

**SPEECH ANXIETY AND LANGUAGE CHALLENGE OF
INDONESIAN STUDENT TEACHERS IN THAILAND
SCHOOLS**

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG
2025**

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THESIS

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **“Speech Anxiety and Language Challenges of Indonesian Student Teachers in Thailand Schools”** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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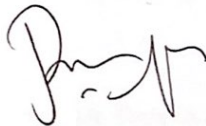
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This to certify that Zahra Nabilla Qatrunnada thesis entitled **Speech Anxiety and Language Challenges of Indonesian Student Teachers in Thailand Schools** has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.).

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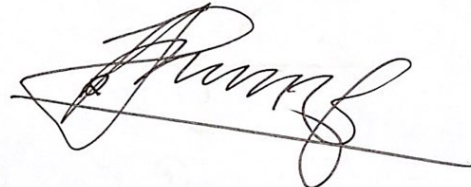
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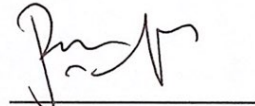
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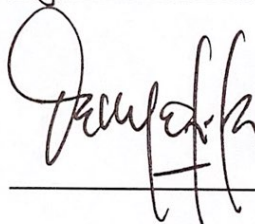
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MOTTO

“Indeed, with hardship comes ease so do not lose hope nor be sad for those who strive in the way of Allah, Allah will surely guide them to the paths of Allah and your efforts will never be in vain.”

(Surah Ash-Sharh 94:6, Al-Imran 3:139, Al-Ankabut 29:69, Al-Anbiya 21:94)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to people who have been a constant source of strength and inspiration in my life. My parents, siblings, family, friends, partner and lecturers have shown me unwavering support, prayers, and encouragement. Their kindness and belief in me have motivated me to keep going, and their guidance has helped me in completing this thesis.

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With sincere gratitude to God Almighty, for all the abundance of grace, love, strength, and peace of mind that has accompanied every step in the long process of preparing this thesis. With His permission and will, I was able to complete this thesis as a condition for obtaining the degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) entitled “Speech Anxiety and Language Challenges of Student Teacher in Thailand Schools”. I dedicate this thesis with great respect and love to:

- 1 My beloved parents, Ayah and Bunda thank you for every sacrifice, for sending me to university, and for always supporting me with unconditional love and tireless prayers. Your trust in my abilities, your wisdom in moments of doubt, and your presence in every step of my journey have been my greatest strength. Without your encouragement and emotional support, this thesis would have remained a dream. My dear family, especially my little beloved brother, who has always stood by my side with support and care. To my extended family as well, thank you for your consistent prayers, encouraging words, and belief in me.
- 2 My thesis advisor, who patiently guided, directed, and encouraged me during the process of preparing this thesis.
- 3 My closest friends, who have accompanied me through the joys and struggles of university life and all my friends who stayed with me through sleepless nights, endless assignments, shared laughter, and emotional breakdowns thank you for making this journey meaningful.
- 4 Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to myself. Thank you for enduring every challenge and persevering through difficult times. I am truly proud of how far I have come.

ABSTRACT

Qatrunnada, Zahra Nabilla. (2025). *Speech Anxiety and Language Challenges of Indonesian Student Teachers in Thailand Schools*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature. Faculty of Humanities. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Prof. Dr. Rohmani Nur Indah, M.Pd.

Keywords: speech anxiety, language challenges, student teachers, Thailand schools.

This study explores the impact of culture shock on speech anxiety experienced by Indonesian student teachers during their internship period in Narathiwat, Thailand. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, the research investigates how language challenges influence speech anxiety within intercultural communication context. The participants comprised student teachers from three Indonesian universities namely UIN Malang, UIN Riau, Unsoed who underwent internships in Narathiwat Thailand during 2024-2025. Data were collected through interviews, and observations then analyzed using Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory as the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that culture shock significantly exacerbates speech anxiety caused by language challenges, unfamiliar dialects, and pragmatics mismatches. The participants employed various coping strategies including code-switching, seeking social support, and pragmatic adjustment to manage their anxiety and facilitate intercultural communication. This study highlights the importance of addressing culture shock and language challenges to improve student teachers communication competences and psychological adjustment during internships abroad. Implications for teachers education programs and intercultural training are discussed.

ABSTRAK

Qatrunnada, Zahra Nabilla. (2025). *Kecemasan Berbicara dan Tantangan Bahasa pada Mahasiswa magang di Sekolah Thailand.* Skripsi Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Humaniora. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Prof. Dr. Rohmani Nur Indah, M.Pd.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan berbicara, tantangan bahasa, mahasiswa magang, sekolah Thailand.

Studi ini mengeksplorasi dampak dari culture shock terhadap kecemasan berbicara yang dialami oleh mahasiswa guru selama periode magang mereka di Narathiwat, Thailand. Mengadopsi desain deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana tantangan bahasa mempengaruhi kecemasan berbicara dalam konteks komunikasi antarbudaya. Para peserta terdiri dari mahasiswa calon guru dari tiga universitas Indonesia UIN Malang, UIN Riau, dan UNSOED yang menjalani magang di Narathiwat Thailand selama 2024-2025. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, dan observasi kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teori Manajemen Kecemasan/Ketidakpastian (AUM) sebagai kerangka teoritis. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kejutan budaya secara signifikan memperburuk kecemasan berbicara yang disebabkan oleh tantangan bahasa, dialek yang tidak dikenal, dan ketidakcocokan pragmatis. Para peserta menggunakan berbagai strategi koping termasuk berganti kode, mencari dukungan sosial, dan penyesuaian pragmatis untuk mengelola kecemasan mereka dan memfasilitasi komunikasi antarbudaya. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya mengatasi kejutan budaya dan tantangan bahasa untuk meningkatkan kompetensi komunikasi dan penyesuaian psikologis mahasiswa calon guru selama magang di luar negeri. Implikasi untuk program pendidikan guru dan pelatihan antarbudaya dibahas.

مستخلص البحث

قطراندي، زهرة نبيلة. (2025). قلق التحدث وتحديات اللغة لدى الطلاب العاملين في المدارس التايلاندية. أطروحة بكالوريوس قسم الأدب الإنجليزي. كلية العلوم الإنسانية بن. جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانج الإسلامية الحكومية. المشرف: أ.د. د. رحمان نور إنداه،

ماجستير الكلمات المفتاحية: قلق التحدث، تحدي اللغة، الطلاب المعلمين، المدرسة التايلاندية.

تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثير الصدمة الثقافية على قلق التحدث الذي يعاني منه الطلبة المعلمون خلال فترة تدريبهم في ناراثيروات تايلاند. في وباعتماد تصميم وصفي نوعي، بحثت هذه الدراسة في كيفية تأثير التحديات اللغوية على قلق التحدث في سياق التواصل بين الثقافات. تألف المشاركون من طلاب مدرسين من ثلاث جامعات إندونيسية هي جامعة إندونيسيا مالانج وجامعة إندونيسيا ريلو وجامعة إندونيسيا ريلو وجامعة إندونيسيا في تايلاند، الذين خضعوا للتدريب في ناراثيروات خلال الفترة 2024-2025. وقد جمعت البيانات من خلال المقابلات والملاحظات وتحليل الوثائق، تحليلها ثم تم باستخدام نظرية البراغمية ونظرية إدارة القلق/عدم اليقين كإطار نظري. أظهرت النتائج أن الصدمة الثقافية من قلق فاقمت بشكل كبير التحدث الناجم عن تحديات اللغة واللهجة غير المألوفة وعدم التوافق البراغمي. استخدم المشاركون استراتيجيات مختلفة للتكيف بما في ذلك تبديل الرموز، والبحث عن الدعم الاجتماعي، والتعديلات البراغمية لإدارة قلقهم وتسهيل التواصل بين الثقافات. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على أهمية معالجة الصدمة الثقافية والتحديات اللغوية لتحسين كفاءة التواصل والتكيف النفسي لدى المعلمين قبل الخدمة خلال فترة التدريب في الخارج. وتناقش الدراسة الآثار المترتبة على برامج تعليم المعلمين والتدريب بين الثقافات.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS COVER.....	i
STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.....	ii
APPROVAL SHEET.....	iii
LEGIMATION SHEET.....	iv
MOTTO.....	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii
ABSTRAK.....	ix
ABSTRACT (Arab).....	x
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
11 Background of the Study.....	1
12 Problem of the Study.....	4
13 Objectives of the Study.....	5
14 Significance of the Study.....	5
15 Scope and Limitation.....	5
16 Definition of Key Terms.....	7
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
21 Pragmatic.....	8
22 Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory.....	11
23 Participant Observation Theory.....	14
24 Speech Anxiety.....	16
25 Language Challenges.....	18
26 Culture Shock.....	20
27 Language Barriers.....	22
28 Cultural Differences.....	24
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD.....	26
31 Research Design.....	26
32 Research Instruments.....	27
33 Data and data sources.....	30
34 Data collection.....	31
35 Data Analysis.....	32
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	33
A. Findings.....	33
B. Discussion.....	82
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....	89
A. Conclusion.....	89
B. Suggestion.....	90
REFERENCES.....	92
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	96

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises background and problem of the study. In addition, it explains the significance of the study as well as its scope and limitation. The final part describes the definition of key terms used in this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In this increasingly globalized world, cross cultural experiences have become more common, especially among student teachers participating in teaching internships across national or regional boundaries. One such context is Narathiwat Thailand, a culturally diverse area where Thai and Kelantan Malay are predominantly spoken. Student teachers from different backgrounds including those from UIN Malang, UIN Riau, and UNSOED in the 2024-2025 period who are unfamiliar with these cultural and linguistic settings often face significant challenges in communication and adjustment. These challenges primarily emerge in the form of culture shock and language challenges which can disrupt their ability to interact, teach, and express themselves effectively during their practicum (Sa'diyah et al., 2021). When people are put in a culturally unfamiliar setting, they may experience a psychological phenomenon known as culture shock. Because of strange traditions, social mores, and communication patterns, it usually causes feelings of bewilderment, anxiety, and disorientation (Chun et al., 2020).

The internship program is implemented through the International Student Mobility and Academic Seminar in Humanities (I-SMASH) scheme

initiated by UIN Malang. This program is an international mobility program organized by the Faculty of Humanities of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM) and Field Work Practice (PKL) schemes. This program provides opportunities for students to participate in academic and professional activities abroad, especially in Thailand. The main focus of this program includes teaching, diplomacy, tourism, and translation.

This program is only available at UIN Malang and is not implemented at other campuses. Students from UIN Riau and UNSOED follow a similar program with the name and structure of the program determined by their respective institutions. One of the partner schools where students are placed is Attarkiah Islamiah Institute, an Islamic-based private educational institution located in Narathiwat. The institute integrates the Thai national curriculum with Islamic values and applies a bilingual learning approach using Thai and Kelantan Malay as the main languages of instruction.

In this context culture shock can have a direct impact on student teachers performance and emotional well being. As highlighted by Abukhattala and Alshammari, educators working in foreign cultural environments often struggle with aligning their expectations and teaching practices to local standards which leads to emotional stress and professional tension apart from cultural unfamiliarity and language challenges are another significant source of difficulty (Abukhattala and Alshammari, 2021). Language plays a central role in international internships allowing students teachers to explain concepts, manage classroom, and build relationships with students and colleagues. When they

lack proficiency in the local language or dialect student teachers are likely to experience difficulty in communication which may lead to misinterpretation and anxiety (Syamsinar & Jabu, 2021). According to Koran and Budiman, limited language ability is closely associated with reduced confidence and increased speech anxiety especially in front of audience (Koran and Budiman, 2022).

To better understand the speech anxiety and language challenges effect of these intercultural experiences this study applies the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory develop by Gudykunst 2005. The theory suggests that successful intercultural communication depends on one's ability to manage uncertainty and anxiety. When student teachers are unable to regulate their speech anxiety due to cultural unfamiliarity and language limitations their communication may become ineffective and they may withdraw from speaking situations altogether (Mingxia & Shao, 2022).

Although there is a growing body of research on culture shock and language anxiety most studies have focused on international students in academic settings or language learners in formal classrooms (Budiata et al., 2023; Yuan & Liu, 2020). There is limited research that specifically investigates student teachers undergoing teaching internships in multilingual environments like Narathiwat. Few studies have explored the intersection between culture shock, language challenges, and their impact on speech anxiety in real classroom situations. Narathiwat's unique linguistic environment where both Thai and Kelantan Malay coexist creates an additional layer of complexity for student teachers.

Those who are unfamiliar with these languages often experience fear of making mistakes, being judged, or not being understood. These fears may lead them to avoid speaking altogether, rely on gestures, or seek help from translators-behaviors indicative of speech anxiety (Nuraeni et al., 2021). Observations suggest that even confident student teachers may hesitate when faced with unfamiliar cultural cues and communication expectations. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gaps in previous literature by deeply exploring the experiences of student teachers in dealing with culture shock, language challenges, and speech anxiety within the intercultural context of Narathiwat, Thailand.

