

**AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' SPEAKING ANXIETY
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate the levels of speaking anxiety among students, the differences in speaking anxiety between male and female students, and the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety. The researcher used mixed method and SPSS program to analyzed the data kuantitative. Data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, which consists of 33 positive and negative items. The results showed that 1.9% of students were very anxious, 25% were anxious, 59.6% were mildly anxious, and 13.5% felt relaxed during speaking activities. Although there was no significant difference in overall anxiety levels between male and female students, significant differences emerged when specific domains such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation were analyzed. In addition, the factors cause of students speaking anxiety; Communication Apprehension (CA), Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE).

Keywords: Analysis, English Speaking, Anxiety, Level of Anxiety, Factors cause

A. INTRODUCTION

One of the end products or outcomes of the language learning process is speaking. According to Amalia & Husna (2020) speaking is a crucial skill since oral activity participation is a prerequisite for language acquisition progress. Meanwhile, Moleong (2017) stated that speaking is not only an activity of expressing words by mouth but also conveying information through words from our mouths. This indicates that speaking is considered a vital component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, as the ultimate goal of language acquisition is to help students comprehend and use the target language effectively. However, despite its importance, speaking often triggers anxiety, which can hinder students' ability to express themselves confidently. According to Chiu et al. (2013), students who are attempting to create a linguistic output, such as speaking, are more likely to experience anxiety.

According to Spielbelger (2013), there are two types of speaking anxiety; trait anxiety and state anxiety. Additionally, Gufron & Risnawita (2012) identifies that three main sources of anxiety include worry, emotionality, and task generated interference. Anxiety can severely affect students' self-confidence, leading them to remain silent or speak hesitantly. In

addition, Lightbown and Spada (2003) describe speaking anxiety as a fear of oral expression, often accompanied by physiological symptoms, which can significantly impede one's ability to communicate. Students often experience constraints when trying to speak a foreign language, primarily due to fear of making mistakes. Moreover, Tanveer (2007) notes that language learners frequently report feelings of anxiety, tension, or worry when attempting to speak in English, often feeling blocked mentally. These concerns, particularly regarding the fear of errors, contribute to students resorting to their native language, which feels more comfortable and familiar. This reluctance to speak the target language hinders their progress, as their vocabulary knowledge, despite being extensive, is often underused in verbal communication.

Previous studies have highlighted that anxiety can significantly impact students' performance and participation in English-speaking activities, often discouraging them from fully engaging in communication tasks. According to Siagian & Adam (2017), many pupils struggled with vocabulary development, some spoke English rarely, and some had trouble pronouncing words correctly. This happens because students feel anxious when speaking English, and they encounter problems with expression. The result of this worry is that the kids become uneasy and cease speaking in English. Sometimes they stop speaking because cannot find a suitable vocabulary and expressions (Syahfutra, 2021). An anxious student may have trouble focusing, efficiently digesting knowledge, finding information, and applying previously taught skills (Ormrod et al., 2023).

Despite the extensive research on speaking anxiety, there remains a gap in understanding how these factors vary across different demographic groups, particularly in terms of gender differences in language learning environments. While, Campbell (2006) highlighted gender differences in speaking anxiety, his study did not delve into the specific factors that contribute to this anxiety or how male and female students cope with it in diverse classroom settings. Additionally, there is a lack of research exploring speaking anxiety in non-native English-speaking countries, where contextual and cultural factors may influence anxiety levels. Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the levels of speaking anxiety among students, explore the differences in speaking anxiety between male and female students, and identify the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety. By addressing this research gap, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into how speaking anxiety can be better understood and managed, ultimately helping to improve students' speaking skills and language acquisition.

B. METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data (Sugiyono, 2019). Specifically, the researchers utilized a sequential explanatory design, a type of mixed-methods approach where quantitative data is collected first, followed by qualitative data collection. This design allows for a more in-depth understanding of the research problem by explaining quantitative findings with qualitative insights. In the first phase of the study, a quantitative method was employed by administering a questionnaire to assess the students' levels of speaking anxiety. The analysis of the questionnaire results provided an overview of the students' anxiety levels, which informed the subsequent qualitative phase. In this second phase, the researchers conducted interviews to gather detailed and specific information regarding the factors contributing to students' anxiety in

speaking English. As Arthur & Nazroo (2003) highlights, interviews are a valuable tool to find some information or found out participants' experiences.

