

Exploring English as a Foreign Language Students' Perspectives on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety: A Tertiary Study

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Abstract—Anxiety is a negative inward feeling that includes a sense of unease, stress, and hesitation. Anxiousness also has a psychological impact on an individual's mental health. Thus, it can affect an individual's academic performance. Therefore, anxiety is highly assessed in the fields of education and psychology. Psychologists differentiate several types of anxiety. Speaking anxiety is one of them. Language anxiety occurs while speaking a foreign language. It has consequences in learning a language. This study examines English as a foreign language students' perception of foreign language speaking anxiety at the Faculty of Education-Tishk International University in the academic year 2022–2023. The present study answers the following inquiries: Students' anxiety during speaking sessions in the class, the reasons for having anxiety, and the situations in which the students feel uncomfortable. A descriptive quantitative research design has been implemented, and an online survey was designed to determine the reasons and conditions for anxiety in speaking classes. The survey was sent to 80 Education Faculty students, who had 8 h of weekly speaking classes. Due to easy access, convenience sampling was implemented in the data collection. The researcher analyzed the data using Minitab 19. One-sample *t*-tests and analyses of variance are used. Results of data analyses showed that speaking a foreign language in front of the class is exclusively the source of anxiety. Based on the sufficient impact of language anxiety in speaking class, future studies could find strategies for decreasing language anxiety, like tailored anxiety management techniques.

Keywords—Educational psychology, Foreign language, Language anxiety, Language teaching, Speaking class.

I. INTRODUCTION

In globalized language education and communication, English has become increasingly significant for personal usage, academic purposes, and professional contexts. English has arisen as a lingua franca in today's globalized society, promoting communication and collaboration among different cultures. Its implications go beyond personal usage and are vital for academic and professional outcomes. For foreign language learners, proficiency in English provides a wide array of educational opportunities alongside the chance to collaborate with international researchers to conduct research. In the professional realm, English language skills are essential for attaining employment, advancing careers, and engaging in business transactions. Fortunately, as globalization shapes the world, mastering the English language has become the priority of individuals seeking personal, academic, and professional success.

On the other hand, speaking skills are essential for communication and creating relations. Speaking skills are

defined as articulating thoughts and ideas clearly, and this process needs active listening (Rao, 2019, p. 7). Strong speaking skills have functions and purposes, such as public speaking, presentations, and everyday conversations. For developing speaking skills, practicing, receiving feedback, and a willingness to learn function together so that the individuals can create solid and effective conversations (Khasawneh, 2023, p. 1560). Other techniques, such as sufficient body language and clear pronunciation, significantly improve students' speaking skills. By improving their speaking skills, learners can develop their confidence and overall success in both their personal and professional lives (Wahyuningsih and Afandi, 2020, p. 968).

On the other hand, most English as a foreign language (EFL) learners face foreign language anxiety when they engage in speaking practices, which can block the learner's development and overall academic performance (Akkakoson, 2016, p. 65). EFL learners face limitations in expression with the target language due to blocking students' exposure to the

target language. Many EFL learners fear making mistakes and receiving negative criticism from their classmates or teachers. This fear causes them to lose their desire to speak and practice the language. Some of these learners need to be prepared more for speaking activities for various reasons, such as more background knowledge, which can contribute to language anxiety (Jameel et al., 2021).

Coping with speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms needs a multifaceted technique that causes both emotional and cognitive factors. One sufficient strategy is to make classrooms more encouraging and supportive, where language learners feel secure while having conversations and receiving constructive feedback. Furthermore, creating enormous potential for letting learners practice and express themselves with the target language helps them build confidence and lower language anxiety. The speaking activities need to be designed from simple to complex. Providing simple tasks and then gradually making them complex causes a gradual progression; in this way, the learners slowly improve their speaking skills (Kim et al., 2024, p. 12).