The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the long term impact of cross cultural communication challenges as well as the strategies students use to manage uncertainty and anxiety in verbal interactions. Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the understanding of intercultural communication dynamics in non-academic contexts and to support the development of more empathetic approaches for future student teachers in similar environments.

1.2 Problem of the Study

1. What are the types of speech anxiety experienced by Indonesian student teachers from UIN Riau, UIN Malang, and Unsoed during their internship programs in the schools at Narathiwat, Thailand?
2. How do the student teachers manage their speech anxiety and language challenges during their internship programs in the

schools at Narathiwat, Thailand?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the types of speech anxiety experienced by Indonesian student teachers from UIN Riau, UIN Malang, and Unsoed during their internship programs in the schools at Narathiwat, Thailand.
2. To examine how student teachers manage their speech anxiety and language challenges during their internship programs in the schools at Narathiwat, Thailand.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of pragmatics by deepening the understanding of intercultural communication and speech anxiety triggered by language barriers and culture shock. By applying Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory it provides new insights into how student teachers handle verbal interaction in cross cultural environments. Practically, the findings are expected to support educational institutions particularly UIN Riau, UIN Malang, and Unsoed in preparing students for international internships in multicultural areas like Narathiwat, Thailand. Furthermore, this study may serve as a guide for student teachers in managing speech anxiety and language challenges for host institutions creating supportive and culturally responsive communication environments.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study is based on pragmatics focusing on speech anxiety and

language challenges caused by culture shock and language barriers during intercultural interactions. It uses the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory to examine how student teachers manage speech anxiety and uncertainty in cross cultural settings. The study is limited to student teachers from UIN Riau, UIN Malang, and Unsoed who interned in Narathiwat, Thailand in 2024 and 2025. This study involved only five participants who were purposively selected from all student interns placed in Narathiwat.

The selection of participants was based on the consideration that they came from different institutions, had direct experience teaching in a classroom with unfamiliar cultural and linguistic contexts, and demonstrated significant communication dynamics during the internship. In addition, the five participants were also considered to have the ability to reflect deeply on their experiences and were willing to actively engage in the interview and observation process. Thus, the selection of these five people is considered to be able to comprehensively represent the phenomenon under study. While many theories on language barriers exist this research exclusively uses the AUM Theory and does not examine psychological factors like personality or mental health nor does it explore non verbal communication or digital tools. The study focuses on the student teachers experiences with culture shock, language difficulties, and how these impact their speech anxiety in both professional and social contexts.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- **Speech Anxiety:** Speech anxiety, also known as communication apprehension is the fear or nervousness associated with speaking in public or unfamiliar situations especially when using a second language.
- **Language challenges:** Language challenges refer to the difficulties individuals face in understanding, using, or experiencing a language that is not their native tongue.
- **Culture Shock:** Culture shock refers to the psychological and emotional disorientation experienced by individuals when they enter a new cultural environment that is significantly different from their own.
- **Language Barriers:** Language barriers are obstacles to communication that occur when individuals do not share a common language or have differing levels of language proficiency.
- **Student teachers:** A student teacher is a university or college student who is undergoing practical training by teaching in a real school setting usually as part of an education degree program. In this study, student teacher refers to pre-service teachers assigned to teach in Thailand schools as part of their internship program.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains the related literature review of the research topics which are pragmatic, AUM theory, participant observation theory, speech anxiety, language challenges, culture shock, language barrier, cultural differences.

2.1 Pragmatic

Pragmatics is the branch of linguistics that deals with the study of language use in context and the factors that govern speakers' choices in communication (Senft, 2014, p. 1). It explores how utterances function in actual communicative situations beyond their literal meanings (Kecskes, 2022, p. 3). Pragmatics acknowledges that language is a dynamic, interactive tool used by individuals to achieve specific communicative goals (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 3). According to Senft (2014), pragmatics focuses on the role of the speaker and hearer, including their intentions, assumptions, and shared knowledge (p. 2). This field is especially concerned with how speakers manage meaning through choices in language that are appropriate to particular social and cultural contexts (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 5). Kecskes (2022) states that pragmatics is essentially about meaning negotiation between interlocutors, which is always situated in context (p. 6). The field is divided into two main branches: theoretical pragmatics and applied pragmatics (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 4).

Theoretical pragmatics investigates general principles such as speech acts, presuppositions, and deixis (Senft, 2014, p. 15). Meanwhile, applied pragmatics deals with practical issues such as teaching pragmatic competence in second language learning (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 27). Speech act theory, developed by Austin and Searle, describes how utterances can perform functions such as requesting, apologizing, or thanking (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 8). Speech acts are classified into categories such as assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, each fulfilling different communicative intentions (Senft, 2014, p. 20). For example, saying "I promise to help" is not only a statement but also a commitment to future action a commissive speech act (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 10). Misusing speech acts in intercultural contexts can cause confusion or offense, especially when politeness levels differ between cultures (Kecskes, 2022, p. 19).

Pragmatic competence refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in diverse social situations (Kecskes, 2022, p. 15). This competence includes both sociopragmatic knowledge (understanding social and cultural norms) and pragmalinguistic knowledge (choosing the right expressions) (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 30). In second language acquisition, learners often struggle with pragmatic transfer, where they unintentionally apply norms from their first language to the second (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 12). Such transfer may result in pragmatic failure, even when the grammar is

correct, leading to communication breakdown (Senft, 2014, p. 25). For instance, using direct commands like "Give me water" might be seen as rude in English but not in the learner's native language (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 42). These failures often increase learners' anxiety, particularly in unfamiliar social environments (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 18).

Pragmatics examines how meaning is negotiated between speakers from different cultural backgrounds (Kecskes, 2022, p. 12). It recognizes that meaning is co-constructed, and interlocutors must rely on shared context, cultural knowledge, and real-time adjustments (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 38). This co-construction becomes more complex when interlocutors do not share the same cultural assumptions or pragmatic norms (Tajeddin & Alemi, 2020, p. 17). Language learners in intercultural contexts may experience discomfort and heightened anxiety when unsure how their speech will be perceived (Senft, 2014, p. 33). To address this, pragmatic instruction must emphasize flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, and awareness of cultural diversity (Kecskes, 2022, p. 26). It is crucial for language learners to be equipped not just with grammatical competence but also with the pragmatic tools to navigate intercultural conversations successfully (Felix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021, p. 44).

In conclusion, pragmatics plays a critical role in understanding how meaning is negotiated in context sensitive communication. It

emphasizes that language is more than structure it is a tool shaped by cultural norms, social intentions, and interpersonal dynamics. Mastering pragmatic competence is essential, especially for language learners operating in intercultural settings.

2.2 Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory

William B. Gudykunst created the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory, which is one of the most well-known theories for describing how people deal with uncertainty and anxiety in cross-cultural communication. According to the theory, people can effectively communicate when they are able to control their levels of anxiety and uncertainty, particularly when interacting with strangers from diverse cultural backgrounds (Gudykunst, 2005). Based on the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) developed by Berger and Calabrese in 1975, AUM theory adds to the model by distinguishing between anxiety and uncertainty and arguing that both need to be controlled for effective communication. Gudykunst describes anxiety as the emotional strain brought on by such unpredictability, and uncertainty as the incapacity to forecast the attitudes, actions, or results of others (Miller & Samp, 2007).

Gudykunst (2005) states that the fundamental tenet of AUM is that people's ability to control their anxiety and bring their level of uncertainty down to acceptable levels is a prerequisite for effective communication. Communication becomes stifled or surface-level when anxiety levels are

too high or low. Effective cross-cultural communication requires that anxiety and uncertainty be kept within a certain range (Gudykunst, 2005; Neuliep, 2011). The theory presents several axioms and theorems that describe the causal connections among variables like self-concept, social categorization, motivation to interact, situational processes, and anxiety and uncertainty management (Gudykunst, 1995). These factors aid in forecasting people's likely behavior in cross-cultural communication situations.

One of the critical aspects of AUM theory is the emphasis on mindfulness, which involves being consciously aware of communication and adjusting behavior accordingly. Mindfulness allows individuals to process information in more nuanced and culturally sensitive ways, thereby improving the quality of intercultural exchanges (Gudykunst, 2005; Ni, Wang, & De la Flor, 2011). AUM theory also recognizes several types of anxiety that influence communication intercultural contexts:

- Trait Anxiety is rooted in a person's character. For example, individuals who are naturally introverted or socially cautious may feel anxious in any social interaction regardless of context (Gudykunst, 2005).
- Context Anxiety emerges in specific communication environments, such as formal meetings or public speaking settings. Gudykunst (2005) illustrates this through his experience delivering

a commencement speech at a school in the Philippines where the formal setting and cultural expectations caused him to feel increased anxiety and self-awareness during the speech (pp. 297-298).

- Audience Anxiety arises from the characteristics of the people one is addressing. In the same incident, Gudykunst admitted feeling uncertain and anxious because he was unfamiliar with the audience's cultural background and unsure how they would interpret his short, informal speech (p. 298).
- Situation Anxiety develops from past negative communication experiences, such as being misunderstood or rejected in a previous intercultural encounter (Gudykunst, 2005). For example, a student who was laughed at for a pronunciation error is afraid of repeating the same mistake.
- State Anxiety is temporary and specific to a particular moment. For example, Gudykunst (2005) describes how he suddenly felt anxious upon realizing that his brief speech may have violated local expectations for length and formality, a momentary reaction specific to that particular situation (p. 298).

Additionally, AUM theory can be used to better understand how people in foreign environments may experience higher levels of speech anxiety due to language barriers and unfamiliar cultural norms. Unfamiliar communication norms are frequently encountered when interns or students

enter new cultural contexts, which can exacerbate feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. These feelings can cause avoidance behaviors or communication breakdowns if they are not controlled (Ni et al., 2011; Miller & Samp, 2007). The theory explains how their language barriers and unfamiliar cultural norms lead to increased anxiety and communication problems.

In conclusion, AUM theory provides a valuable lens for analyzing how individuals navigate intercultural communication by managing anxiety and uncertainty. The theory emphasizes the importance of mindfulness and adaptive techniques, particularly in situations involving unfamiliar language and cultural contexts. It illustrates how unchecked anxiety brought on by language challenges and cultural unfamiliarity can result in poor communication and elevated psychological stress for student interns.

2.3 Participant Observation Theory

Participant observation is a qualitative research method commonly used in ethnography to understand cultural meanings from the insider's perspective (Spradley, 1980). The term emphasizes both aspects of the method of participation in the daily life of the people being studied and systematic observation of their behaviors. Spradley described participant observation as a process of learning from people rather than studying them in a detached way (Spradley, 1980). He emphasized that the method allows researchers to uncover both explicit and tacit cultural knowledge through direct engagement with the community. Similar to his

view Malinowski (1922) defined the goal of ethnography as "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world." This quote, frequently cited by Spradley (1980), underscores that the ultimate aim of participant observation is to experience and interpret the world as the participants do.

To conduct participant observation effectively Spradley (1980) introduced a systematic procedure called the Developmental Research Sequence (DRS). This sequence includes steps such as selecting a social situation, making descriptive and focused observations, conducting domain and taxonomic analysis, and eventually writing an ethnography. Spradley (1980) also emphasized that observations can be classified into three levels: descriptive, focused, and selective.

Descriptive observations provide a broad overview of the cultural scene, while focused observations target specific domains, and selective observations examine cultural patterns or themes. In guiding these observations Spradley (1980) introduced nine major dimensions of any social situation. These dimensions serve as practical tools in formulating grand tour questions and organizing ethnographic fieldnotes. The nine dimensions are: (1) Space -the physical setting or place where the situation occurs; (2) Actor -the individuals or groups involved in the situation; (3). Activity -sets of related acts that people do within the setting; (4) Object -the physical things that are present in the environment; (5) Act - individual, observable actions performed by participants; (6)

Event - a series or sequence of related activities; (7) Time -the sequencing, flow, and timing of actions and events; (8) Goal - the intended outcomes or objectives people aim to achieve; and (9) Feeling -emotions felt or expressed by the participants.

For example, in his study of a grand jury court process Spradley (1980) described how each of these dimensions helped shape his understanding. The temporal dimension (time) revealed that court cases at the beginning of the day progressed more slowly than those at the end. This change in pace was also evident in other activities illustrating how the sequencing of time shaped interactions and decision-making patterns (Spradley, 1980, p. 78).

In conclusion participant observation is a methodological tool that enables researchers to access and document cultural knowledge. It is not only about observing behavior but also about discovering the meaning behind that behavior. This method serves as a foundation for understanding human experience from the perspective of those living it.

