory (2015:6) states that decoding is the receiver's interpretation of the sender's message. The receiver converts the message into thought and tries to analyze and understand it. It makes the communication becomes effective. Effective communication can occur only when both the sender and receiver assign the same or similar meaning to the message.

Lastly, the fifth element in communication is feedback. Feedback is known as the response given to the message. It is given in order to achieve the purpose of the communication. It can be in form of clarification, accepting, refusing or others.

Generally, it can be inferred that the process of communication is a continually and never ending process. After the receiver receives the message, the response given will be translated and accepted by the sender. The process will be continue until both of the sender and receiver achieve the degree of understanding towards the message given.

It is important to know the role of each components of communication. As Keyton in Lunenburg (2010) says that the elements of communication determine the quality of the communication. These all components must be in unity in order to have meaningful communication.

Communication can be done into two ways, face-to-face or oral communication and written communication. Both of the modes of communication are used alternately. In one situation, the communicator think that the oral communication is effectively used in delivering the ideas, but in another situation the use of written communication is appropriate. Oral or written communication has it's strengthen and weaknesses. It can be drawn through the characteristics of the communication.

#### **Oral and Written Communication**

Philip (1987:63) defines oral communication as a process of communication in a speaker interacts verbally with a listener to influence the receiver's behavior. Scharlet et all (1977) propose the characteristics of the oral communication. They grouped into the big four parts, physical nature, the use, the purpose, and the language use. From the physical nature, it is known that oral communication provides the aural information since the oral communication involves spoken words. Then, the oral communication is also use prosodic features (rhythm, stress, intonation). It is used to emphasis the important part of the message. It is also used to make the communicator be easier to understand the message.

From the use side, it is known that oral communication is used in interactive interaction. It means that communicator give direct response in the process of communication occur. The oral communication is mostly found where the communicator are in the same place. Most of the oral communication occurs is situated the communicator in the same place. In other words, it is a kind of face-to-face communication.

Furthermore, Scharlet (1977) also states that oral communication is aimed at preserving social relationship among the communicator. Due to the process of the occurring this mode of communication involves the immediate feedback, both of the communicant are able to build a relationship in a better way. Either sender or receiver have to fix one and other in order to achieve the purpose of their communication. They must be able to know their role in communication.

Then, the characteristics of the oral communication is also can be drawn from the language use. Since it uses spoken words, repetition cannot be avoided.

It uses to emphasis an important part of the communication. It occurs since the communicator are easier to understand their conversation. They know it since it involves prosodic features.

Based on the characteristics proposed by the expert above, it can be drawn the advantages and also disadvantages of oral communication. There are some advantages of oral communication. First, the communicator are able to provide the immediate feedback. They can give their own view without waiting for a long time. Second, since it is situated the communicator in the same place mostly, it helps them to understand the context of communication in hurry. Third, the communicator are easily to make sure the focus of the communication since it uses rhythm, stress, and intonation.

Meanwhile, it also has the disadvantage. As it is known that there is no physical form of the communication. It makes them difficult to prove such kinds of communication they want to prove. Sometimes, the communicant talks different thing about the same ideas in different time. It gives a chance for certain communicator to do disclaimer.

The other modes of communication is written communication. It has its own characteristic which makes distinction with oral communication. Written communication is the sharing and the exchanging of written symbols between individuals. It is used the written form definitely. To make it clear, it is important to know the characteristics of the written communication.

As Scharlet et.sll (1977) propose that, as well as the oral communication, the characteristics of written communication are divided into the four big parts, namely, physical nature, the use, the purpose, and also the language use.

Physical nature describes the form of the communication itself. Since it uses written form in the process of communication such as e-mail or letter, the written communication provides the visual information. The communicator understand the message given after they read the text. It involves reading ability. Then, as stated previously, this type of communication has physical form, namely text. However, it does not uses rhythm, stress and intonation.

The next characteristics is about the use of written communication. During the process of communication, the communicator are not situated in the same place. The interaction occurs is not in form of face-to-face interaction. In other words, there is no immediate interaction between the communicator.

Then, written communication is aimed at telling the information through the written symbols. The communicator communicate the information through their written. It is necessary for the communicator to consider the components of the written language. It becomes a consideration in order to avoid misunderstanding between the sender and receiver.