In addition, relaxation techniques need to be a part of speaking classrooms so that learners will be more familiar with managing their emotions and lowering their anxiety. In short, with these strategies, language instructors can create a conducive learning environment that allows language development and decreases speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. Investigating these students' perceptions of speaking anxiety contributes to a profitable vision of this phenomenon, including its role in EFL learners' language education. Speaking anxiety is a sufficient concern in teaching English as a foreign language classroom. It affects language learners' communication skills (Kruk, 2018, p. 34). For developing a language education system, analyzing language learners' perceptions is essential regarding language anxiety in EFL classroom (York et al., 2021, p. 55). The current study aims to explore EFL learners' perceptions of language anxiety in a tertiary language education context. A quantitative research method has been implemented for data collection and analysis. Language learners in the Kurdistan Region mostly face speaking anxiety that affects their academic performance negatively. The speaking anxiety makes them less confident during communication. There is not enough quantitative research directly examining language learners' points of view and the reasons why it exists. Focusing on this gap is very crucial for providing strategies to decrease speaking anxiety and improve learning outcomes.

A. Rationale and Significance of the Study

Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which is defined as a distinctive educational, political, and cultural region, provides unique challenges and opportunities for EFL students. The present study could potentially incorporate three reflections. The first is the educational context, which includes the standards of English language education in the Kurdistan Regional

Government (KRG). It incorporates the accessibility of qualified teachers, sufficient resources, and standardized assessment practices, which could contribute to learners' anxiety levels. The second is a socioeconomic factor. Economic discrepancy and educational opportunities in the KRG may affect students' confidence and motivation to learn the English language. The last one is a cultural factor. Iraqi Kurdish culture might affect EFL students' perceptions and experiences of speaking anxiety due to its emphasis on respect, collectivism, and avoidance of face loss. There is a gap for quantitative studies that can help directly explore KRG EFL learners' perceptions, while earlier studies investigated speaking anxiety. With the help of quantitative research methods, this study aims to find out how often, how severely, and exactly what aspects of speaking anxiety KRG EFL students find difficult. The results will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which speaking anxiety influences EFL students and will provide information about developing evidence-based strategies to address this issue (KRG). Furthermore, this study enhances global research on language anxiety by emphasizing how social and economic factors influence students' experiences in foreign language learning. By comparing the findings of this study with international research, educators and policymakers can formulate more inclusive and adaptive solutions to mitigate speaking anxiety across many cultural and educational contexts. The results can be used as a starting point for more cross-cultural research, which will allow researchers to look into how language anxiety is similar and different in different educational settings.

B. Research Objectives

The primary purposes of this study are as follows:

1. The goal is to establish the reputation and levels of foreign language anxiety among EFL learners in a tertiary education setting.
2. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and the language proficiency and participation in speaking activities of EFL learners.
3. The third objective is to identify any potential demographic or background factors that may contribute to the anxiety associated with speaking a foreign language.

C. Research Questions

To achieve the research goals, the present study seeks to respond to the following research inquiries:

1. How common and severe is fear of speaking in a foreign language among higher-education EFL students?
2. What circumstances or settings cause speaking anxiety in EFL students?
3. How do EFL students' language proficiency and engagement in speaking activities relate to speaking anxiety in foreign languages?
4. How are demographic or societal aspects linked to anxiety when speaking a foreign language?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Historical Background of Speaking Anxiety

Language anxiety is a significant factor in language learning, as outlined in Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Gardner's Socio-educational Model. It hinders the effective processing of language input and influences learning outcomes. However, most studies on language anxiety, especially in EFL, focus on qualitative approaches or specific regions. This study aims to provide a comprehensive quantitative analysis of EFL learners' perceptions of speaking anxiety that distinguishes individuals from each other and still impacts the development of foreign language research. Today's context recognizes anxiety as one of the top emotional experiences an individual can have. Anxiety can be defined as the uneasiness of the mind that occurs by fear of danger. It is the exaggerated worry about daily routines. It is not a realistic or over-proportion constant worry that influences and interferes with everyday career, education, cooperation, and social life activities. Different researchers have approached foreign language anxiety from different perspectives in the history of language teaching. There is a professional interest in developing students' speaking proficiency, and this concern influences oral competence. In educational life, speaking is considered a necessary personal characteristic (Erdiana et al., 2020, p. 335).