2.4 Speech Anxiety

Speech anxiety has been shown to directly affect language fluency, as emotional tension can interrupt cognitive processes such as conceptualization and formulation (Aubrey, 2022). Anxious language learners tend to pause more frequently and exhibit disrupted speech patterns, indicating that moment to moment shifts in anxiety can significantly impact spoken performance (Aubrey, 2022). These effects

are especially noticeable in second language (L2) speaking tasks, where learners must perform under pressure and often without full control of the language (Aubrey, 2022). Speech anxiety is a psychological phenomenon characterized by feelings of tension, apprehension, and fear that arise when an individual is required to speak, especially in formal or unfamiliar settings (Horwitz, 1986). In the context of second language learning this anxiety is often intensified due to limited proficiency, fear of making mistakes, and perceived judgment from others (Horwitz, 1986). This is particularly relevant for student interns who must communicate in a foreign language while adapting to a new cultural environment.

Foreign language anxiety is recognized as a distinct form of anxiety that impacts learners' ability to speak fluently and confidently in their target language (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994). It encompasses fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety, all of which can hinder language acquisition and performance (Macintyre & Gardner, 1994). These factors often lead to communication breakdowns, withdrawal from social interaction, and reluctance to participate in speaking activities (Horwitz et al., 1986). Individual differences such as self-efficacy, motivation, and personality traits also play a significant role in determining speech anxiety levels (Dewaele & Macintyre, 2014). Learners with high self-confidence are more likely to manage anxiety and perform better in speaking tasks, while those with introverted personalities may experience heightened apprehension in

public speaking situations (Dewaele & Macintyre, 2014). These differences highlight the importance of a learner-centered approach in addressing speech anxiety.

In intercultural contexts like student internships abroad, speech anxiety may also be exacerbated by culture shock, unfamiliar social expectations, and limited support systems (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). Navigating a new language environment while coping with cultural differences creates a unique set of psychological challenges that directly affect oral communication. Therefore, understanding and mitigating speech anxiety in second language learners is essential for improving communicative competence and promoting successful intercultural adaptation (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022).

In conclusion, speech anxiety significantly impacts language performance especially in second language and intercultural contexts. It is not only a reaction to unfamiliar language demands but also to social and cultural pressures. Recognizing the psychological roots and individual variability of speech anxiety is crucial for developing supportive strategies that enhance learner confidence and communicative effectiveness.

2.5 Language Challenges

Language challenges are among the most common difficulties faced by English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, especially during oral communication tasks. These include limited vocabulary,

grammatical uncertainty, pronunciation problems, and the fear of making mistakes, which often result in speech anxiety and reluctance to speak (Habiburrahim et al., 2020, pp. 254-255). Zetterkvist (2021) found that students frequently experienced stress when speaking English in class, particularly during oral presentations or full class discussions. A dominant factor was the fear of being judged or ridiculed by classmates or corrected by teachers, which caused students to stay silent even when they had something to say (Zetterkvist, 2021, pp. 12-13).

Some learners reported avoiding speech altogether to protect themselves from embarrassment (Zetterkvist, 2021, p. 5). This emotional pressure is often linked to perceived linguistic inadequacy. Learners worried about using incorrect words, not speaking fluently, or mispronouncing terms issues that increased anxiety even when their actual language skills were sufficient (Zetterkvist, 2021, p. 5; Khan, 2015, p. 52). According to Khan (2015), students felt socially inferior if their language lacked fluency or sounded "non-native," which reduced their confidence to speak (p. 52). The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping these experiences. Zetterkvist (2021) noted that unclear instructions, abrupt speaking tasks, and harsh feedback heightened students' fear, while positive reinforcement, clear structure, and gradual exposure helped reduce anxiety (pp. 14-15). Many students mentioned that preparation such as practicing at home or rehearsing presentations significantly improved their speaking performance and lowered their

stress (Zetterkvist, 2021, p. 15).

In conclusion, language challenges are not just linguistic in nature but are closely tied to emotional and environmental factors. Fear of failure, peer judgment, and classroom dynamics all influence learner's willingness to speak. Reducing these barriers requires a supportive well-structured environment where learners are encouraged to participate without fear.

2.6 Culture Shock

Culture shock is a psychological reaction to encountering a new and unfamiliar cultural environment, often marked by confusion, anxiety, and emotional stress (Oberg, 2017). It occurs when individuals are exposed to different social norms, behaviors, and communication styles that contrast sharply with their own cultural background (Oberg, 2017). The traditional model of culture shock involves four stages: honeymoon, crisis (or frustration), recovery, and adjustment (Oberg, 2017). These stages represent an emotional journey from initial fascination with the host culture to eventual adaptation and integration (Oberg, 2017).

However, more recent perspectives argue that this staged model is overly simplistic and fails to reflect the fluidity and complexity of intercultural experiences (Dervin, 2016). Dervin critiques the culture shock concept for reinforcing essentialist views of culture, suggesting it often pathologized the normal process of encountering difference (Dervin, 2016). Rather than assuming intercultural contact always leads to

disorientation, Dervin and Gross emphasize the importance of critical intercultural competence, which encourages learners to reflect, question assumptions, and engage in dialogue (Dervin & Gross, 2016). This approach shifts the focus from suffering to learning, from confusion to negotiation (Dervin & Gross, 2016).

In the context of student internships, especially in culturally distinct regions such as Narathiwat, Thailand cultural adaptation involves both challenge and growth (Dervin, 2016). Students may initially experience disconnection and insecurity when encountering unfamiliar practices, but they also develop resilience and new intercultural skills over time (Dervin, 2016). Gunn (2017) highlights that culture shock in educational settings is not only emotional but deeply embedded in structures of power and institutional norms (Gunn, 2017).

Students experiencing culture shock often struggle with mismatches in classroom behavior, expectations, and values, leading to misunderstandings and internalized discomfort (Gunn, 2017). Communication challenges both verbal and non-verbal are at the core of the culture shock experience often resulting in students becoming withdrawn or anxious during interactions (Gunn, 2017). These communicative struggles can amplify feelings of failure especially when students are unsure how to appropriately express themselves in the host culture (Gunn, 2017). Speech anxiety can also be intensified during culture shock, as students often feel pressure to conform to unfamiliar

communicative norms and may fear miscommunication or negative judgment (Dervin & Gross, 2016). These moments of uncertainty highlight the emotional dimension of intercultural learning and the need for institutional support during overseas placements (Dervin & Gross, 2016).

In conclusion, culture shock is a multifaceted emotional and communicative experience triggered by exposure to new cultural norms. While it can cause anxiety and withdrawal especially in educational contexts it also offers opportunities for growth and intercultural learning. Understanding culture shock through a critical lens enables institutions to better support students during international placements turning discomfort into meaningful adaptation.

2.7 Language Barriers

Language barriers are frequently cited as significant obstacles in second language communication especially when individuals navigate unfamiliar sociolinguistic environments (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). These barriers often provoke anxiety and reduce learners' ability to express themselves effectively (Li et al., 2022). For student interns in regions like Narathiwat, where Thai is the dominant language, a lack of fluency contributes to psychological discomfort and communication breakdown. Language differences intensify feelings of exclusion and may increase the risk of developing speech anxiety (Rasch, 2020).

In second language acquisition, anxiety is not solely tied to

linguistic competence but also to social evaluation and the perceived risk of negative judgment (Li et al., 2022). Learners often internalize fear of embarrassment, especially when they cannot express themselves as intended in the target language (Li et al., 2022). Student interns frequently encounter structural communication barriers in both institutional and everyday settings which can lead to a sense of powerlessness. These limitations inhibit full social participation and delay cultural adaptation (Rasch, 2020).

Language related difficulties hinder not only daily conversation but also access to services, support networks, and academic environments. For young adults like interns these barriers are especially critical as they affect identity formation and confidence (Li et al., 2022). When language and cultural expectations clash, students may experience linguistic alienation-feeling voiceless in both social and professional contexts. This alienation contributes to stress and undermines their overall intercultural experience (Rasch, 2020). Even students with good second language proficiency can struggle with local dialects, accent bias, and pragmatic misunderstandings; these subtle communication mismatches heighten anxiety in high-stakes interactions (Li et al., 2022). Language barriers serve as both practical and emotional challenges, deeply influencing how interns experience culture shock and manage speech-related anxiety (Rasch, 2020; Li et al., 2022). Addressing these barriers is essential for supporting interns' well-being

and adaptation in foreign cultural environments (Rasch, 2020).

In conclusion, language barriers are not merely technical limitations but deeply emotional and social challenges that shape the intercultural experience. They restrict access, increase anxiety, and hinder cultural adaptation-especially for internship student teachers in unfamiliar environments. Addressing both linguistic and pragmatic aspects of communication is vital for easing these barriers and supporting successful integration.

2.8 Cultural Differences

Cultural differences refer to the diverse ways which people from various cultural backgrounds think, communicate, and behave, shaped by their unique values, beliefs, and social norms (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). In second language learning contexts these differences influence not only communication styles but also classroom interaction, learner motivation, and pragmatic language use (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). For instance, students from high power distance cultures may be less likely to participate in class discussions which contrasts with expectations in low power distance educational settings (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). Pragmatics highlights that language use is deeply embedded in cultural context, where speech acts such as requests, refusals, and compliments are performed differently across cultures (Kecskes, 2022). Pragmatic failure, is inability to use language appropriately in intercultural interactions, often stems not from linguistic incompetence but from unawareness of

cultural conventions (Kecskes, 2022). These misalignments can lead to misunderstandings or perceptions of rudeness, even when the speaker's intention is polite (Kecskes, 2022). Rather than viewing cultural differences as barriers, intercultural communication scholars emphasize the concept of "socio-cultural salience," which recognizes that individuals draw on both their personal experiences and shared cultural frameworks during interaction (Kecskes, 2022). This dynamic understanding allows for more flexible and adaptive communication, moving beyond essentialist views that stereotype cultures as fixed and homogeneous (Kecskes, 2022). Moreover, effective communication across cultures requires not just linguistic knowledge but intercultural competence-the ability to interpret and negotiate meaning in contextually appropriate ways (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022). Developing this competence involves both awareness of one's own cultural assumptions and sensitivity to those of others, which is essential for second language learners navigating diverse cultural settings (Li, Hiver, & Papi, 2022).

In conclusion, cultural differences profoundly influence how language is used, interpreted, and responded to in intercultural interactions. Misunderstandings often arise not from language errors but from differing cultural expectations. Therefore, fostering Intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness is essential for bridging communication gaps and promoting respectful effective dialogue across cultures.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter presents the methodological foundation of the study. It explains the overall design and approach used to explore how student interns experience speech anxiety and language challenges during their internship programs.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences of student interns who encounter language barriers and intercultural communication challenges during their internships in Narathiwat, Thailand. A qualitative approach is selected because it enables the researcher to investigate complex context bound human experiences in depth. Rather than focusing on numerical or statistical patterns, qualitative research emphasizes understanding individuals' perspectives, emotions, and adaptive behaviors in real-life situations. The main justification for choosing a descriptive qualitative approach is its capacity to present clear and direct representations of participants' experiences and perceptions especially in contexts where limited prior research exists (Doyle et al., 2019). This makes it especially suitable for capturing the interns' subjective meanings and social realities within their natural settings.

The primary goal of this study is to examine how student interns respond to cultural shock, manage speech anxiety, and adapt to a new

cultural and linguistic environment. The qualitative design supports a naturalistic and interpretive inquiry in which the researcher seeks to understand participants' experiences from their own point of view. This approach is particularly relevant to research involving intercultural interaction and psychological responses such as anxiety and uncertainty which are inherently subjective and context sensitive.

3.2 Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the main instrument is the researcher themselves. As the primary data collector and interpreter, the researcher plays a central role in designing the study, interacting with participants, and making meaning from the collected data. To ensure systematic and consistent data collection, the researcher utilizes two supporting instruments: an observation checklist and an interview guide.

a. Observation Checklist

The observation checklist is designed to assist the researcher in recording key communicative behaviors, interaction patterns, and non-verbal cues that emerge during the interns' engagement in their host environment. It focuses on elements such as hesitation in speech, avoidance behaviors, gestures indicating discomfort, and responses to misunderstandings. The checklist helps in organizing observational data in a structured manner while maintaining flexibility to capture emergent behaviors.

The following table 1 presents the observation checklist rubric

adapted from Spradley's (1980) Participant Observation Method:

Table 1. Observation checklist rubric adapted from Spradley's (1980)

No.	Observation Focus	Indicators	✓
1	Language Use	Student intern uses English	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Local responds in Thai or Thai-Malay mix	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Student switches between languages	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Speech Anxiety Indicators	Hesitation or long pauses before speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Avoids eye contact while speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Speaks in a low or unclear voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Refrains from responding or passes question	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Communication barriers	Requests for repetition from either party	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Misunderstandings or incorrect responses	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Frequent use of gestures to clarify meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Coping Strategies	Uses Google Translate or dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Asks peer/friend to translate or speak on behalf	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Switches to simpler words or short phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Emotional Responses	Shows visible signs of frustration or nervousness	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Smiles or laughs to cover confusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Withdraws from conversation or social interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Intercultural Adjustment	Attempts to learn/use local phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Tries to maintain conversation despite language difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Engages actively in social or work activities	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Interview Guide

The interview guide is composed of semi structured questions aimed at eliciting in- depth responses from participants. The questions are

open ended allowing participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and emotions in their own words while still ensuring that key thematic areas such as cultural adaptation, language difficulties, and emotional responses are addressed. The use of a semi structured format ensures consistency across interviews while providing room for follow up questions that can reveal deeper insights.