For the interview, the researchers selected a sample of eight students: two with high anxiety, two with moderate anxiety, two with middle-range anxiety, and two with low anxiety. The interview included five open-ended questions, designed to explore the factors contributing to anxiety during English speaking activities in the classroom. To measure speaking anxiety, the researchers used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), which consists of 33 statements addressing various aspects of language learning anxiety. The scale includes both positive and negative statements, with responses measured on a 5-point Likert scale. For positive statements, responses range from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1), while negative statements are reverse-scored.

To provide a clear overview of the students' responses to the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), the following table presents the distribution of scores based on the 33 statements included in the scale. These responses reflect various aspects of speaking anxiety experienced by the students.

Table 1. Anxiety- Level Scale

Level of Anxiety	Scale
Very relaxed	33 - 65
Relaxed	66 - 86
Mildly Anxious	87 - 107
Anxious	108 - 123
Very Anxious	124 - 165

To effectively analyze the collected data, a systematic approach was employed to ensure clarity and accuracy. The process of organizing data in a logical way, classifying it, and providing an overall description of the data is known as data analysis (Kaelan, 2005). In this study, the questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS software, with the Independent Sample T-Test applied to explore variations in speaking anxiety between male and female students. For the interview data, the analysis followed the framework outlined by Miles & Huberman (2002), which includes four key components: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. This combined approach to data analysis, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods, allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the students' speaking anxiety.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion related to the research objectives, which aim to investigate the levels of speaking anxiety among students, explore the differences in speaking anxiety between male and female students, and identify the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety. The results and discussion presented below address these aspects and highlight key findings from the data

1. The levels of students speaking anxiety

The researchers assessed and categorized each student based on their answers to the FLCAS questionnaire, the assessment's findings, and the students' anxiety level classification in

order to determine the degree of anxiety each student felt when speaking in English. The frequency of students' speaking anxiety levels is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Frequency of students' speaking anxiety levels

		Level			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Anxious	26	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Mildly Anxious	62	59.6	59.6	84.6
	Relaxed	14	13.5	13.5	98.1
	Very Anxious	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

The results show that students' speaking anxiety scores range from 69 (Relaxed level) to 129 (Highly Anxious), with a mean score of 99, indicating most students are Mildly Anxious. Based on the table, there are 2 respondents with very anxious, 26 respondents with anxious, 62 respondents with mildly anxious, 14 respondents with relaxed and no one with very relaxed. From frequency above, the percentage of students who have very anxious in students 8 grade Junior High School Al- Falah Jambi 1.9 percent, students with anxious 25.0 percent, students with mildly anxious 59.6 percent and relaxed 13.5 percent. The findings support previous research, showing that speaking anxiety is common among students but varies in intensity. For instance, Mandela (2021) reported that 48% of students were Mildly Anxious, 39% were Anxious, 13% were Very Anxious, and no students were Relaxed or Very Relaxed during English-speaking activities. Similarly, Ula (2016) observed that 53% of students experienced Mild Anxiety, 29% were Anxious, 12% felt Relaxed, and 6% were categorized as Very Relaxed, with no students classified as Very Anxious.

Comparing these results, the current study shows a slightly higher percentage of students who are Mildly Anxious (59.6%) compared to Mandela's and Ula's findings. This may suggest that the context or instructional strategies in the Junior High School Al-Falah Jambi could contribute to students' relatively lower levels of extreme anxiety. Interestingly, while Mandela's study revealed no students feeling Relaxed or Very Relaxed, and Ula found a small proportion of Relaxed and Very Relaxed students, the present study identified 13.5% of students as Relaxed. This finding indicates that some students at Al-Falah Jambi might have developed coping strategies or benefitted from a less intimidating learning environment. This indicates that the variations in findings across studies can be attributed to differences in student circumstances, classroom dynamics, learning environments, peer interactions, and teaching methods, all of which influence students' speaking anxiety. As noted by Slameto (2010), factors affecting learning can be categorized into internal and external variables. Internal factors, such as students' motivation and self-confidence, alongside external factors, including classroom atmosphere and teacher support, significantly shape students' learning experiences and their levels of speaking anxiety.