Unfortunately, foreign language learners often have feelings of stress, uneasiness, nervousness, or anxiety during the process of learning to speak the target language and expect to have a "mental block" against learning. Sönmez and Kurtoglu (2021, p. 231) stressed that speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms means feeling stressed and anxious while using a foreign language in speaking classrooms. It can exist in different forms, such as hesitations, worries about making mistakes, thinking about negative actions, confirming negative criticism by surroundings, or nervousness belonging to speaking breakdowns (Ebadi and Azizimajid, 2024, p. 12). These findings reflect Krashen's (1982) hypothesis that excessive anxiety levels hinder the natural acquisition and retrieval of vocabulary, thereby impairing speaking fluency. Gardner (1985) elucidates how fear of unfavorable judgment and diminished self-confidence intensify language anxiety, hindering learners' participation in oral tasks. Language anxiety has a sufficient role in motivating learners in speaking classrooms. Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis suggests that elevated anxiety prevents learners from obtaining or using intelligible input, reducing speaking proficiency. Gardner (1985) also emphasizes that anxiety negatively affects motivation, which affects students' confidence and classroom participation.

Krashen's (1982) and Gardner's (1985) theories help explain language anxiety, but most research has been done in Western contexts and ignores cultural factors, especially in non-Western regions like the Kurdistan Region. Sönmez and Kurtoglu (2021) and Ebadi and Azizimajid (2024) provide important insights into speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms, but they ignore local cultural and societal standards, which may affect anxiety levels differently.

Qualitative research like Alrabai (2014) and Russell (2020) provides in-depth perspectives on anxiety, but quantitative evidence is scarce, especially in Kurdistan. This quantitative study measures speaking anxiety frequency and intensity in a new sociocultural situation to fill this gap. Wijaya (2023, p. 215) identified three psychological aspects of anxiety: trait anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, and state anxiety. Gardner (1985) defined affective factors as individual attributes like self-confidence and motivation intersecting with situational influences like classroom dynamics. Situational worries raise the affective filter, making it challenging for learners to comprehend or create language during speaking activities, according to Krashen (1982). Various factors, such as lack of confidence, apprehension, and shyness, cause anxiety in EFL-speaking classrooms (Krashen, 1982, p. 45). These factors are personal, such as individual traits, self-confidence, and language skills. Furthermore, external factors such as the learning atmosphere, classroom activities, and interactions between language instructors and learners also play a significant role. On the other hand, there are more possibilities of having cultural factors and an individual's language learning experiences (Almusharraf and Bailey, 2023, p. 5). Luo (2014, p. 100) mentioned that the anxiety of conversation may have a noticeable impact on English students' vocal qualification progress. As anxiety rises, learners may struggle to recall vocabulary, create specific grammar sentences, and speak fluently. The fear of low inspection and performance, coupled with anxiety, may hinder their ability to introduce themselves in an engaging manner. Eventually, having anxiety during conversations may prevent students' total language authority and courage (Elaldi, 2016, p. 220).

Based on a series of research studies in the field of language anxiety, Gardner (1985, p. 56) discovered that anxiety is considered one of the most potent analysts of language development. Language anxiety establishes itself when language learners avoid dialogue with complicated messages in a foreign language. Moreover, when the students freeze up during role-play activities, such as (Alrabai, 2014, p. 85), they have done qualitative research to explore the specific factors of foreign language anxiety in EFL classrooms in a university setting. The results of his study proved that the students are mostly worried about making grammatical mistakes, and this causes the fear of making mistakes.