From the language use in written communication, it has been stated that the written communication uses complete sentence. It must be arranged in a good order to eases the receiver in understanding the sender's intention. To make it easier in understanding the message, the sentence is syntactically more complex and complicated.

After knowing the characteristics of the written communication, the advantages and disadvantages can be drawn. The advantage is the written communication gives a chance for the communicator to check or re-check their agreement on understanding the ideas since it has physical form. The communicator might show the physical prove of the communication in case of the other communicator do disclaimer.

Meanwhile, it has disadvantage. The communicator needs much time to understand the ideas by considering the other components of the communication. The communicator have to analyze and understand the ideas given. They were not able to have immediate feedback since the interaction is only occurs after waiting for receiver's response. It takes time to use written communication.

### **Communication Apprehension**

Doing communication is not a simple task at least not for everyone. There are some consideration involved. It is also experienced by the language learners since the application of the communicative activity has been decided to be applied in the process of learning a language. The communication task becomes more difficult to be accomplished since the students learn the foreign language. It needs a struggle to achieve the demanded of language learners, to use the language to communicate. There are some traits face by the students in acquiring the foreign language. One of the factors that inhibit students' success in acquiring and use the language to communicate is the students' fear to use the language. Some scholars has been discussed the phenomenon found. It is known as communication apprehension.

Mc.Croskey (1978) defines that communication apprehension is the individual's fear of communicating associated with either real or anticipated communication. The individual experienced fear towards the communication given. It means it deals with how the individual feels the communication given. In other words, it relates to the negative reaction given towards the communication activity.

Furthermore, Boston (2001) states that communication apprehension is a psychological response towards the condition given. It means those who face the communication activity experiences physical or mental symptoms. It might be react negatively.

Mc.Croskey (1978) adds communication apprehension is a common phenomenon experienced by all language learners, especially foreign language learners. Those students who communicate by using their native language is also experienced apprehension in communication. It seems that communication apprehension cannot be avoided by the language learners.

As stated previously, communication involves some components. The presence of communication apprehension can be derived from the components of the communication. Mc.Croskey and Richmond (1995) divides the communication apprehension into four types.

First, Trait Communication Apprehension (TCA). TCA deals with how people generally feel across the situation and the time given in doing

communication. Booth-butterfield (1992) adds that trait communication apprehension is considered as the personality traits. Some individuals are afraid to face a situation given, but they are confident to face another communication situation given. It occurs as the consideration on different view that human being was created. As it is known that individuals has different characteristics. They response in different way towards the communication situation given.

Second, Context-based Communication Apprehension. Context-based Communication Apprehension as a relatively enduring, personality-type orientation towards communication in a given type of communication context (Mc. Croskey & Richmond,1995). In relation to definition above, it can be said that the individual's fear might arise since they know the context of the communication given.

Mc.Croskey (1997) adds that context-based communication apprehension is a consistently apprehension response and orientation toward communication in specific setting or context (e.g. public speaking). It can be said that the individual might fear in facing a certain communication context given, but they might confident in facing the other communication context. Mc.Croskey (1997) adds that there are four common context where communication apprehension occurs: (1) public speaking, (2) meetings, (3) group discussion, and (4) interpersonal conversation.

Third, Audience-based Communication Apprehension. Mc.Croskey and Richmond (1995) defines that audience-based communication apprehension as an individual's experience as one caused by the people present in the communication situation. This type of communication apprehension is relatively enduring orientation toward communication with a given person or group of people. It cannot be said as personality based but it is a response to the situational constraints created by the other person or group.

There are some reasons underlying the fear of audience given, such as the subordinate status. For example, it becomes more apprehension when the employee talks with their boss rather than talks to among the employee. The students becomes more apprehension when they interact with their teacher rather than interact among their friends.

Regarding to the explanation above, it can be said that the audience-based communication apprehension deals with the influence of the situation of communication created certain audience.

Fourth, situational communication apprehension. Mc.Croskey and Richmond (1995) say that situational communication apprehension is transitory orientation toward communication with a given person or group of people and situation. The combination of the audience and the time given influence the presence of apprehension. However, it is not a permanent condition. In other words, when the situation passes, the apprehension dissipates. Almost people experiences it, situational communication apprehension. For example, you might have felt situational CA during an important job interview or while taking oral exam. When the interview or exam was over, your apprehension disappeared too.

