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Group Counselling with Systematic Desensitization and Emotional Freedom Techniques to Reduce Public Speaking Anxiety

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Abstract

Public Speaking or the ability to speak in public is one of basic competencies that must be owned by students. However, apparently, there found many students having public speaking anxiety and in high category. Regarding this problem, this study was aimed at examining the effectiveness of a group counselling with desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique in reducing students' public speaking anxiety. The implementation of those techniques were done twice in each group counselling service. Meanwhile, the research method employed was mixed anova repeated measures test design by involving 16 students having high level public anxiety chosen from 100 students by using purposive sampling. Further, the results of mixed anova repeated measure showed thatthe group counselling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique (EFT) was proved to be effective in reducing the public speaking anxiety of students. Besides, seen from the average score and time effect, emotional freedom technique resulted higher decrease than systematic desensitization technique. For more, the more emotional freedom technique was given, the higher decrease of the public speaking anxiety of students would result.

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INTRODUCTION

Public Speaking or the ability to speak in public is one of basic competencies that must be owned by students. Wibowo (2017) argues that future competencies needed in facing the flow of globalization are, among others, the ability to communicate, the ability to think clearly and critically, the ability to consider the moral aspect of a problem, the ability to be responsible citizens, the ability to try to understand and tolerant of different views, and the ability to live in a global society. However, there are still many university students foundto have high levels of public speaking anxiety. Anxiety is actually a form of behavior that is normal for everyone. It acts as a level of fear associated with direct or indirect communication between a person and another person (McCroskey, 2009). However, a high level anxiety will result in boredom in learning and disruption of students' well-being (Andriyani, Himma, Alizar, Amin, & Mulawarman, 2017).

The results of a study conducted by Ririn et al (2013) on Guidance and Counselling (BK) department studentsof FIP (Faculty of Educational Sciences) of State University of Padang indicate that students' communication competence is in low category, while their public speaking anxiety is in high category. The students who are afraid and anxious to speak in public have difficulty in expressing their opinions in discussion situations, tend to be silent when given the opportunity to ask questions, have difficulty in starting and ending a conversation with others as well as difficulty giving feedback to friends (Isti'adah, 2017). Besides, there are also students who always close themselves from problems that happen to them, depressed by peers when commenting so they show less sensitivity to the dynamics of each group discussion, less creative in devoting opinions related to learning topics that support their ability or self-potential (Lianasari & Purwanto, 2016). These conditions will continue to grow and certainly will lead to othermore complex problems. If the ignorance of these conditions continue to happen, it will cause the individuals suffering the anxiety and get isolated from their environment (Agustiyana & Awalya, 2016).

From the description above, it is known that speaking anxiety is a fear behavior that must be immediately given intervention to make any of its level on individual getting reduced to low level because based on a research conducted by McCroskey (2009), individuals with high speech anxiety have unsatisfactory skills. They are also considered as people with irrational cognition. Gladding (2012) states that counseling with a behavioral approach is useful in dealing with anxiety, stress, self-confidence, parent-related relationships and social interaction with the aim of changing or eliminating maladaptive behavior into healthy and constructive behavior.

The technique used in behavioral group counseling is a systematic desensitization technique. This technique is used as a core treatment to help students reduce the anxiety of public speaking. Also, the systematic desensitization technique is a technique used to eliminate unwanted emotional responses to certain types of stimuli wheresituations which arise unwanted emotions are coupled with inhibiting responses (Nursalim, 2013). In line with this, the systematic desensitization technique is chosen to reduce public speaking anxiety on the grounds that this technique has the basic assumption that response to anxiety can be learned or conditioned and can be prevented (Corey, 2013).

Studies related to reducing public speaking anxiety by using systematic desensitization techniques have been widely done. Some of these studies include a research conducted by Syafryadin et al (2017), mentioning that public speaking training with systematic desensitization technique is effective to improve the competence of public speaking of students. There isanother study conducted to measure the effectiveness of systematic desensitization in reducing academic anxiety and anxiety in facing of the test on students (Fitri, Wibowo, & Sunawan, 2017; Risyadi, 2016; Solechah, Wibowo, & Japar, 2016). It is Sutisna (2016) who proves in his research that systematic desensitization is able to lower the level of apprehension in SeniorHigh School students. However, other researches suggest that the systematic desensitization technique is no more effective than implosive techniques in reducing speech anxiety in front of the class (Ariani, Suarni, & Dantes, 2016).