Similarly, Rachmawati and Jurianto (2020, p. 23) discovered a correlation between elevated levels of anxiety and decreased fluidity and precision. The researcher found that individuals who were fearful of making grammatical errors experienced low evaluation from peers, and lacked confidence were severe causes of anxiety (Russell, 2020, p. 18). Ansari (2015, p. 39) figured out that there is a pessimistic connection between speaking anxiety and evaluation. In his study, he found that course grades harmed high school students. Likewise, Zhang and Lai (2024, p. 11) highlighted the relationship between language anxiety and students' performance during oral examinations. Wang et al. (2023, p. 26) claimed that language learners can easily forget

previously learned words and phrases or grammar rules when they realize that they are in evaluative situations. The educators need to take action accordingly. For example, they may avoid direct corrections or provide verbal fluency tasks so that the students can switch the anxiety for a motivational tool for developing their speaking skills. These methods follow Krashen's (1982) advice to decrease the affective filter by creating a supportive, low-pressure classroom. Gardner's (1985) methodology stresses lowering fear of evaluation and increasing positive reinforcement to boost motivation. According to Wang et al. (2023), educators can use anxiety to motivate by addressing personal and situational concerns. This study will illuminate EFL students' anxiety triggers in Kurdistan and the field of language anxiety research. It also will quantify anxiety frequency and causes to better understand how socio-cultural and educational factors affect language learners' anxiety. The study may also challenge Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Gardner's Socio-Educational Model by including regional and cultural aspects that prior studies have ignored.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher aims to determine the students' viewpoints on EFL speaking anxiety. For that reason, in this study, an exploratory descriptive quantitative research design was used to find out how the EFL students felt about language anxiety. This is because a quantitative research design is ideal for finding objective data and numbers (Heale and Twycross 2015). This approach provides a systematic analysis of the students' inputs from a significant sample. It also ensures that the results reflect the broader population of EFL learners. Using a structured questionnaire alongside standardized scales, the study's main objective is to measure anxiety concentration, identify specific factors, and investigate the influence of anxiety on learners' overall speaking performance. The insights of the present study can provide pedagogical practices and trigger the development of powerful strategies to decrease speaking anxiety and enhance EFL learners' speaking skills.

A. Participants

Eighty EFL learners participated in this study. They were university students, and English language was their instructional language. They were students of the academic year 2022–2023. They were in the fall semester when this study has been conducted. Due to easy access, convenience sampling was implemented in the data

collection. This approach was considered appropriate for an initial investigation of EFL speaking anxiety within the KRG environment. Due to limited access to a large and randomized sample in this educational setting, convenience sampling was a useful way to gather important data. Despite its drawbacks, this strategy facilitated the collection of ideas from a sample of students spanning multiple departments and academic levels. The researcher selected them based on their accessibility and availability. Participants were students at a private university in the KRG. Tables I and II below provide the details about the participants. It is possible that convenience sampling from a study with only one private university in the Kurdistan Regional Government does not apply to all EFL learners, and self-selection bias could happen because people chose to take part on their own. Future research could use random sampling, direct observational techniques, or mixed-method approaches to improve data reliability.

The survey data contains a distinct demographic profile of the participants. Most participants (58.8%) are in the 20–23 age group, which shows a significant concentration of younger participants. The second largest age group is between 16 and 19, accounting for 26.3% of the population. A few students were above 31, demonstrating that the sample primarily consisted of young adults. The participant's departmental affiliation was also a part of the data, and the highest representative departmental affiliation is the English Language Teaching Department. About 53.8% of the students are affiliated with the English Language Teaching Department. About 12.5% of the participants are from the Biology Education Department, and 7.5% are from the Physics Education Department. The remaining participants are distributed across the Computer Education Department and the Mathematics Education Department. The first graders are the study's most common participants, and 52.5% of them are in the study.