Generally the type of communication apprehension can be grouped into two basic concepts, trait communication apprehension and situational communication apprehension. Trait apprehension relates to the personality-based while situational communication apprehension relates to the combination of the person and the time given toward the communication.

It has been argued that communication apprehension in the past is broadly focus to the oral communication apprehension, but it has been developed nowadays. Some scholars also did a research on the apprehension in written communication, namely written apprehension. Basically, the focus is the same. It deals with the individual's response towards the communication given.

### **Oral Communication Apprehension**

It has been argued that in the past the focus of apprehension in communication is oral communication. Some scholars decided to choose this focus since the use of oral communication is often found. As stated previously, communication apprehension deals with the individual's fear in facing communication, either real or anticipated communication. Meanwhile, since it focuses on oral communication, it means that it deals with the individual's fear related to the oral communication activities.

Marran et.al (2012:4) states that oral communication apprehension concerns with a fear of speaking or talking to other people in different contexts, such as on a one-to-one, groups, in meeting, or public speaking. Actually, the existence of the apprehension in communication cannot be avoided. Mc.Croskey (1977) argues that communication apprehension is a common phenomenon. In other words, every individuals experiences it. Since it is unavoidable things, the existence of oral communication apprehension has different levels. It means, the individual might fear in facing the communication, but they are still able to control their fear. Then, the individual might think that apprehension is a usual symptom in facing the communication. Lastly, the existence of apprehension might cause fail experience of communication for the individual.

Regarding the description on individuals' reaction toward the communication, there are three levels of communication apprehension, namely low-level, moderate-level and high-level. Mc.Croskey (1977) states that those who suffer or experience low-level of oral communication apprehension (low apprehensive individual) is likely enjoy the communication activity given. The individual views that the communication given as a facilitator of the development of both communication competence and communication skills and as a direct precursor of positive communication affect. The moderate-level of oral communication apprehension (the moderate apprehensive individual) is tended to enjoy or fear the communication given. Most of the individuals tend to enjoy the communication given. The high-level of oral communication apprehension (the high apprehensive individuals) is tend to avoid the communication given. Those who experiences it view communication as the potential inhibitor that inhibit their effort to acquire the communication purposes. The high apprehensive individual views the communication apprehension as the potential inhibitor of the development of both communication competence and communication skills and as

a direct precursor of negative communication. Beatty and Dobs in Marran, (2012:5) add the individual who experiences high oral communication apprehension reports fear, tension, and physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate and sweating.

Furthermore, Boston (2001) states that communication apprehension is a psychological response. It is closely related to the students' mental associated with the communication activity given. Kory (2015) adds the apprehension in communication affects the individual's mind and physic. It can be said as a stress that is inhibit individual to achieve their purposes in communication.

Apprehension affects the individual's mind. The individual tends to judge themselves by thinking on the negative perceptions, such as low profile, being afraid of, nervous, communication disruption. Meanwhile, it also affects the individual's physics, such as sweating, trembling hands, rapid heartbeat, digestive breakdown, and out of breath.

## Method

This is a descriptive research, conducted at Riau Islamic University, Jl.Kaharudin nasution, Marpoyan. This research gained the information on the level of Oral Communication Apprehension experienced by English Department Students in Presentation Class at Riau Islamic University. Questionnaire on the Level of Oral Communication Apprehension proposed by Mc. Croskey is adapted by the researcher. It was validated by the expert judgement, Psychology Lecturer since the questionnaire items were Psychological side. It was used to obtain the data on the level of Oral Communication Apprehension. Three classes were chosen as the sample of the research since they enrolled the Presentation course.

## Finding and Discussion

The data presented in this research related to the communication activities given to the students in Presentation class. The students were required to have oral communication performance. They have to present the presentation individually. This research finds out the level of oral communication apprehension experienced by the English Students.