Table 2 below provides the guidelines for conducting interviews, including several questions that will be asked to student teachers. In this study, the researcher will interview two students from UIN Malang, two students from UIN Riau and one student from Unsoed. The following questions are developed based on the Types of Speech Anxiety as outlined in AUM Theory by William B. Gudykunst:

Table 2. Interview Guidelines Based on AUM Theory by William B. Gudykunst (2005)

COMPONENTS	QUESTIONS
<p>Trait Anxiety – Anxiety that is part of a person’s personality or character.</p> <p>Context Anxiety – Anxiety triggered by specific communication situations.</p> <p>Audience Anxiety – Anxiety caused by the characteristics of the audience.</p> <p>Situation Anxiety – Anxiety resulting from previous negative speaking experiences.</p>	<p>Question 1 What usually makes you feel most anxious when you have to speak</p> <p>English in public or to native Thai speakers, especially regarding language challenges?</p> <p>Question 2 Have you ever felt nervous or anxious when speaking English during your internship in Narathiwat due to language challenges? Can you describe the situation?</p> <p>Question 3 How did your speech anxiety and language challenges affect your ability to communicate during your internship?</p>

<p>State Anxiety – Temporary anxiety that arises in a particular moment or situation.</p>	<p>Question 4 What strategies did you use to manage your anxiety when speaking English and overcoming language challenges? Were they effective?</p> <p>Question 5 Over time, did you notice any changes in your confidence when speaking English despite language challenges? What helped you improve or feel more comfortable?</p>
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3.3 Data and data sources

The primary data used in this study were visual and audio documents, interview transcripts and observation notes. Data sources included: (1) visual or audio recordings made during the learning process (2) transcripts of interviews and (3) written descriptions of communicative behaviors recorded in the observation rubric. All data were collected in the period 2024-2025. The participants were five students from several Indonesian state universities with an age range 21-23 years old: JI and VI from UIN Malang, IR and UL from UIN Riau, and NA from UNSOED, who had completed internships in Narathiwat, Thailand in the period 2024-2025. The selection of these data sources was in line with the focus of the study, which was to investigate speech anxiety and language challenges during the internship.

3.4 Data collection

The data collection process involved two main methods: observation and interviews. The first stage of data collection began with observation of the internship site. The researcher directly witnessed the interactions between the interns and the local community or viewed recorded interactions. This allows the researcher to record behaviors and communication patterns without interruption. Observation allows researchers to capture real-time responses that cannot be adequately expressed in interviews such as hesitation in speaking, shyness, attempts to adapt, and signs of anxiety or discomfort.

After the observation stage, the researcher conduct in-depth interviews with the selected participants. Data collection was conducted through interviews with respondents via WhatsApp calls. During the interview, the researcher asked each respondent five questions. During the interview, respondents can answer in English or Indonesian. Each interview lasted about 10-15 minutes per respondent. The researcher then transcribed the data based on each respondent's answers. Findings from the interview transcripts explored the speech anxiety and language challenges faced by student teachers regarding their participation in English when teaching English or other subjects, speaking in English with Thai students, and interacting with their supportive mentor teachers. The interview also serves as a confirmation method for data obtained through observation. By comparing the results of observations and answers from

the participants, the researcher can triangulate the data to ensure the validity of the findings and obtain a more complete picture of the communication experience of students in the context of cross-cultural internships.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study follows a thematic approach. After transcribing the interviews and reviewing the observation notes, the researcher identifies recurring themes and patterns within the data. These themes are grouped based on similarities in experiences, emotional responses, and communicative behavior. Themes such as “language-related anxiety,” “fear of misunderstanding,” “strategies for adaptation,” and “cultural misinterpretation” are interpreted using the lens of AUM Theory. The focus of the analysis is to understand how participants perceive and respond to intercultural uncertainty and anxiety, and how these psychological states influence their communication. The AUM framework is used not only to organize the data thematically but also to offer explanatory insights into how student interns manage their experiences in a cross-cultural context. In the analysis process, interviews were also used to confirm and strengthen the data obtained from observation. This approach allows researchers to triangulate data, so that the resulting interpretations become more valid and academically accountable.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings from interviews with student interns from UIN Riau, UIN Malang and UNSOED who participated in an internship program in Narathiwat, Thailand. The findings relate to the two research questions in this study and are analyzed and discussed in relation to Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM), which provides a framework for understanding how uncertainty and anxiety affect communication in cross cultural contexts.

A. FINDINGS

The following finding is based on the observation data adapted and organized according to Spradley's (1980) ethnographic framework, which identifies nine key dimensions for analyzing social situations. These dimensions help structure the observations by focusing on different aspects of the communicative environment and participants' behaviors. Spradley's nine dimensions include: Space, referring to the physical setting where interactions occur; Actor, meaning the individuals or groups involved; Activity, which covers related actions people perform within the setting; Object, the tangible items present; Act, the specific observable behaviors; Event, the sequence of related activities; Time, addressing the timing and flow of actions; Goal, the objectives participants aim to achieve; and Feeling, the emotions experienced or cultural and linguistic environment.

The qualitative design supports a naturalistic and interpretive inquiry in which the researcher seeks to understand participants' experiences from their own point of view. This approach is particularly relevant to research involving intercultural interaction and psychological responses such as anxiety and uncertainty which are inherently subjective and context sensitive.

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In qualitative research, the main instrument is the researcher themselves. As the primary data collector and interpreter, the researcher plays a central role in designing the study, interacting with participants, and making meaning from the collected data. To ensure systematic and consistent data collection, the researcher utilizes two supporting instruments: an observation checklist and an interview guide.

a. Observation Checklist

The observation checklist is designed to assist the researcher in recording key communicative behaviors, interaction patterns, and non-verbal cues that emerge during the interns' engagement in their host environment. It focuses on elements such as hesitation in speech, avoidance behaviors, gestures indicating discomfort, and responses to misunderstandings. The checklist helps in organizing observational data in a structured manner while maintaining flexibility to capture emergent behaviors.

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		Refrains from responding or passes question	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Communication barriers	Requests for repetition from either party	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Misunderstandings or incorrect responses	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Frequent use of gestures to clarify meaning	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Coping Strategies	Uses Google Translate or dictionary	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Asks peer/friend to translate or speak on behalf	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Switches to simpler words or short phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Emotional Responses	Shows visible signs of frustration or nervousness	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Smiles or laughs to cover confusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Withdraws from conversation or social interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Intercultural Adjustment	Attempts to learn/use local phrases	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Tries to maintain conversation despite language difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The interview guide is composed of semi structured questions aimed at eliciting in- depth responses from participants. The questions are

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COMPONENTS	QUESTIONS
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The data collection process involved two main methods: observation and interviews. The first stage of data collection began with observation of the internship site. The researcher directly witnessed the interactions between the interns and the local community or viewed recorded interactions. This allows the researcher to record behaviors and communication patterns without interruption. Observation allows researchers to capture real-time responses that cannot be adequately expressed in interviews such as hesitation in speaking, shyness, attempts to adapt, and signs of anxiety or discomfort.

After the observation stage, the researcher conduct in-depth interviews with the selected participants. Data collection was conducted through interviews with respondents via WhatsApp calls. During the interview, the researcher asked each respondent five questions. During the interview, respondents can answer in English or Indonesian. Each interview lasted about 10-15 minutes per respondent. The researcher then transcribed the data based on each respondent's answers. Findings from the interview transcripts explored the speech anxiety and language challenges faced by student teachers regarding their participation in English when teaching English or other subjects, speaking in English with Thai students, and interacting with their supportive mentor teachers. The interview also serves as a confirmation method for data obtained through observation. By comparing the results of observations and answers from

the participants, the researcher can triangulate the data to ensure the validity of the findings and obtain a more complete picture of the communication experience of students in the context of cross-cultural internships.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study follows a thematic approach. After transcribing the interviews and reviewing the observation notes, the researcher identifies recurring themes and patterns within the data. These themes are grouped based on similarities in experiences, emotional responses, and communicative behavior. Themes such as “language-related anxiety,” “fear of misunderstanding,” “strategies for adaptation,” and “cultural misinterpretation” are interpreted using the lens of AUM Theory. The focus of the analysis is to understand how participants perceive and respond to intercultural uncertainty and anxiety, and how these psychological states influence their communication. The AUM framework is used not only to organize the data thematically but also to offer explanatory insights into how student interns manage their experiences in a cross-cultural context. In the analysis process, interviews were also used to confirm and strengthen the data obtained from observation. This approach allows researchers to triangulate data, so that the resulting interpretations become more valid and academically accountable.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings from interviews with student interns from UIN Riau, UIN Malang and UNSOED who participated in an internship program in Narathiwat, Thailand. The findings relate to the two research questions in this study and are analyzed and discussed in relation to Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM), which provides a framework for understanding how uncertainty and anxiety affect communication in cross cultural contexts.

A. FINDINGS

The following finding is based on the observation data adapted and organized according to Spradley's (1980) ethnographic framework, which identifies nine key dimensions for analyzing social situations. These dimensions help structure the observations by focusing on different aspects of the communicative environment and participants' behaviors. Spradley's nine dimensions include: Space, referring to the physical setting where interactions occur; Actor, meaning the individuals or groups involved; Activity, which covers related actions people perform within the setting; Object, the tangible items present; Act, the specific observable behaviors; Event, the sequence of related activities; Time, addressing the timing and flow of actions; Goal, the objectives

participants aim to achieve; and Feeling, the emotions experienced or expressed by those involved. By applying this comprehensive framework, table 3 organizes key observational focuses and indicators that reflect how student teachers navigate linguistic, emotional, and cultural challenges during their internship experience. This structured analysis provides a detailed foundation for understanding the complex dynamics at play.

Table 3. Observation checklist rubric adapted from Spradley's (1980)

No	Observation Focus	Indicators	JI	VI	IR	UL	NA
1	Language Use	Student intern uses English	✓		✓	✓	✓
		Local responds in Thai or Thai-Malay mix					✓
		Student teacher switches between languages		✓			✓
2	Speech Anxiety Indicators	Hesitation or long pauses before speaking		✓		✓	
		Avoids eyecontact while speaking					
		Speaks in a low or unclear voice		✓			✓
		Refrains from responding or passes question					✓
3	Communication Barriers	Requests for repetition from either party	✓	✓	✓		✓
		Misunderstandings or incorrect responses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Frequent use of gestures to clarify meaning	✓		✓	✓	
4	Coping Strategies	Uses Google Translate or dictionary		✓	✓	✓	✓

		Asks peer/friend to translate or speak on behalf					✓
		Switches to simpler words or short phrases		✓		✓	✓
5	Emotional Responses	Shows visible signs of frustration or nervousness					
		Smiles or laughs to cover confusion	✓		✓		✓
		Withdraws from conversation or social interaction					
6	Intercultural Adjustment	Attempts to learn/use local Phrases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
		Tries to maintain conversation despite language difficulty	✓			✓	✓
		Engages actively in social or work Activities					✓

The data in this study were obtained through two main methods, namely observation sheets and interviews. However, in this section, the explanation will focus first on the results obtained from the observation sheet.

1. OBSERVATIONS FINDINGS

This section presents the findings obtained through the observation of student teachers during their teaching practice in Narathiwat, Thailand. The focus of observation includes six main aspects, namely language use, speech anxiety indicators, communication barriers, coping strategies, emotional responses, and intercultural adjustment.

1. Language Use

Language use became one of the most defining and complex challenges faced by student teachers during their internship in

Narathiwat. As temporary residents and educators in a multilingual region where Thai and Thai-Malay are dominant, the student teachers were thrust into an environment where English, their teaching language and expected communicative tool did not always function effectively. While they arrived with the assumption that English, as an international language, would suffice for both instructional and interpersonal purposes, the reality was far more nuanced. The students quickly realized that communication in a real world, multicultural context involved more than just knowing English grammar and vocabulary it required cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and acute awareness of linguistic mismatches between speaker and audience.

In many situations, English was not the default language of social interaction. It often required effort, simplification, and persistence to make English communication work at a basic level. Language use, therefore became more than just a technical skill it became an evolving practice of survival, relationship building, self expression, and cultural negotiation. Rather than simply delivering lessons or conveying instructions, student teachers had to engage in a continuous process of testing, adjusting, and re evaluating their language use depending on context, audience, and communicative goals. Language use was particularly critical in three observable dimensions whether English was used consistently, how locals

responded linguistically, and whether the student teachers resorted to switching between languages as a coping mechanism.