On the other hand, third and fourth grades have lower percentages. Some of the participants (22.5%) are in second grade. Most participants (67.5%) are female and 28% are male. This means that by a significant margin, female participants outnumber male respondents. A few students (3.7%) preferred not to say their gender. In brief, the data provide a clear preference for younger female participants in the study. The English Language Teaching Department is the most famous, followed by the Biology and Physics Education Departments. Most of the participants are at the level of first grade, recommending that the survey focus on first-stage students.

TABLE I
PARTICIPANT'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Age	Percentage	Department	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Gender	Percentage
16–19	26.3	English Language teaching department	53.8	First	52.5	Male	28
20–23	58.8	Biology education department	12.5	Second	22.5	Female	67.5
24–26	3.7	Physics education department	7.5	Third	3.7	I prefer not to say	3.7
27–30	8.8	Mathematics education department	13.7	Forth	21.3		
above -31	2.5	Computer education department	12.5				

n=80

B. Instruments

An online questionnaire was created using Google Forms for the study’s data collection, and the questions were adapted from (Young, 1990) research. It has been shared via online platforms such as Viber community and Google Classroom. The questionnaire was used to determine when and why EFL learners feel anxious when speaking the target language. The survey consisted of two main sections. Section one was Likert scale questions, which assess the student’s perception regarding the reason behind their feeling anxious and how they can cope with speaking anxiety. The second section asked for demographic information such as age, department, grade, and gender.

For analyzing the data, Minitab (a software application specialized for data analysis) was used for descriptive statistics. Participants’ responses were demonstrated by frequency and percentage.

The descriptive statistics show that the average score is 45.90 with a median value of 45.00, which indicates that the study’s data is approximately normally distributed (Fig. 1). Effect sizes were calculated in conjunction with statistical tests to clarify the practical importance of the findings. Effect sizes quantify the magnitude of correlations or differences identified in the study. This research uses Cohen’s D to assess the extent of variations in speaking anxiety levels among various student groups. This study seeks to provide a more thorough knowledge of the real-world effects of speaking anxiety among KRG EFL learners by integrating effect sizes.

The study’s data are approximately normally distributed. The maximum score is 64.000, which means completely agree, and the minimum value is 26.000, which means completely disagree.

C. Procedures

Participants completed the survey anonymously, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the responses and identify patterns. The present study was conducted at a university in 2023 using an online survey distributed via the Viber community and Google Classroom. Eighty EFL learners responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire included Likert scale inquiries and demographic questions to assess speaking anxiety. The responses have been received anonymously. Descriptive statistics were implemented for the data analysis.

D. Ethical Considerations

This study was accepted by the Institutional Scientific Committee of Tishk International University-KRG Erbil branch. In addition, before sharing the survey, the researcher informed all participants about this study’s aim by clarifying the survey. The researcher clarified the study’s objectives for the EFL learners. There were no personally identifiable questions, so the respondents could complete the survey anonymously. They have been guaranteed that their responses, including identity, will be saved and secured. The researcher reported the voluntary nature of their participation. Furthermore, the researcher guarantees the utmost confidentiality for their responses.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One sample *t*-test was used to find out whether the participants agreed with this questionnaire. The null hypothesis assumes that the participants are neutral toward this survey; that is, all students’ average responses are 63. A one-sample *t*-test is applied to test the null hypothesis $H_0: \mu = 63$ against the alternative $H_1: \mu \neq 63$. The test shows that there is a significant difference compared with the hypothetical value $\mu = 63$, as shown in Table III.

Table III shows that H_0 is rejected, as it is shown that *t* is equal to -16.3 with a $P = 0.000$, which means that the students are not neutral toward this survey. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test is used to determine whether the students strongly agree with the survey and whether there are significant differences between grade, gender, and department. Tables IV-VII present the ANOVA.