In applying systematic desensitization to reduce public speaking anxiety, this technique will be compared with emotional freedom technique (EFT) therapy. EFT is a psychological intervention technique used to facilitate emotional healing. EFT is a method used to balance the body's energy system and to assist in the release of unwanted emotions,

including anxiety, anger, fear, sadness, or trauma (Zainuddin, 2009).

Some researches have also been conducted on the benefits and effects of this strategy. They show that the use of emotional freedom technique will be able to provide information and other new point of views. Accordingly, library studies show that emotional freedom technique (EFT) can be used to overcome the problem of addiction, diet, anxiety, trauma, depression, fear, phobia, breathing, allergies and other problems related to emotions. Several studies have shown that this technique is quite effective on some psychological problems (Wandira & Purwoko, 2017).

EFT is also showed to reduce anxiety and improve students' academic performance in presentation in front of the class after being given EFT for fifteen minutes (Boath, Stewart, & Carryer, 2013). Moreover, Jones, Thornton and Andrews' study of public speaking anxiety (2011) which gave EFT to eighteen people in an experimental group shows a decrease in anxiety levels in public speaking after a forty-five-minute EFT session.

Based on the problems mentioned above, in the design of this study, the intervention to be tested was a group counseling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique to reduce the anxiety of public speaking. By testing the techniques, the researchers expected to know the level of effectiveness of both techniques to reduce anxiety in public speaking. In addition, the findings of this study were expected to reveal generalizations of the effectiveness of desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique in the study sample.

METHODS

This study used experimental design of repeated measure experiment using two experimental groups without involving control group. Experimental group A was given treatment in the form of counseling group of systematic desensitization technique and experimental group B received a treatment which was given in the form of group counseling with emotional freedom technique to reduce public speaking anxiety to the students. Meanwhile, the design of pretest and multiple posttest of this study is described in figure 1.

Research subjects involved in this study were 16 students taken using a purposive technique with the criteria of students who had high speech anxiety. Alternatively, the subjects of this study were selected from 100 students who came from all of semesters at Guidance and Counselling (BK) department of FKIP (Faculty of Teacher Training and Education) of Darul 'Ulum University. Random assignment was performed on the collected sample to place 8 students in group A and 8 students in group B. This was done so that both groups had equality. Then, in order to see how far the effectiveness of the intervention has been given after the posttest, the step of the study continued with follow-up over a 4-week period.

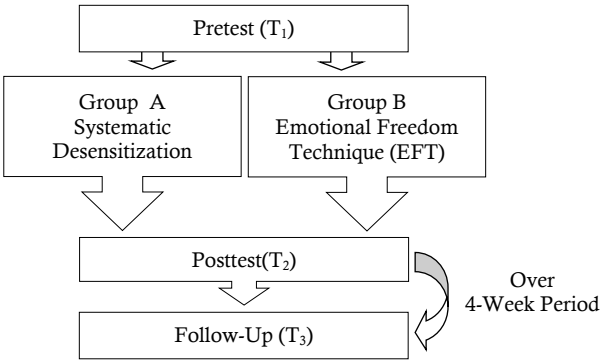


Figure 1. Research Stage

Additionally, the data collection technique used in this study was by using a scale tool of Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) developed by McCroskey (1970).This scale consists of 34 items. In the measuring instrument, the researchers performed equivalence by doing backtranslation process, expert validation and then tested the instrument. All instrument test results were valid (r_{xy} = 0.517-0.789) and had alpha cronbach coefficient of 0.743. The collected data were then analyzed using ANOVA repeated measure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data (pretest-posttest-follow-up) were prepared before being analyzed. Meanwhile, the anxiety condition of public speaking ofall students before getting treatment was in high level (16 people). After getting the intervention, the anxiety level of public speaking of students showed change and wasin a moderate level. Based on the results of Pretest, Posttest and Follow-up, it was known that group counseling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom

technique had an impact on reducing public speaking anxiety. The results of the hypothesis testing analysis can be seen in Table 1.