- **Indicator 1: Student Teacher Uses English**

The first and most direct form of observation was to assess whether student teachers actively used English in their everyday activities and social interactions. This included teaching lessons, discussing with local teachers, asking questions in meetings, or even casual conversations with students outside the classroom. All five student teachers (JI, VI, IR, UL, NA) were observed using English as their primary medium. However, the nature and effectiveness of their English usage varied. Initially student teachers tended to speak in complete, grammatically structured sentences with formal vocabulary, likely shaped by their academic training. But they soon discovered that their audiences particularly students and local staff often struggled to understand them. This mismatch led to visible confusion and required the student teachers to make real-time adjustments to their speech. They began to slow their pace, use simpler sentence structures, and repeat key points. Over time, many adopted a more functional version of English: prioritizing clarity and

tone over formality and grammar.

In several cases, student teachers developed scripts or memorized key phrases they expected to use repeatedly. For example, instructions like "Open your book to page..." or "Do you understand?" were rehearsed beforehand. This type of preparation became a coping mechanism to reduce speech anxiety while maintaining professionalism.

Despite their efforts, however, communication breakdowns remained frequent. Moments of silence, blank stares, or awkward smiles often followed attempts to speak in English. These non-responses sometimes discouraged the student teachers, who began to question the usefulness of English in non-instructional contexts. This emotional fatigue compounded the sense of isolation they felt early in the internship, yet they continued to persevere. Using English consistently even imperfectly became a way for them to maintain their teacher identity and fulfill their role, despite the disconnect they often encountered.

- **Indicator 2: Local Responds in Thai or Thai-Malay Mix**

This indicator focused on how locals responded to the English spoken by the student teachers. Although this behavior was not directly marked in the checklist during formal observation (only respondent NA), interview data suggested that this occurred frequently in informal settings. When student teachers greeted local staff in English or asked for directions in the school environment, they were often met with replies in Thai or a Thai-Malay blend. This introduced a unique linguistic challenge: understanding a response in a language they were unfamiliar with. These situations forced student teachers to rely on non-verbal cues tone of voice, body language, facial expressions to interpret meaning. Some tried to guess the intent of the message based on context. Others would respond with polite nods or ambiguous affirmations like "okay" even if they didn't understand, to avoid embarrassment or disrupting the flow of interaction.

For many student teachers, these moments created a psychological barrier. Their inability to comprehend replies led to hesitation in initiating further interaction, particularly outside the classroom. A sense of linguistic helplessness emerged especially when they

felt stuck in a conversation they couldn't follow. Some reported feeling anxious about accidentally giving the wrong response or appearing disrespectful due to misunderstanding cultural signals embedded in local expressions.

Ultimately, this indicator pointed not only to language difficulty but also to the emotional strain of being linguistically excluded. While the student teachers' efforts to speak English were commendable, the lack of reciprocal understanding limited the success of two way communication and made them more dependent on alternative strategies (such as translation apps or peer support).

- **Indicator 3: Student Teacher Switches Between Languages**

As the internship progressed and student teachers became more aware of the linguistic limitations of their environment, many began to adopt code switching alternating between English, Indonesia, Thai, or Thai- Malay during communication. This switch was not always planned or fluent, but rather a natural response to contextual needs. Student teachers who had prior exposure to Malay, in particular, were better equipped to navigate interactions with locals who

spoke the Kelantan dialect, which shares similarities with Melayu.

Respondents JI, VI, and UL were observed using multiple languages during interactions. They would start instructions in English and then clarify a term in Malay if the student appeared confused. Others used Thai honorifics like "Khun" or closing phrases like "khop khun ka" to show politeness and respect. These efforts were often met with increased engagement, smiles, and even compliments from locals, which helped reduce anxiety and built rapport. Rather than seeing code switching as a failure to use English fluently it should be recognized as an adaptive strategy for cross cultural communication. It reflects the student teachers' ability to negotiate meaning in a challenging linguistic landscape. Their use of multiple languages, even in fragmented forms, was a reflection of flexibility, humility, and cultural respect.

Over time, these blended exchanges helped the student teachers feel more connected to the local community. They no longer saw language as a rigid boundary but as a flexible tool for relationship building. While

their grammar might have been imperfect and their vocabulary limited, their willingness to switch codes signaled sincerity, effort, and openness qualities that fostered understanding in ways that textbook English could not.

2. Speech Anxiety Indicators

Speech anxiety often referred to as communication apprehension is a central issue in second language use, particularly in intercultural contexts where the speaker is expected to perform under the pressure of linguistic and cultural uncertainty. For student teachers in Narathiwat, this anxiety did not stem solely from a fear of using English incorrectly; it was deeply intertwined with feelings of inadequacy, fear of judgment, and the pressure to maintain a competent teacher identity in front of students, local teachers, and community members.

The psychological and emotional strain of communicating in English in an unfamiliar environment manifested through observable behaviors that indicated hesitation, avoidance, and self-consciousness. These non-verbal and verbal cues revealed how internal anxiety disrupted the fluency, clarity, and confidence of speech. Importantly,

these manifestations were not just random slips but predictable indicators of deeper psychological states linked to the student teachers' ongoing process of cultural and communicative adaptation.

In this study, four specific behavioral indicators were used to identify speech anxiety: hesitation or pauses before speaking, avoidance of eye contact, unclear or low volume speech, and refraining from responding altogether. Each of these offered insight into how student teachers managed or struggled to manage the emotional weight of being a non-native speaker in a high stakes teaching role.

- **Indicator 1: Hesitation or Long Pauses Before Speaking**

One of the clearest indications of speaking anxiety observed during the internship was hesitation especially during long pauses before speaking. These silent situations often occurred when student teachers were asked to respond to unexpected questions, give instructions spontaneously, or communicate outside the classroom with unfamiliar people.

Respondents JI and IR exhibited highly visible moments of hesitation especially when speaking in

more formal or public environments. This was often evident in mental signs of searching for the right word, extended “umm” sounds or pausing mid-sentence. These pauses are not just due to forgetting the vocabulary but the nervous feeling of misspeaking. This reflects the cognitive and emotional barriers of internal conflict between the desire to speak and the fear of the outcome.

Such doubts can also be influenced by social pressure. Knowing that they are being watched by many people or need to maintain a professional image can reinforce speaking anxiety. Many are afraid of making mistakes that could be interpreted as incompetence. As a result, they mentally rehearse their lines before speaking which contributes to delays and reduces spontaneity. This kind of planning, while strategic also highlights a lack of confidence in their communication in high stakes situations.

- **Indicator 2: Avoids Eye Contact While Speaking**

Although not directly marked for any respondent in the observation checklist avoiding eye contact is a widely acknowledged behavioral indicator of nervousness and low communicative confidence. While this specific

behavior was not ticked in the table it may have gone unnoticed or occurred subtly. In classroom settings, for example a student teacher might look toward the whiteboard or teaching materials rather than directly at students while giving instructions which can be an indirect form of avoidance.

In the context of this study, the absence of this indicator in observational data does not rule out its occurrence. It may simply suggest that other indicators were more dominant or that eye contact was not the primary method of communication used in cross cultural interactions where norms about eye contact may differ. In Thai culture, for example sustained direct eye contact may be considered too assertive, particularly in hierarchical settings so some avoidance might be culturally strategic rather than anxiety driven.

- **Indicator 3: Speaks in a Low or Unclear Voice**

Respondent VI and UL were observed speaking in voices that were either too low to be heard clearly or lacked clarity and projection. This could be the result of several factors: nervousness, lack of confidence, unfamiliarity with the classroom acoustics, or

uncertainty about their own English pronunciation. In high anxiety states, physiological symptoms like dry mouth or rapid heartbeat can affect voice production. Speaking in a low voice also reflects a subconscious desire to reduce the impact of possible errors. If they make a mistake, at least it won't be heard clearly this seems to be the logic behind this behavior. Unfortunately, this strategy often backfires, as unclear instructions create more confusion and force the speaker to repeat themselves, leading to more stress and greater anxiety.

In addition, this behavior can unintentionally affect the balance in the classroom. When a teacher or student teachers speak too slowly students may interpret it as a lack of assertiveness or confidence. This not only undermines classroom management but also contributes to a negative feedback loop where student teachers begin to doubt their ability to lead the class effectively. Eventually students may look down on student teachers who are teaching them and assume student teachers don't have much power or influence to educate them.

- **Indicator 4: Refrains from Responding or Passes Question**

This is the most direct behavioral sign of intense speaking anxiety that is completely separated from communicative action. NA respondents were observed not to respond or chose to skip questions when faced with challenging situations. Rather than risk embarrassment, she chose to remain silent or make non-verbal gestures such as nodding or smiling.

This behavior indicates that the level of uncertainty and anxiety was so high that verbal engagement felt riskier than withdrawal. While this may serve as a short-term coping mechanism it limits language exposure, diminishes opportunities for improvement, and reinforces the perception of communicative incompetence. Moreover, repeated avoidance may cause a decline in motivation and self-efficacy making future participation even more difficult.

Overall, these four indicators reveal a layered picture of how student teachers deal with the psychological requirements of speaking English in a culturally unfamiliar and linguistically complex environment. While some people hesitated or spoke softly, others avoided speaking at all or

replaced verbal responses with gestures. These behaviors should not be seen as failures, but rather as survival strategies under intense international communicative pressure.

Speaking anxiety, in this context is not just about performance anxiety and overwhelming feelings of fear. It is shaped by the fear of being misunderstood, the burden of being perceived as an “English teacher” who is assumed to be able to speak English without any mistakes and the internal conflict between language knowledge and real world usage. The gap between theoretical knowledge and communicative reality is noticeable and often disappointing but it is also a powerful learning experience. To many student teachers, the process of identifying and addressing their own anxiety is a turning point in learning cross-cultural competencies. By recognizing the symptoms of anxiety, they gradually develop strategies to manage it such as breathing techniques, practicing sentences, or relying on key phrases. Over time, some even accepted anxiety as a necessary part of growth, a signal that they were stepping out of their comfort zone and would therefore continue to improve.

3. Communication Barriers

Communication barriers are one of the most consistent and relevant challenges for English as a Second Language

(ESL) learners especially in the context of spoken communication. These barriers include a range of difficulties including limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, pronunciation problems, and fear of making mistakes. Collectively, these factors contribute to speaking anxiety and often cause students to hesitate or avoid speaking at all. The difficulties of communication barriers are not only linguistic but also emotional.

Learners often experience the stress of feeling insecure about their language skills, worrying that their English might be wrong or sound not native which undermines their confidence and willingness to participate. Environmental factors such as classroom atmosphere, peer reactions and feedback from the teacher further shape this experience and a supportive environment helps reduce anxiety while negative feedback worsens it. Preparation and practice emerged as important coping mechanisms that enabled students to manage these barriers and communicate more effectively. Among student teachers interning in Narathiwat, communication barriers are a major part of their daily challenges. Their dual roles as learners and teachers added to the pressure as they had to demonstrate authority and competence despite language limitations. The indicators below illustrate the

multifaceted nature of these barriers as observed during their practical experience.

- **Indicator 1: Requests for Repetition from Either Party**

Almost all student teachers (JI, VI, IR, NA) reported requesting repetition during conversations highlighting a mutual struggle in understanding between student teachers and their interlocutors. This indicator reflects crucial communication barrier breakdowns in comprehension necessitating repeated clarification.

Frequent requests for repetition suggest that both parties often faced uncertainty about what was being communicated. Student teachers grappled with limited vocabulary and unfamiliar local speech patterns, while locals may have struggled with the student teachers' English pronunciation or hesitations. These repeated exchanges slowed communication and sometimes induced frustration or anxiety.

This persistent barrier illustrates the gap between the student teachers' language proficiency and the demands of real-life interaction. However, requesting repetition also demonstrates a pragmatic communication strategy willingness to maintain interaction despite difficulties. It signals motivation to understand and be understood

essential for effective cross- cultural communication.

- **Indicator 2: Misunderstandings or Incorrect Responses**

All respondents were marked for this indicator emphasizing the prevalence of miscommunication during their internship. Misunderstandings and incorrect responses are natural outcomes of limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, and cultural differences in conversational norms. Student teachers might have responded incorrectly due to confusion over a question's meaning, difficulty in finding suitable expressions, or mishearing words because of unfamiliar accents. Such responses could disrupt the flow of communication and lead to further misunderstandings.

These incidents carry both linguistic and emotional weight. Linguistically, they reveal gaps in command of English and pragmatic competence. Emotionally, they can lower confidence, trigger embarrassment, and increase speech anxiety, sometimes causing hesitation or withdrawal.

Despite the challenges, these moments are important learning opportunities, pushing student teachers to

reflect on their language use and develop strategies such as rephrasing, confirming, or employing nonverbal cues to repair communication breakdowns.

- **Indicator 3: Frequent Use of Gestures to Clarify Meaning**

Three student teachers (JI, VI, UL) frequently used gestures as supplementary communication tools. Gestures are universal in human interaction but become especially vital in multilingual, cross cultural contexts where verbal language proficiency is limited.

The reliance on gestures highlights the student teachers' resourcefulness in overcoming communication barriers. When verbal expression falls short, pointing, miming, or other nonverbal signals helped clarify intent, convey instructions, and maintain interaction flow. This reduced misunderstandings and compensated for limited vocabulary or pronunciation difficulties.