TABLE II
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

<i>n</i>	Mean	Coef.Var.	Minimum	Median	Maximum
80	45.90	19.68	26.000	45.000	64.000

TABLE III
ONE-SAMPLE T-TEST

<i>n</i>	Mean	Standard deviation	SE mean	<i>t</i> -value	<i>P</i> -value
90	23.70	9.03	1.01	-16.3^{**}	0.000

** Means highly significant

TABLE IV
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN GRADES

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-value	<i>P</i> -value
Grades	3	113.8	37.94	0.46	0.714
Error	76	6333.4	83.33		
Total	79	6447.2			

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-value	<i>P</i> -value
Departments	4	511.4	127.86	1.62	0.179
Error	75	5935.8	79.14		
Total	79	6447.2			

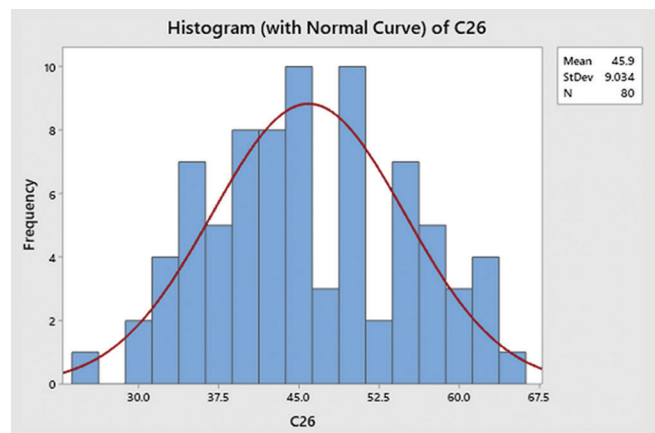


Fig. 1: Data distribution.

TABLE VI
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN AGES

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-value	P-value
Ages	4	205.0	51.26	0.62	0.653
Error	75	6242.2	83.23		
Total	79	6447.2			

TABLE VII
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN GENDERS

Source	DF	Adj SS	Adj MS	F-value	P-value
Genders	2	26.26	13.13	0.16	0.855
Error	77	6420.94	83.39		
Total	79	6447.20			

Table IV shows that the participants' grades are not significantly different ($F = 0.46$, $P = 0.714$). This result indicates that the respondents' grades have no clear patterns. Thus, the respondents are relatively homogeneous. This result suggests that there is no significant difference among the respondents' grades.

Table V shows that the departments of the population of the study have no significant difference ($F = 1.62$, $P = 0.179$).

Table VI demonstrates that the age of the learners has no significant difference. ($F = 0.62$, $P = 0.653$).

Table VII determines that the gender of the students has no significant difference. ($F = 0.16$, $P = 0.855$).

As shown in Table VIII, 51.25% of the participants strongly agree on having more speaking practice in the

TABLE VIII
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS FOR SCALE ITEMS