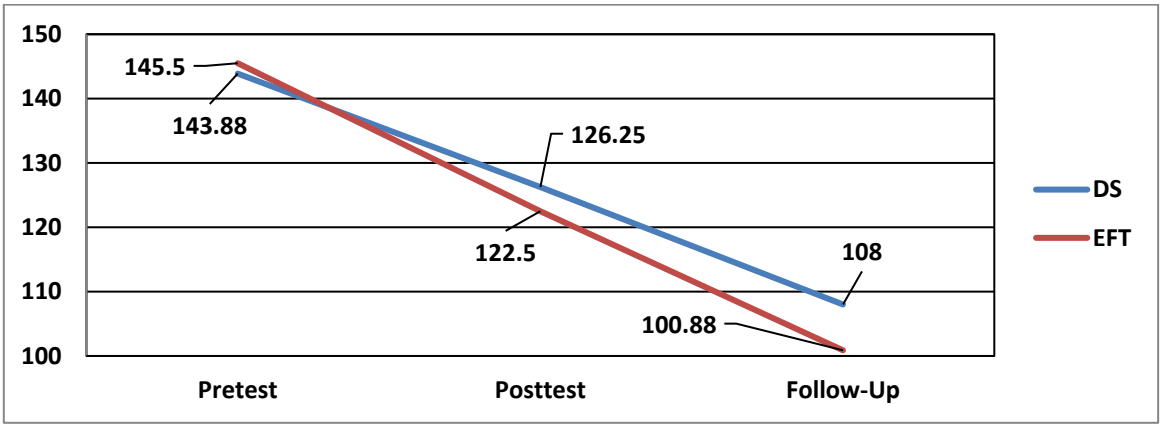
Table 1. The Results of The Hypothesis Testing Analysis

Group	Pretest		Posttest		Follow-Up		F_1	F_2	F_3
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	(1,38, 19,3)	(2,28)	(1,14)
Systematic Desenditization	143,88	2,85	126,25	2,964	108	3,464	5336,83	6653,554 (p<0,01)	2,79
EFT	145,5	4,69	122,5	4,14	100,88	4,324	(p<0,01)	1951,367 (p<0001)	(p<0,01)

By referring to Table 1, it was proved that public speaking anxiety condition in both treatment groups was at high level (> 131) withpretest mean in group A of 143.88 (SD = 2.85) and in group B of 145.5 (SD = 4.69). Then, on posttest measurement, group B experienced a greater decrease in public speaking anxiety with the mean value of 145.5 (SD = 4.14) than group A whose mean value of 126.25 (SD = 2,964). Furthermore, the decrease in public speaking anxiety in group B was seen to be higher than in group A at follow-up measurements with the mean values of 100.88 (SD = 4,324) ,while the mean in group A was 108 (SD = 3,464). Therefore, it showed that the anxiety of public speaking in group B has decreased consistently rather than group A.

Based on the calculation of data analysis using mixed anova technique, it showed that counseling group with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique was effective in reducing public speaking anxiety of the students ($F_{(2,28)}$ = 5336,83, p < 0.001). Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the effectiveness between group counseling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique ($F_{(1.14)}$ = 2.79, p < 0.01). Interestingly, the results of the study showed an interaction effect of the type of technique and time of measurement on anxiety ($F_{(1.38,\ 113.02)}$ = 64.150, p < 0.01). for more, the EFT group had an effect of decreasing anxiety levels higher than those with systematic desensitization technique.

Based on the results of data analysis, it could be concluded that the difference in the effectiveness level of systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique was at the same level.This meant that both techniques were at the same level of effectiveness. However, when viewed from the average result and the effect of time, the emotional freedom technique decreased higher than the systematic desensitization technique. The longer the emotional freedom technique treatment was given, the higher the level of public anxiety decreased in the students. Furthermore, the degree of decreased anxiety of public speaking on the application of each technique is shown in Graph 2.



Graph 1. The Graph of Public Speaking Anxiety Level

The analysis of mixed anova also showed an effect of decreased public speaking anxiety at each stage of measurement through pairwise comparation seen in table 2. In the table, it could be seen that changes in each stage of measurement majority showed significant difference ($p < 0.01$). As a result, it proved that the majority of measurements showed a significant decrease in the level of public speaking anxiety in college students and it could be interpreted that group counseling technique with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique contributed positively to the decrease in public speaking anxiety.

Table 2. The Results of Pairwise Comparation Analysis

Comparison	Systematic Desensitization Technique			Emotional Freedom Technique		
	MD	SE	P	MD	SE	P
Pretest-Posttest	17,625	0,263	< 0,01	23,000	0,707	< 0,01
Pretest-Follow-Up	38.875	0,295	< 0,01	44,625	0,944	< 0,01
Posttest-Follow-Up	18.250	0,366	< 0,01	21,625	0,375	< 0,01

Based on the results of the study, it was known that the level of anxiety in public speaking before the students were given treatment was in high category, so it could be concluded that the majority of students experienced anxiety inpublic speaking. This could be seen from many students who felt tense and nervous when speaking in public, felt stiff, fast heart beats and trembling hands when giving a presentation. On the one hand, in student discussions, students often experienced difficulty in expressing their opinions, tended to be silent when given the opportunity to ask questions, had difficulty in starting and ending a conversation with others, as well as difficulty in giving feedback to friends.