2. Gender Differences in Speaking Anxiety Among Students

Before presenting the results of the Independent Samples T-Test to compare speaking anxiety between male and female students, the table below shows the analysis of three dimensions of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Table 3. Independent Samples Test for Speaking Anxiety Factors
Between Male and Female Students

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Communication Apprehension	Equal variances assumed	1.693	.208	1.833	20	.082	9.818	5.357	-1.357	20.994
	Equal variances not assumed			1.833	17.577	.084	9.818	5.357	-1.457	21.093
Test Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	13.809	.001	2.802	28	.009	15.333	5.471	4.126	26.541
	Equal variances not assumed			2.802	17.513	.012	15.333	5.471	3.815	26.851
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Equal variances assumed	3.361	.092	.962	12	.355	9.714	10.102	-12.295	31.724
	Equal variances not assumed			.962	7.385	.367	9.714	10.102	-13.922	33.351

The results from the Independent Samples Test indicate that there were no significant differences between male and female students regarding their levels of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. According to the criteria for the Independent Samples T-Test, a significant difference is considered when the p-value (Sig. (2-tailed)) is less than 0.05. Conversely, when the p-value is greater than 0.05, no significant difference is observed. For communication apprehension, the p-value was found to be 0.082, which is greater than the 0.05 threshold, indicating no significant difference between male and female students. Similarly, in the case of test anxiety, the p-value was 0.009, which is less than 0.05, suggesting a marginally significant difference. However, it is important to note that this value still does not meet the strict criteria for significance. Finally, for fear of negative evaluation, the p-value was 0.355, which is well above the 0.05 threshold, further confirming the absence of any significant gender-based differences. In conclusion, the analysis suggests that male and female students at SMP Al-Falah Jambi experience similar levels of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Therefore, gender may not be a determining factor in the variation of these types of speaking anxiety among students in this context.

Table 4. Independent Samples Test for Speaking Anxiety Between Male and Female Students

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	18.307	.000	3.311	64	.002	12.30303	3.71535	4.88076	19.72530
	Equal variances not assumed			3.311	43.500	.002	12.30303	3.71535	4.81280	19.79326

The results of the Independent Samples Test indicate a significant difference in speaking anxiety between male and female students at SMP Al-Falah Jambi, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.002 (Sig. (2-tailed) < 0.05). This suggests that gender plays a role in the levels of speaking anxiety experienced by students. In comparison with the study by Tercan & Dikilitas (2015), which found significant differences between male and female students in terms of anxiety related to answering questions, test anxiety, and public speaking, this study shows a similar pattern of gender-based differences in speaking anxiety. These contrasting findings may be attributed to the different types of anxiety measured and the varying contexts in which they occur. Thus, while both studies identify significant gender differences in speaking anxiety, the nature of these differences and the factors contributing to them may vary across different research settings and contexts.

3. The factor causes of students speaking anxiety

Speaking anxiety is a significant barrier to effective language learning and communication, particularly in EFL contexts. It stems from various factors that hinder students from actively participating in oral communication. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), speaking anxiety often originates from three primary dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These dimensions interact with students' individual differences, such as proficiency levels and prior experiences. This section discusses the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety

Communication apprehension (CA)

Communication Apprehension is the term used to describe the worry or anxiety that is linked to real or anticipated communication with others. Studies show that communication anxiety affects almost everyone, while some people are more affected than others. An example of

communication anxiety would be trouble understanding what it means to speak in front of a group or an audience, like students said below;

“I am a bit nervous because I don’t have enough English vocabulary so I’m not fluent, I can’t speak English and I’m still thinking about what to say next”

The students identified several factors contributing to their speaking anxiety. One student mentioned that their inability to speak English fluently and the struggle to construct sentences in English were significant challenges. They also reported difficulties in understanding spoken English. Additionally, the student expressed feeling nervous due to a limited vocabulary, which hindered their confidence. Another common concern was the fear of mispronouncing words or constructing grammatically incorrect sentences. These perspectives are further illustrated in the following statements:

“I feel afraid when I speaking English in class, afraid of pronounce the words incorrectly and afraid of made the wrong sentences structure.”

Based on students' responses, a significant factor contributing to speaking anxiety is the fear of mispronouncing words and constructing incorrect sentences, which creates heightened nervousness when speaking English in class. Some students fear making mistakes in their sentences, while others experience a broader fear of errors in any aspect of speaking. This aligns with Horwitz et al. (1986), who describe communication apprehension as a type of shyness marked by worry or unease when speaking to others, particularly in everyday interactions. Individuals with communication apprehension often struggle to speak in front of groups, listen to others, or understand themselves, which hampers their ability to interact effectively. For example, they may find it difficult to participate in public speaking or group discussions and may even avoid social interactions altogether (Aeni et al., 2017; Pascual-Ferrá, 2016). These challenges illustrate the pervasive impact of communication apprehension on students' willingness and ability to engage in conversations.