Additionally, gestures contributed to emotional regulation helping studentteachers maintain confidence and control during communication. Their use often elicited positive responses from interlocutors who seemed more receptive when visual cues

accompanied speech. However, over dependence on gestures may indicate underlying linguistic insecurities and highlight areas for language development. Thus, gestures serve as both practical coping strategies and diagnostic indicators of ongoing communication barriers.

Communication barriers faced by student teachers during their Narathiwat internship went beyond vocabulary and grammar, involving a complex interplay of linguistic limitations and emotional challenges. The high incidence of requests for repetition, misunderstandings, and use of gestures underscores the persistent difficulty of real-world language use in a cross-cultural setting.

These indicators collectively reflect the student teachers' struggle to bridge linguistic gaps while maintaining effective communication and professional identity. They also highlight verbal and nonverbal adaptive strategies employed to navigate these challenges. Understanding these dynamics is vital for developing targeted support that addresses both linguistic and emotional aspects of language learning and intercultural communication.

4. Coping Strategies

Coping strategies represent the active efforts and techniques student teachers employed to manage the linguistic and psychological difficulties encountered during their internship in Narathiwat. Given the significant language challenges and speech anxiety detailed earlier, coping became essential not only to maintain functional communication but also to preserve motivation and confidence.

In the complex intercultural environment where linguistic mismatches and emotional pressures were frequent, student teachers developed a range of strategies to reduce communication breakdowns and ease anxiety. These strategies reflect a proactive mindset, highlighting their willingness to learn, adapt, and problem solve despite the uncertainties of their new environment. Coping therefore extended beyond mere linguistic adjustments to include psychological and social dimensions.

The indicators identified in the observations reveal different facets of this adaptive process from technological assistance to social support and linguistic simplification. Together they illustrate how student teachers navigated the intersection of language competence and emotional resilience.

- **Indicator 1: Uses Google Translate or Dictionary**

Four of the five student teachers (JI, VI, IR, NA) were observed using technological aids such as Google Translate or dictionaries during their internship. This behavior highlights the practical application of modern tools to bridge vocabulary gaps and clarify meaning. Using such tools allowed student teachers to verify unknown words, prepare key phrases, and understand responses that were otherwise incomprehensible. These technological aids acted as scaffolds supporting communication, reducing moments of confusion or hesitation.

Importantly, the reliance on Google Translate and dictionaries also served a psychological function it provided a safety net which decreased the fear of making mistakes and increased confidence. Knowing they had quick access to lexical support empowered the student teachers to take greater risks in speaking and experimenting with language. However, dependence on technology also presented limitations. Translation tools can sometimes produce inaccurate or awkward renderings and overuse may hinder spontaneous speech development. Nonetheless,

their use in this context reflects a pragmatic approach to overcoming immediate barriers.

- **Indicator 2: Asks Peer/Friend to Translate or Speak on Behalf**

Only one student teacher, NA, was recorded requesting assistance from peers or friends to translate or even speak on her behalf. This indicates moments where the student teacher felt overwhelmed by language barriers and anxiety to the extent that direct communication became untenable. This strategy points to a social dimension of coping, where interpersonal networks become crucial resources. Peer-support not only facilitates understanding but also provides emotional reassurance. By delegating communication to a trusted friend, the student teacher could avoid embarrassment and maintain social interaction, albeit indirectly.

While effective in the short term, this strategy can also lead to dependency, reducing opportunities for autonomous language practice and confidence building. Hence, it is typically seen as a temporary measure when anxiety or linguistic challenges peak.

- **Indicator 3: Switches to Simpler Words or Short Phrases**

Three student teachers (VI, IR, UL) employed simplification strategies, consciously choosing to use simpler vocabulary and shorter sentences to make their speech more accessible. This technique demonstrates linguistic awareness and strategic adaptation. By reducing complexity, they minimized the risk of grammatical errors or misunderstandings, making communication smoother and more efficient. It also reflected their sensitivity to the interlocutor's language proficiency and cultural background.

Simplifying language is a widely recognized coping mechanism in second language acquisition, promoting communicative effectiveness and confidence. It allows speakers to maintain participation and reduces cognitive load, which is particularly important under stress. The use of simpler language also served as a bridge for gradual language development, enabling student teachers to gain fluency incrementally without being paralyzed by the fear of making mistakes.

Coping strategies among student teachers during

their Narathiwat internship revealed a multifaceted approach to overcoming communication barriers. From leveraging technology to social support and linguistic simplification, these strategies facilitated ongoing engagement despite anxiety and language limitations. Such proactive coping not only improved immediate communication outcomes but also fostered resilience and adaptive competence essential for professional growth. Recognizing and supporting these coping mechanisms can inform training programs and institutional policies aimed at preparing student teachers for effective intercultural communication.

5. Emotional Responses

Emotional responses during intercultural communication play a crucial role in shaping how student teachers experience and manage their language learning and teaching challenges. In the context of their internship in Narathiwat, emotional reactions were often intertwined with language difficulties, anxiety, and cultural adjustments, influencing not only their communication behavior but also their overall adaptation and motivation.

The observations focused on visible signs of frustration or nervousness, the use of smiling or laughter to mask confusion, and withdrawal from interaction. These emotional expressions are indicators of how student teachers coped internally with the pressures of their new environment and linguistic demands. Understanding these responses is essential to grasp the psychological landscape of the internship experience and to design better support mechanisms.

- **Indicator 1: Shows Visible Signs of Frustration or Nervousness**

Interestingly, none of the student teachers were marked as visibly frustrated or nervous during the structured observations. This absence may reflect the professional demeanor they maintained in formal settings or could indicate subtle signs that escaped direct observation.

However, interview data revealed that many experienced significant internal emotional turmoil including frustration over communication failures and nervousness before speaking. This discrepancy between external calm and internal stress is common among learners who strive to project confidence

despite uncertainty. The ability to mask visible anxiety might be linked to cultural expectations of professionalism or personal coping styles. It also highlights the need for more nuanced methods of emotional assessment beyond direct observation.

- **Indicator 2: Smiles or Laughs to Cover Confusion**

Four student teachers (JI, VI, IR, and UL) frequently used smiling or laughter as social strategies to cover their confusion or discomfort during communication. This behavior serves multiple functions: it reduces social tension, signals politeness, and maintains rapport when verbal communication fails. Such smiles or laughter often occurred in response to misunderstandings, unexpected questions, or moments of language breakdown.

While these expressions can mitigate embarrassment and smooth social interactions, they may also mask underlying anxiety or feelings of inadequacy. This coping mechanism reflects an important aspect of intercultural communication-nonverbal cues play a vital role in managing face needs and preserving social harmony especially when language competence is

limited.

- **Indicator 3: Withdraws from Conversation or Social Interaction**

No direct withdrawals were observed among the respondents during the sessions, suggesting that student teachers generally maintained engagement despite challenges. This sustained participation is a positive sign of resilience and motivation. However, withdrawal behaviors might occur more frequently outside formal observations, such as in informal interactions or moments of acute anxiety. The lack of withdrawal in observed settings may indicate the students' commitment to their roles and a professional effort to stay involved despite emotional discomfort.

Emotional responses of student teachers during their Narathiwat internship were complex and often concealed beneath composed exteriors. While visible frustration or nervousness was not overtly observed, the use of smiles and laughter to mask confusion was common, revealing a nuanced emotional regulation strategy.

These behaviors underscore the intricate balance student teachers maintain between managing internal

anxiety and fulfilling their social and professional roles. Supporting emotional well-being alongside language development is essential for fostering effective intercultural communication and successful internship experiences.

6. Intercultural adjustment

Intercultural adjustment refers to the processes and behaviors through which student teachers adapt to the cultural and linguistic environment of Narathiwat during their internship. It involves both cognitive and behavioral adaptations that facilitate effective communication, social integration, and professional functioning within a culturally distinct setting. Successful intercultural adjustment is critical for reducing communication anxiety, overcoming language challenges, and ultimately achieving teaching and learning goals.

This observation focus examines how student teachers actively engage with the local culture and language, persist through communicative difficulties, and participate in social or professional activities despite cultural differences and initial discomfort. The indicators reflect a spectrum of adjustment strategies, from language learning efforts in social engagement and persistence.

- **Indicator 1: Attempts to Learn/Use Local Phrases**

All five student teachers (JI, VI, IR, UL, NA) demonstrated efforts to learn and use local language phrases, primarily Thai or Thai-Malay. This behavior indicates a recognition that linguistic accommodation is vital for building rapport and demonstrating respect within the host community.

Using local phrases, even in a limited capacity, served multiple functions. It eased communication in informal interactions, helped clarify meaning when English proved insufficient, and signaled cultural sensitivity to locals. These attempts likely enhanced the student teachers' acceptance and integration by local students and staff, fostering positive interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, the process of learning local phrases reflects a willingness to engage beyond the classroom, promoting deeper intercultural understanding. This proactive attitude is a hallmark of effective intercultural adjustment.

- **Indicator 2: Tries to Maintain Conversation Despite Language Difficulty**

Student teachers JI, IR, and UL showed persistence in

sustaining conversations even when faced with language barriers. Instead of withdrawing or giving up they made continuous efforts to communicate often through repeated requests for clarification, simplification of language, or use of gestures. This tenacity is crucial for building communicative competence and overcoming linguistic obstacles. It indicates resilience and a problem solving approach to intercultural interaction. Maintaining conversation despite difficulty helps prevent breakdowns in communication and allows for incremental learning and adaptation.

- **Indicator 3: Engages Actively in Social or Work Activities**

Among the respondents NA was specifically noted for active participation in social and professional activities beyond mere linguistic interaction. This Indicator reflects a higher level of cultural adjustment where the student teacher navigates not only language but also social norms, work expectations, and community dynamics. Active engagement enhances both language acquisition and cultural Integration. It signals confidence and a sense of belonging, contributing to overall internship success. Moreover, Involvement in

social activities provides informal learning opportunities that formal classroom experiences may lack.

Intercultural adjustment among student teachers during their Narathiwat internship encompassed a range of adaptive behaviors aimed at bridging cultural and linguistic divides. Their efforts to learn local phrases, sustain difficult conversations, and actively participate in community life were vital components of this adjustment process. Such behaviors demonstrate not only linguistic flexibility but also cultural empathy and commitment to their professional roles. Supporting student teachers in developing these adaptive skills is essential for fostering successful intercultural communication and teaching efficacy in diverse educational settings.

After presenting detailed explanations of each observation focus and its corresponding indicators from Language Use through to Intercultural Adjustment it is essential to synthesize and analyze the frequency with which these focuses and indicators appeared during the internship observations. This will help identify which aspects were most

prominent in the student teachers' experiences and which were less evident. With this foundation, the following analysis is based on the collected observation data and the in-depth descriptions :

1. Most Frequently Observed Focus and Indicators

From the given data, the observation focus "Communication Barriers" stands out as the one with the highest frequency of occurrence among the student teachers. All five respondents (JI, VI, IR, UL, NA) consistently showed signs related to all three communication barrier indicators: requests for repetition from either party, misunderstandings or incorrect responses, frequent use of gestures to clarify meaning (checked in three respondents: JI, VI, UL)

This indicates that communication barriers were the most persistent and common issue faced by the student teachers during their internship. The fact that all respondents requested repetition and had misunderstandings highlights ongoing difficulties in comprehension and production of English within the multilingual environment. The frequent use of gestures further emphasizes the need for nonverbal communication to compensate for linguistic gaps.

Additionally, the "Student Teacher Uses English"

indicator under the Language Use focus was also universally observed across all five respondents, confirming that despite challenges English remained the primary medium of communication.

2 Observation Focus and Indicators with Moderate Frequency

- **Coping Strategies:** Four respondents used Google Translate or dictionaries, and three respondents used simpler words or short phrases. However, only one respondent asked peers to translate or speak on their behalf. This shows that while technological and linguistic coping strategies are commonly employed, reliance on social support for translation is less frequent.
- **Intercultural Adjustment:** All respondents tried to learn or use local phrases, showing universal efforts to adapt culturally. Three respondents actively tried to maintain conversations despite difficulties, and one was noted to engage actively in social or work activities. This suggests moderate but meaningful engagement in cultural adaptation.

3 Observation Focus and Indicators with Low or No Frequency

- **Speech Anxiety Indicators:** Although hesitation and

low voice were observed in some respondents, avoidance of eye contact was not marked in any respondent, indicating either cultural norms affected eye contact behavior or this anxiety indicator was less visible during observations.

- Emotional Responses: Notably, no respondents showed visible signs of frustration or nervousness during the observation periods, and no withdrawal from conversation was observed. Smiling or laughing to cover confusion appeared in four respondents, but direct emotional distress was less apparent externally.
- Local Responds in Thai or Thai-Malay Mix (under Language Use) was not checked for any respondent during observation. This suggests either this phenomenon was rare in formal observation settings or was under- recorded due to observational constraints.