The data of the results of the study indicated that the public speaking anxiety of students after being given treatment was in moderate and low level. The decrease in the mean of pretest-follow-up scores from groups with systematic desensitization technique was due to this technique which was being able to eliminate unwanted emotional responses to certain stimuli where emotion-generating situations were not paired with inhibiting responses, such as an anxiety-stimulating stimulus coupled with relaxed response, so the stimulus that evoked anxiety ultimately no longer caused anxiety (Nursalim, 2013).

This is in accordance with several studies such as a research conducted by Marantini et al (2014) on the application of desensitization technique to students who have communication anxiety. Effortsby counselors to reduce the anxiety in communication through systematic desensitization techniques are done by counselors train students to achieve relaxed or relaxed state.This exercise was done through a special procedure called relaxation that seeks to condition students in a state of complete relaxation.

The results achieved by the research subjects of this studycould be used as a proof that changing the relaxed conditions was associated with speaking anxiety. Further, it was important to prepare a counseling strategy whichwas able to touch the emotional sphere. This is in line with what Armasari et al (2013) says that basically systematic desensitization is used to remove negatively reinforced behavior that includes the appearance of behaviors and responses that are contrary to the behavior to remove. In relaxation techniques, students were trained to relax and associate relaxed circumstances in experiences of anxiety which were imagined and visualized. Then, gradually, the experiences related to anxiety were eliminated along with the relaxed conditions created by students, and also the students were trained to relieve tension on the mind and create a relaxed state on the body.

In this way, even though both forms of intervention were equally proven effective in reducing public speaking anxiety in college students, the emotional freedom technique group counseling demonstrated greater effectiveness compared with systematic desensitization technique to reduce public speaking anxiety in college students. This was supported by the

results of research conducted by Ariani et al (2016) which state that systematic desensitization technique is less effective on students, given their limitations in visualizing the situation that is considered problematic. This will interfere with the therapeutic process, since in essence, in the implementation of systematic desensitization technique to the students requires the ability to take back the problematic situation, and try to be reapplied with a new perspective (Erford, 2016).

Different things laid in the application of EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique). It is a technique that directly deals with the disruption of the body's energy system and is useful for eliminating negative emotions (without the need to dismantle past traumatic memories). EFT can do a "short cut" by cutting the chain right in the middle (energy disturbance), with a harmonious body energy system, then the negative emotions felt will be lost by itself (Zainuddin, 2009). In accordance with the results of a research by Adhriani& Yusra (2014), there is a decrease in anxiety on beginners radio announcer after doing EFT. When a person experiences a disruption of the body's energy system such as anxiety, the flow of energy through the meridian point of the body will be disrupted. To eliminate the disruption of the body's energy system, it is necessary to correct the disruption of energy flow at the points of the body meridians by finger knocking in a certain way according to the EFT technique.

The results obtained from this study, showed similar results with previous studies on EFT. They were similar to Jones' research, Thornton & Andrews's study (2011) on public speaking anxiety (PSA), which gave EFT to eighteen people in the experimental group, showed a decrease in anxiety levels in public speaking after a forty-five-minute EFT session. EFT was also proven to reduce anxiety and improve students' academic performance in presentation in front of the class after being given EFT for fifteen minutes (Boath et al., 2013).

Based on the above explanation, it is important for school counselors to reconsider the use of systematic desensitization technique to improve student self-confidence. If this technique will be done to the students, then it should be only for students who have more ability in visualizing events. Emotional freedom technique is more recommended to counselors to reduce public speaking anxiety in students because each student has the potential for self-verbalization although cognitive improvement has not reached the level of perfection.

CONCLUSION

This study has tested the effect of the implementation of group counseling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique in reducing the anxiety of public speaking of the students of BK department of FKIP Darul 'UlumJombang University. The implementation resultswere seen from the acquisition of pretest, posttest and follow-up results analyzed using ANOVA repeated measures. They results show significant differences. From these results, "group counseling with systematic desensitization technique and emotional freedom technique can reduce the anxiety of public speaking to students".

In this study there was no control group as comparison group, so it is expected that the next research can add control group. Fruther, the result of this study is still dominant from sample with female gender at university level, so it needs development with number of samples which not only focus on female gender and at other education level. Also, the time range used for repeated measurements in this study was quite short, so in the next study is expected to use a long time.

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