Test Anxiety

Based on interviews with several students, some reported feeling anxious during exams due to negative thoughts about failing, receiving low scores, and similar concerns. These feelings are reflected in the following statements:

“I was afraid of failed the exam miss.”

One student reported experiencing greater anxiety when speaking English in front of peers, attributing this to a recurring fear of failing exams. Similar concerns were expressed by other students, as reflected in the following statements:

“I was more afraid of the test score than the test.”

The responses indicate that students primarily experience speaking anxiety due to concerns about their performance, particularly in test-taking situations, exemplifying test anxiety. One student expressed negative feelings about her exam performance, reflecting a fear of poor scores. While some students reported greater anxiety during exams due to concerns about failure or receiving low scores, others felt more anxious when speaking English, fearing

judgment from their peers. These findings align with Ula (2016), who identified communication ambiguity, exam anxiety, and fear of poor grades as common contributors to speaking anxiety. Similarly, Amalia and Husna (2020) emphasized that test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation are primary sources of speaking anxiety. According to Manipuspika (2018), test anxiety involves a fearful response to tests designed to evaluate students' performance, often accompanied by tension, physiological over-arousal, and somatic symptoms. Tanveer (2007) highlighted that test anxiety significantly undermines students' confidence and ability, while Horwitz et al. (1986) described it as a form of performance anxiety rooted in the fear of failure. This type of anxiety is pervasive in language classrooms due to their performance-based evaluative nature.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear on negative evaluation was initially described as a characteristic linked to anxiety about receiving a poor review from others, avoiding circumstances that require evaluation, and anticipating receiving a negative evaluation from others. Students may fear, for instance, that their friends will laugh at them if they make mistakes when speaking English and judge them for not knowing the language. It can be seen in the following student statement:

"I feel more afraid of speaking in front of my friend miss, afraid of being laughed at by them."

Students reported feeling more anxious when speaking English in front of their peers due to the fear of being laughed at. This reflects the concept of fear of negative evaluation, where individuals worry about being judged by others. Similarly, other students expressed similar statement:

"I think speaking English in front of friends more making nervous miss, I am afraid if their judge me."

Based on the interview, the student mentioned that speaking English makes her more anxious, especially when doing so in front of her friends, as she fears being judged by them. This highlights that one factor contributing to students' speaking anxiety is the fear of speaking English in front of peers. This anxiety is primarily driven by the fear of being ridiculed or negatively evaluated by others. This indicates that the root of students' speaking anxiety often stems from the fear of negative evaluation. Meihua (2007) explains that Fear of negative evaluation is the anxiety associated with the learner's perception of how other onlookers; instructors, classmates or others; may negatively view their language ability. This aligns with Suparlan's (2021) assertion that ten factors contribute to speaking anxiety, including limited vocabulary, lack of speaking practice, fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, and concerns about peer comparison.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the levels of speaking anxiety among 8th-grade students at SMP Al-Falah Jambi, the differences in anxiety between male and female students, and the factors contributing to this anxiety. The findings revealed that students' speaking anxiety levels were categorized into four levels: very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, and relaxed. However, no students were found to experience a "very relaxed" state when speaking in class

or in front of their peers. The most common level of anxiety was "mildly anxious," with 59.6% (62 students) of respondents falling into this category. This was followed by 25.0% (26 students) who reported feeling anxious, 13.5% (14 students) who felt relaxed, and only 1.9% (2 students) who were very anxious. Regarding gender differences, the Independent-Samples T-test revealed no significant differences between male and female students' speaking anxiety. For the individual domains of Communication Apprehension (sig=0.082), Test Anxiety (sig=0.009), and Fear of Negative Evaluation (sig=0.335), no significant gender-based variations were found. However, when the domains were combined, the analysis showed a significant difference (sig=0.02), suggesting that the overall level of speaking anxiety differed across genders.

Furthermore, the study found that three main factors were responsible for students' speaking anxiety such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. While Test Anxiety affected only two students during exams, the majority of students felt more anxiety related to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that teachers create a more positive classroom environment and offer additional support to students who struggle with speaking English.

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