In conclusion, the data suggest that communication barriers especially requests for repetition and misunderstandings, were the most consistent and widespread issue among student teachers. This highlights the linguistic difficulties inherent in intercultural teaching internships. Conversely, emotional distress and certain anxiety behaviors

were less overtly observed, possibly reflecting the controlled observational context or cultural factors affecting expression.

Student teachers showed resilience by actively using coping strategies and engaging in intercultural adjustment behaviors though social support based coping was less common. This analysis underscores the need for targeted support in managing communication barriers and enhancing coping mechanisms to facilitate smoother intercultural communication during such internships.

Based on the above observational data, further insight into the student teachers' experiences was gained through in-depth interviews. These interviews revealed that their speaking anxiety could be categorized according to William B. Gudykunst's Anxiety/ Uncertainty Management Theory (AUM). Gudykunst. The student teachers' anxiety experiences aligned with five different types: nature, context, audience, situation, and state anxiety. In addition, various coping strategies emerged as important tools to manage their anxiety and facilitate adaptation in intercultural settings.

2. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Next, the findings from the in-depth interviews are presented to explore the participants' internal experiences that were not directly observed

through observation. The interviews focused on various forms of speech anxiety, namely trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, situational anxiety, and state anxiety, as well as coping strategies for managing speech anxiety. Some direct quotes from the participants are included to provide real illustrations and support the findings.

1. Trait Anxiety (Anxiety Rooted in Personality)

Trait Anxiety is a form of anxiety that is this positional, which is a personality trait that is inherent in various situations. In other words, trait anxiety is not just a temporary reaction to certain situations but rather an anxiety that shapes the way individuals see themselves and the world around them. Individuals with trait anxiety tend to have a high level of emotional sensitivity and excessive perfectionism as well as a fear of mistakes and judgment.

In the context of student teachers doing internships in Narathiwat, trait anxiety is very relevant to understand how anxiety arises internally and affects their communication performance. For example, respondent VI revealed that the feeling was not only due to the situation but rather the fear of mistakes and the social impact that the principal, who is considered a higher authority figure, might have. Concerns about whether the language used was polite or formal and even confusion about how to convey the message indicated a deep internal anxiety.

"Yang paling bikin gugup itu kalau harus ngomong ke guru atau kepala

sekolah. Soalnya mereka kelihatan serius, terus aku takut salah ngomong, takut dibilang nggak sopan atau salah arti. Kadang aku juga bingung, ini harus ngomong formal banget atau biasa aja? Jadi sebelum ngomong tuh mikirnya lama, makin dipikir mala makin deg-degan."[What makes me most nervous is when I have to speak to teachers or the principal. They look serious, and I'm afraid of saying something wrong or impolite. Sometimes I'm confused about whether I should speak formally or casually. The more I think about it, the more anxious I get.] - Respondent VI

The same thing was also expressed by NA respondents who felt afraid of speaking wrongly mainly because of the fear of being considered impolite by older people or having official status.

"Biasanya aku paling gugup kalau harus ngomong sama orang yang lebih tua atau yang keliatannya 'resmi' gitu, kayak guru atau kepala sekolah. Aku takut cara ngomongku salah atau nggak sopan." [I usually feel most anxious when speaking with older or formal-looking people like teachers or the principal. I'm afraid my way of speaking might be wrong or impolite.] - Respondent NA

This trait anxiety is very influential in the context of cross-cultural communication and language learning. Trait anxiety makes it difficult for individuals to optimally manage communication uncertainty due to anxiety that has become part of the personality. This inability to balance levels of anxiety and uncertainty causes individuals to experience difficulties in adjusting to new cultural contexts ultimately affecting their ability to communicate effectively. The impact of unaddressed trait anxiety is far-reaching including limited spontaneity in speech, a tendency to avoid interactions, and barriers to confidence building. Perfectionistic individuals with insight. Highly perfectionistic individuals tend to spend excessive time preparing words for fear of making mistakes thus reducing opportunities for development.

2. Context anxiety

Context anxiety is a type of anxiety that develops in response to circumstances or communication scenarios that demand exceptional performance or result in emotional strain. These circumstances are typically formal, like giving a speech, speaking in front of a class, or going to a formal meeting. Context anxiety is transient and contingent upon the situation's demands or surroundings, in contrast to trait anxiety, which is innate to personality. Respondents JI and VI acknowledged to having high levels of anxiety when confronted with these formal situations during their student teaching internships in Narathiwat. Despite their prior preparation, this anxiety resulted in actual physical symptoms like trembling voices, cold hands, and word forgetfulness.

"Yes, especially during my first class. I had to introduce myself and explain the lesson in English, but some students looked confused, and I forgot some words." [*Ya, terutama saat kelas pertama. Saya harus memperkenalkan diri dan menjelaskan pelajaran dalam bahasa Inggris, tapi beberapa siswa terlihat bingung, dan saya lupa beberapa kata.*] - Respondent JI

"Pernah banget. Waktu itu aku disuruh kasi sambutan singkat di depan siswa sama guru. Padahal cuma disuruh kenalan dan ngomong beberapa kalimat aja, tapi pas berdiri di depan, tangan dingin, suara ku bergetar." [I was asked to give a short speech in front of students and teachers. I only had to say a few sentences, but when I stood up, my hands got cold, my voice shook.] - Respondent VI

People are less able to predict the audience's reaction in high-pressure situations like this, which increases communication uncertainty. Anxiety brought on by this uncertainty impairs communication skills by interfering with word retrieval and language processing. To lower their chances of failing, students who

experience context anxiety often speak in very basic terms or steer clear of lengthy speeches. In order to overcome context anxiety, one must gradually practice and become accustomed to handling stressful situations.

For instance, practicing speaking in front of a small group before addressing a large audience, as well as receiving emotional support from the surroundings, like a mentor teacher and a kind, nonjudgmental friend. This method promotes more mature communication skills, boosts self-confidence, and lessens anxiety. Furthermore, learning nonverbal communication skills, stress management, and relaxation techniques can all help students manage their context anxiety and appear more composed and confident in formal settings. This is significant because success in the teaching profession and cross-cultural communication is greatly influenced by one's capacity to adjust to various social and cultural contexts.

3. Audience Anxiety

When speakers encounter people who are perceived as more competent, authority figures, or native speakers of the target language, they may become uneasy or lack confidence. This is known as audience anxiety. This anxiety is closely linked to the fear of being misunderstood, judged negatively, or not being able to effectively communicate the message. The anxiety of the audience is vividly

portrayed by respondents JI and IR. Speaking in front of Thai teachers and students makes respondent JI nervous; the message is poorly received and the grammar is incorrect.

"I feel most anxious when I have to speak in front of teachers or Thai students because I'm afraid my grammar will be wrong and they won't understand me." [*Saya paling cemas saat harus berbicara di depan guru atau siswa Thailand karena takut grammar saya salah dan mereka tidak mengerti.*] - Respondent JI

Meanwhile, the IR respondent feels nervous when the interlocutor speaks too fast, making it difficult to grasp the meaning and causing a fear of responding.

"When people speak English fast and I can't catch their meaning, I feel nervous to respond." [*Ketika orang bicara Bahasa Inggris terlalu cepat dan saya tidak bisa menangkap maknanya, saya jadi gugup untuk merespons.*] - Respondent IR

Audience anxiety makes communication more uncertain since the speaker worries about the audience's reaction and whether the message will be interpreted negatively. This ambiguity reduces bravery and confidence engaged in active participation. Audience fear ultimately has the potential to impede the development of productive interpersonal interactions, which are critical in the educational setting. One way to lessen audience nervousness is to receive extensive verbal communication training. Students are introduced to audience culture, public speaking techniques, and nonverbal cues to help them comprehend communication expectations and conventions. A powerful technique for developing bravery and communication skills in front of a fearsome audience is role-playing with encouraging

comments.

4. Situational Anxiety (Anxiety Stemming from Past Experiences)

Situation anxiety is anxiety that arises from past communication experiences. Negative experiences in the past, such as failing to speak in public or being considered incompetent competent. This experience leaves emotional trauma that makes individuals afraid of repeating it in the future.

Respondents NA and UL clearly illustrate this phenomenon.

Respondent NA feels very embarrassed when speaking at meetings and ends up only being able to speak minimally just a little.

"Pas giliran ngomong, aku malah ngomong terbata-bata, terus akhirnya cuma ngomong seadanya. Rasanya malu banget." [When it was my turn to speak, I stuttered and ended up saying only simple things. I was so embarrassed.] - Respondent NA

Respondent UL experienced communication difficulties with the parents of students who spoke the local language, so they could only smile awkwardly without being able to respond effectively.

"Aku sempat jawab dikit pakai Bahasa Inggris, tapi dia kayak nggak ngerti, dan akhirnya aku cuma senyum-senyum nggak jelas." [I tried answering in English but they didn't seem to get it, so I just smiled awkwardly] - Respondent UL

According to AUM, negative experiences like this increase anxiety and reinforce avoidance behavior, which hinders cultural adaptation and communication skills. Therefore, it is important for students to receive emotional support, such as guidance and coaching, as well as opportunities for reflection to process these experiences and develop

psychological resilience.

5. State Anxiety (Temporary Anxiety That Can Be Managed)

State anxiety is a form of anxiety that is temporary and highly dependent on specific situations or contexts of communication. Unlike trait anxiety, which is part of one's personality and stable, state anxiety arises from external factors and can fluctuate according to experiences and environmental conditions. In the context of student teachers' internships in Narathiwat, state anxiety arises when they face performance-demanding communication situations, such as when they first teach, speak in front of the class, or interact with an audience considered important.

This type of anxiety is very normal and can even become a positive motivator if managed well. For example, feeling nervous just before performing can boost mental readiness and focus. However, if state anxiety is too high and prolonged it can hinder the process of communication and learning. Therefore, managing state anxiety becomes crucial to support the success of internships and the development of students' communication competencies.

In the interview, respondent JI expressed how their self-confidence increased after the first two weeks of the internship, indicating a gradual process of adaptation and management of state anxiety.

"Yes, I became more confident after the second week. The students were friendly, and I learned to use simple English clearly." *[Saya jadi lebih percaya diri setelah minggu kedua. Siswa-siswanya ramah, dan saya*

belajar menggunakan Bahasa Inggris yang sederhana.] - Respondent JI

This positive change indicates that repeated experiences and a supportive environment supportive can significantly reduce state anxiety. Friendly and open attitude from students help respondents feel more comfortable trying to speak and interact without fear of being judged negatively.

UL also described similar experiences regarding environmental factors that support anxiety reduction.

"Yang bikin nyaman itu karena orang-orang di sana nggak getawain atau nge-judge kalau kita salah." [What made me comfortable was that people there didn't laugh or judge when we made mistakes.] - Respondent UL

This experience highlights the importance of an inclusive and non-judgmental environment to reduce momentary anxiety. When students feel accepted and supported, they are more willing to take the risk of speaking, which ultimately improves their communication skills.

Within the framework of the Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) theory, state anxiety is the state of anxiety that arises due to communication uncertainty that can be controlled if individuals have good management strategies and receive social support. AUM Theory states that there is an "optimal anxiety zone" in which the level of anxiety is sufficient to motivate but not too high to the point of hinder communication. In other words, well-managed state anxiety can actually enhance communication readiness

and cultural adaptation.

In other words, well managed state anxiety can actually enhance communication readiness and cultural adaptation. Additionally, the development of pragmatic communication skills such as the use of simple sentences, repetition of keywords, and effective body language can also help students feel more confident and reduce anxiety when speaking.

In conclusion, state anxiety is a normal phenomenon that can be managed and even positively utilized in the process of learning cross-cultural communication. A supportive environment, practical experience, and appropriate anxiety management strategies are crucial in determining students' success in reducing state anxiety and developing effective communication skills during their internship in Narathiwat.

6. Coping Strategies for Managing Speech Anxiety

All respondents employed various active and conscious coping strategies to manage their speaking anxiety. These strategies include practicing speaking repeatedly before facing a real audience, preparing important notes to maintain the flow of speech, using technology such as translation apps, and learning the local language to ensure smoother communication.

Respondent VI practices speaking with their roommate and writes down important points to avoid forgetting:

"Biasanya aku latihan ngomong dulu sebelum ke sekolah, kadang sama temen kamar juga. Aku tulis dulu poin -poin penting biar nggak lupa." [I usually practiced speaking before going to school, sometimes with my roommate. I also wrote down key points so I wouldn't forget.] - Respondent VI

Respondent IR prepared key sentences and used Google Translate to ensure the vocabulary:

"I prepared some key sentences before meetings and used Google Translate to check vocabulary." [*Saya menyiapkan beberapa kalimat kunci sebelum rapat dan menggunakan Google Translate untuk memeriksa kosakata.*] - Respondent IR

Respondent UL learning basic Thai from local friends and teachers:

"Aku belajar dikit-dikit Bahasa Thai dari temen magang sama guru lokal." [I learned a bit of Thai from my fellow intern and a local teacher.] - Respondent UL

This coping strategy is a manifestation of mindfulness and effective uncertainty management. The strategy not only reduces anxiety but also gradually strengthens cultural adaptation skills and communication abilities. The development of effective coping strategies must be supported by educational institutions by providing adequate training, workshops, and counseling so that students can face the complex communication challenges in the workplace.