The students were grouped into the three levels of oral communication apprehension. The classification of the students' level was based on the mean score and the standard deviation found in this research. The mean score was 100, while the standard deviation was 24. The classification of the students' level was supported by Mc.Croskey (1977). The classification of the level of oral communication apprehension as follows:

**Table 1: Oral Communication Apprehension Category and Score Range for Each Category**

OCA Category	Score Range
High Apprehension	124-164

Moderate Apprehension	76-123
Low Apprehension	41-75

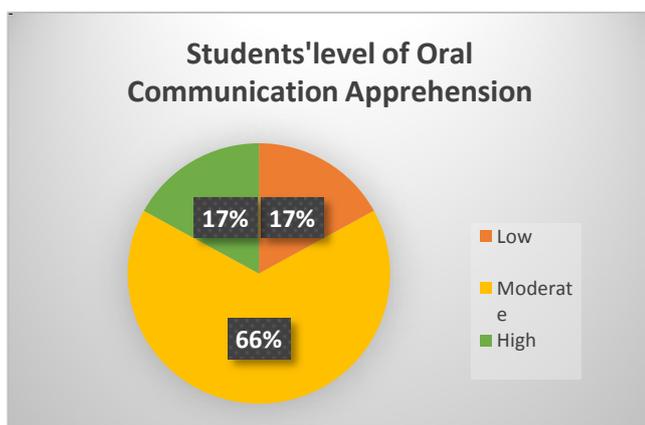
Based on the classification of the range score of each categories, the students were grouped after finding out the total score of the students' response on the questionnaire administered. Table 2 showed the students' level of oral communication apprehension.

**Table 2: Students' Level of Oral Communication Apprehension**

No	Sample	Score	Level
1	Student 1	56	Low
2	Student 2	76	Average
3	Student 3	82	Average
4	Student 4	89	Average
5	Student 5	85	Average
6	Student 6	74	Low
7	Student 7	73	Low
8	Student 8	127	High
9	Student 9	120	Average
10	Student 10	119	Average
11	Student 11	110	Average
12	Student 12	111	Average
13	Student 13	76	Average
14	Student 14	98	Average
15	Student 15	70	Low
16	Student 16	121	Average
17	Student 17	117	Average

18	Student 18	82	Average
19	Student 19	121	Average
20	Student 20	128	High
21	Student 21	127	High
22	Student 22	121	Average
23	Student 23	80	Average
24	Student 24	94	Average
25	Student 25	146	High
26	Student 26	94	Average
27	Student 27	94	Average
28	Student 28	67	Low
29	Student 29	141	High

There were 29 students chosen as the sample of the research. In order to see the clear grouped of the number of the students for each categories, the data were transformed into the graph below.



Based on the questionnaire administered it was found that 5 of 29 (17%) students experienced high-level of oral communication apprehension, 19 of 29 (66%) students experienced moderate level of oral communication apprehension, and 5 of 29 (17%) students experienced low-level of oral communication apprehension. These data told that most of the students were reported experience the moderate level of oral communication apprehension. It means that more than half students were possibly enjoy the

communication task given. According to Mc.Croskey (1977), the students who experienced moderate level of oral communication apprehension means the students tended to enjoy the communication activity given. It means that the students were also experienced apprehension but they are still able to do the communication task given. The students might felt nervous in the beginning of the presentation, but they still able to accomplish the presentation.

It could be said that it was like a normal condition that experienced by those people who had been engaged themselves in the same situation for long time. The students had learned English for four year. They had been given various topics or courses in English, especially speaking courses. They were trained to learn English daily during four year. In other words, the students were in supported environment. They had been accustom with the task given.

## **CONCLUSION**

Most of the English Department Students who enroll Presentation class in academic year 2015-2016 at Riau Islamic University were in the level of moderate oral communication apprehension. It means that the students were still nervous in facing the communication activity given, but they are still able to control their nervousness. On the other side, a few students were still struggle to handle their nervousness in facing the communication activity given. They felt difficult to present their presentation. Then, it gives effect on their performances. The students were struggle to the presentation smoothly. On the other hand, a few students were not experienced difficulties to present the communication task individually. They were known as the low-apprehensive students.

## **SUGGESTION**

The suggestion are as follows: To English Lecturers, in Presentation class is suggested to be aware on the students who were not participated actively in the classroom. It is suggested for the lecturer to know the students' difficulties by engaging them in discussion related to the course design. The lecturer must pay more attention on the silence students in the classroom. To the students must be aware on the existence of communication apprehension in facing the communication task given. The students must be aware since the presence of communication apprehension might affect the students' achievement in the learning process. The students must be participated in various kinds of communication activities in order to improve their confidence to face the communication activity.

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