From the findings that have been described, it could be concluded that student teacher used all six elements of AUM theory which are trait anxiety, content anxiety, audience anxiety, situational anxiety, state anxiety, and coping strategies. Five forms of anxiety expressed by the interview show how education students

emotionally respond to the actual communication demands. However, the language itself does not trigger this fear. Examining the more general elements that influence the experiences of teacher students helps to fully understand why these fears develop and how they affect them. Together, these cultural clashes, constant language barriers, and unusual cultural differences shape their responses and adaptations in a multicultural environment.

◆ The Interaction of Language Barriers, Cultural Differences, and Culture Shock in the Experience of Student Teachers

Language barriers, cultural differences, and culture shock are three key phenomena that must be examined to fully understand the experiences of education students during their internship in Narathiwat. The way the student teachers interacted, perceived, adjusted, and emotionally reacted to the new intercultural context was shaped by these three intricately intertwined dimensions rather than existing in isolation. Together, they created the framework upon which the participants' difficulties and coping mechanisms developed. When the student teachers arrived in Narathiwat, a place known for its multilingual and multicultural nature, they experienced a culture shock, which was a general emotional and mental response to their new environment. This shock appeared subtly through ordinary encounters instead of being restricted to dramatic or traumatic events:

uncertainty about how to greet school staff, uncertainty about the appropriate way to communicate in Thai social hierarchies or unease with new school routines. A greater sense of confusion and emotional vulnerability resulted from these ostensibly insignificant incidents. During this period of cultural and psychological adjustment, the student teachers also had to deal with language barriers, which were the most common and obvious challenge they encountered during the internship. Frequently occurring misunderstandings, frequent requests for clarification, and a dependence on gestures as a nonverbal form of support were all documented as examples of these barriers. These were emotional challenges in addition to language ones. The anxiety stemming from culture shock was reinforced by each unsuccessful attempt to communicate or understand, which felt like a confirmation of inadequacy.

Cultural differences exacerbated the effects of these language barriers by influencing social interaction, authority, politeness, and speech expectations. For example, because they were unfamiliar with power dynamics and social hierarchies, the student teachers frequently hesitated to correct students or ask senior teachers questions for fear that it would be interpreted as disrespectful. The student teachers were unfamiliar with these cultural norms, which frequently caused them to second-guess themselves, respond slowly, or avoid interaction entirely.

Speech anxiety, which was divided into five categories according to Gudykunst's AUM Theory trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, situation anxiety, and state anxiety was a clear example of how these three factors shock, barrier, and difference interacted. The students' responses to cultural differences had an impact on each category, their experience of culture shock, and the daily friction of language-based miscommunication.

In summary, the experiences of the student teachers were influenced by a complex and interconnected system of unspoken social norms (cultural differences), communicative friction (language barriers), and cultural dislocation (culture shock). These three factors work together to explain not only the causes of speech anxiety but also how it changed and was handled during the internship. Gaining an understanding of this intersection offers a more comprehensive perspective on what it means to teach and learn in a culturally unfamiliar setting. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of intercultural preparation that encompasses not only language but also emotional, social, and psychological aspects.

B. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research offer significant insights into the language challenges and speech anxiety faced by student teachers from UIN Riau, UIN Malang, and UNSOED during their internship programs in Narathiwat, Thailand. The interpretation of these findings

is framed through the lens of William B. Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory. This theory asserts that the effectiveness of communication in intercultural contexts depends on the ability to manage uncertainty and anxiety at an optimal level. The discussion elaborates on the ways in which student teachers navigated their intercultural experiences and reflects how their behaviors correspond to key components of AUM Theory.

1. Types of Speech Anxiety Experienced by Student Teachers in Thailand Schools

The findings of this study indicate that student teachers experienced multiple types of speech anxiety while conducting their internships in Narathiwat, which can be effectively explained using William B. Gudykunst's Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Theory. This framework divides speech anxiety into five distinct categories: trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, situation anxiety, and state anxiety, all of which were clearly reflected in the participants' experiences. Trait anxiety represents a relatively stable personality characteristic involving a general predisposition to feel anxious in communication settings. Several student teachers exhibited this form of anxiety consistently across different situations, demonstrating a chronic fear of negative evaluation and a tendency toward communicative avoidance.

These individuals frequently hesitated before speaking, avoided eye contact, and showed physical signs of nervousness regardless of the

context, reflecting Gudykunst's assertion that individual psychological predispositions strongly affect one's communication confidence (Gudykunst, 2005). Khan (2015) further supports this view, emphasizing that learners with high trait anxiety often struggle to maintain fluency, which results in persistent communication difficulties (Khan, 2015). Context anxiety was particularly salient in formal environments such as classroom instruction or administrative meetings. The heightened social stakes in these settings exacerbated anxiety, reducing fluency and increasing the likelihood of speech disruptions. The perceived pressure to perform correctly in front of authority figures and students aligns with Zetterkvist's (2021) findings that anxiety peaks during public speaking and evaluative scenarios (Zetterkvist, 2021). This supports the AUM Theory's premise that communication anxiety escalates in high-uncertainty contexts where expectations are ambiguous or strict (Gudykunst, 2005). Audience anxiety manifested predominantly in interactions with native Thai speakers and senior educators, where social hierarchy and linguistic proficiency imbalances were apparent. The student teachers felt heightened self-consciousness and fear of judgment, leading to low-volume speech, frequent pauses, or complete withdrawal from conversations. Miller (2007) explains that such anxiety arises from power differentials and lack of shared cultural frameworks, which intensify apprehension in intercultural encounters (Miller, 2007).

Situation anxiety developed from previous adverse communicative experiences, such as public correction or misinterpretation, which fostered anticipatory anxiety about repeating failures. This negative feedback loop discouraged participation in subsequent interactions, consistent with psychological models of anxiety where past negative outcomes reinforce avoidance behaviors (Zetterkvist, 2021). Gudykunst (2005) similarly notes that repeated failure in uncertain situations deepens both cognitive and emotional apprehensions.

State anxiety, unlike other types, was transient and context-dependent. Student teachers reported feeling less anxious when supported by peers or when receiving positive reinforcement from locals. This temporary reduction in anxiety demonstrates AUM Theory's proposition that communication effectiveness is highest when anxiety and uncertainty are managed to manageable levels (Gudykunst, 2005). Ni (2011) similarly highlights that supportive environments can significantly alleviate anxiety and foster communication success in EL contexts (Ni, 2011).

Furthermore, non-verbal signs such as fidgeting, avoidance, and indirect communication were common manifestations of anxiety, illustrating the emotional strain the student teachers endured. These behavioral indicators reveal the importance of addressing affective factors alongside linguistic proficiency in intercultural communication training (Dewaele et al., 2018).

2. Strategies to Manage Speech Anxiety and Language Challenges by Student Teachers in Thailand Schools

Student teachers demonstrated a variety of coping mechanisms to manage their speech anxiety and language challenges encountered during their internship. These strategies align with Gudykunst's emphasis on mindfulness, behavioral flexibility, and information seeking as vital components for reducing anxiety and uncertainty in intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2005). The use of technology, particularly translation tools like Google Translate and other online dictionaries, was a commonly used tactic. Before starting a conversation, student teachers used these resources to prepare vocabulary, verify meanings, and practice important phrases. By lowering lexical uncertainty, this kind of technology support boosts students' confidence and lowers speech anxiety (Habiburrahman et al., 2020).

Many student teachers simplify their language, use short phrases and have been trained to minimize errors and improve clarity. Linguistic preparation and control significantly contribute to lowering anxiety levels by enabling students to anticipate and manage communicative demands (Ni, 2011). Code-switching is another important strategy observed in this study where teachers blend English with Thai, Malayu or Indonesian. These linguistic adaptations not only facilitate smoother

communication, but also serve as a means of expressing cultural sensibility and building relationships with the locals. Code-switching is an effective intercultural communication tool that helps reduce anxiety and increase mutual understanding in a multilingual environment (Khudobina et al., 2019).

Student teachers also used emotional regulation techniques such as positive talk, deep breathing exercises and social smiling to mask nervousness and maintain composure during challenging interactions. These affective strategies have been shown to improve communication performance by reducing stress responses (Dewaele et al., 2018). Finally, social support networks including peer encouragement and guidance from local teachers play an important role in reducing speech anxiety. Miller highlights that positive feedback and non-judgmental attitudes from interlocutors help create a safe communicative environment that allows students to take risks and build confidence (Miller, 2007). These strategies describe how student teachers actively negotiate the challenges of intercultural communication by combining linguistic, cognitive and emotional tools. Their ability to engage in such adaptive behaviors aligns with the core principles of AUM theory which emphasizes that successful communication in intercultural contexts depends not only on language ability, but also on managing psychological discomfort through conscious behavior and knowledge acquisition (Gudykunst, 2005).

As an important note, although the findings in this study provide an in-depth picture of the dynamics of speech anxiety and language challenges in the context of cross-cultural internships, this study has several limitations. One of them is the limited number of participants, which is only five people, so the generalization of findings to a wide population of practicing students needs to be done carefully. In addition, the focus of the study which only used AUM theory without considering other psychological factors such as personality or mental health also limited the scope of analysis. This study also did not systematically observe aspects of nonverbal communication or the use of digital media in detail in the interaction process.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter contains conclusions and suggestions from the findings. This research is not perfect, therefore constructive suggestions are needed for the progress of this research.

A. CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the types of speech anxiety and language challenges that student teachers have faced in cross cultural teaching practice, as well as the coping strategies they use in dealing with these challenges. The findings of this study show that speech anxiety appears in five categories based on William B. Gudykunst's AUM (Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory) namely: Trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, situation anxiety, and state anxiety.

Student teachers who experience trait anxiety show anxiety in communication consistently regardless of context. Context anxiety will appear in student teachers in formal situations such as teaching or during joint evaluations. Audience anxiety will arise if the student teacher interacts directly with an important figure such as the principal. Situation anxiety arises from the student teacher's previous negative experiences, and finally state anxiety varies depending on the social support and feedback received at the time. Nonverbal behaviors such as hesitation when speaking, avoiding eye contact, and nervous movements also reflect these types of anxiety.

In terms of language challenges, this study found when speaking, avoiding eye contact, and nervous movements also reflect these types of anxiety. In terms of language challenges, this study found that student teachers experienced difficulties with limited vocabulary, failing to understand local accents, and overcoming interruptions in conversation. These challenges, combined with cultural differences and culture shock experiences, amplified their speech anxiety and affected their communication effectiveness. Despite these obstacles, student teachers actively implement various coping strategies such as using google translate or other translator applications, simplifying sentences to make them easy to understand, code switching, learning the local language little by little and last but not least supporting each other. These strategies show self-awareness and behavioral adaptability that help them gradually reduce anxiety and improve intercultural communication competence. Overall, this study confirms that managing speech anxiety and language challenges in cross-cultural teaching requires linguistic preparation as well as mental and emotional preparedness. Language competency is only one factor that determines success; other factors include cultural sensitivity and adaptability when handling linguistic difficulties.

B. SUGGESTION

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be made. First, international internship preparation programs should focus on intercultural communication training that focuses on language skills as

well as anxiety management techniques. Preparing internship students for the possibility of speech anxiety and culture shock can increase their confidence and effectiveness during the internship program abroad. Secondly, the use of technological aids such as google translate should be encouraged as practical tools to aid communication. In addition, building closeness and support among peers and mentoring programs before the internship and during the internship can provide important emotional and linguistic support to reduce anxiety. Third, future research could broaden the scope by exploring the long-term impact of cross-cultural internship experiences on language proficiency. Studies could also examine the role of culture-specific factors in shaping language anxiety in different regions.

It is important to highlight that this study has limitations the findings are based on a limited number of participants from a specific university and location, which may affect the general representativeness of the results. In addition, data was collected through interviews and observations during a relatively short internship period of 6 - 7 months, which may not fully reflect the overall experience or long-term adjustment process. Future research is recommended to use a larger and more diverse sample, a longer observation period, and a mixed-methods approach to gain a more detailed understanding. Finally, institutions in destination countries can also contribute by creating a welcoming environment, eliminating seniority and providing positive feedback so that international students feel more comfortable and supported.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



Zahra Nabilla Qatrunnada was born in Yogyakarta, February 19th. She graduated from SMA Negeri 1 Ngawi. During her study at the Senior High School, she was actively involved in the flag- hoisting troop (Paskibra) at her school and frequently participated in various competitions, often achieving victories. In 2018, she was selected as a member of the district-level Paskibra team to raise the national flag during the Independence Day ceremony. In addition to that, she also actively took part in swimming competitions held at her school. Then started her higher education at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang majoring in English Literature in 2021. During college, she attends organization and other activities.