Scale items		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. "I would feel more confident speaking in class if we practiced speaking more."	Count	41	33	3	2	1
	Percent	51.25	41.25	3.75	2.50	1.25
2. "I would feel less self-conscious about speaking in class in front of others if I knew them better."	Count	20	32	19	3	6
	Percent	25.00	40.00	23.75	3.75	7.50
3. "I feel very relaxed in class when I have studied a great deal the night before."	Count	44	25	8	3	0
	Percent	55.00	31.25	10.00	3.75	0
4. "I am less anxious in class when I am not the only person answering a question."	Count	28	30	13	7	2
	Percent	35.00	37.50	16.25	8.75	2.50
5. "I think I can speak a foreign language pretty well, but when I know I am being graded, I mess up."	Count	18	25	20	14	3
	Percent	22.50	31.25	25.00	17.50	3.75
6. "If I were more confident in my answers, I would be more willing to volunteer them in class."	Count	31	29	12	7	1
	Percent	38.75	36.25	15.00	8.75	1.25
7. "I enjoy the class when we work in pairs"	Count	32	29	8	6	5
	Percent	40.0	36.25	10.00	7.50	6.25
8. "I feel more comfortable in class when I do not have to get in front of the class."	Count	23	24	15	13	5
	Percent	28.75	30.00	18.75	16.25	6.25
9. "I would enjoy class if we were not corrected at all in class."	Count	5	11	11	35	18
	Percent	6.25	13.75	13.75	43.75	22.50
10. "I am more willing to speak in class when we discuss current events."	Count	14	32	27	5	2
	Percent	17.50	40.00	33.75	6.25	2.50
11. "I would get less upset about my class if we did not have to cover so much material in such a short period."	Count	23	27	22	8	0
	Percent	28.75	33.75	27.50	10.00	0
12. "I would feel better about speaking in class if the class were smaller."	Count	6	20	19	25	10
	Percent	7.50	25.00	23.75	31.25	12.50
13. "I feel comfortable in class when I come to class prepared."	Count	41	30	6	3	0
	Percent	51.25	37.50	7.50	3.75	0
14. "I am more willing to speak in class when a debate is scheduled."	Count	24	26	22	5	3
	Percent	30.00	32.50	27.50	6.25	3.75
15. "I would not be so self-conscious about speaking in class if it were commonly understood that everyone makes mistakes and that making a mistake is not such a big deal."	Count	42	28	8	2	0
	Percent	52.50	35.00	10.00	2.50	0
16. "I prefer to be allowed to volunteer an answer instead of being called on to answer."	Count	37	21	20	1	1
	Percent	46.25	26.25	25.00	1.25	1.25
17. "I am more willing to participate in class when discussing exciting topics."	Count	39	31	7	3	0
	Percent	48.75	38.75	8.75	3.75	0
18. "If I had more practice speaking in class, I would be less nervous about taking an oral test in a foreign language."	Count	35	33	10	1	1
	Percent	43.75	41.25	12.50	1.25	1.25
19. "I enjoy class when I can work with another student."	Count	24	27	17	5	7
	Percent	30.00	33.75	21.25	6.25	8.75
20. "I would feel uncomfortable if the instructor corrected our mistakes in class."	Count	14	26	31	7	2
	Percent	17.50	32.50	38.75	8.75	2.50
21. "I feel uneasy when my fellow students are asked to correct my mistakes in class."	Count	20	20	22	12	6
	Percent	25.00	25.00	27.50	15.00	7.50

class, and only 1.25% of them disagree. About 40% of the students agreed that knowing their classmates makes them relaxed during speaking class, and only 0.75 disagreed with it. Moreover, for the statement that having good preparation before the class lowers the student's stress, 55% of the learners strongly agree and 0% strongly disagree. Regarding the idea that students should not only be responsible for answering questions, 35% strongly agree and 2.5% strongly disagree. For the statement, "*I think I can speak the foreign language pretty well, but when I know I am being graded, I mess up.*" Some of the participants (31%) agree, and 3.75% strongly disagree. "*I would be more willing to volunteer answers in class if I were not so afraid of saying the wrong thing.*" 38.75% of the students strongly agree, and 1.25% strongly disagree. "*I prefer to be allowed to volunteer an answer instead of being called on to answer.*" About 46.25% of the students strongly agree, and % 1.25 strongly disagree. "*I would feel uncomfortable if the instructor never corrects our mistakes in class.*" Some of the respondents (32.50%) strongly agree, and 8.75% strongly disagree. "*I feel uneasy when my fellow students are asked to correct my mistakes in class.*" Twenty-five percent of the students strongly agree, and 7.50% strongly disagree. The above table provides. The table below provides the overall question ratio.

The study conducted a descriptive statistical analysis to determine the student's perceptions regarding language anxiety. The table below shows the descriptive statistical analysis for scale items. The results of the present study show that the students were seeking to have more speaking practice so that they could lower their speaking anxiety, and they also needed time to know their classmates to communicate with each other. Limeranto and Bram (2022) have confirmed these findings. Thus, language educators should be patient and give time to the class to get to know each other. Students also confirm that they must prepare at least one night before the class. They are more engaged when the class is active and not only one student is answering the questions. They also prefer peer dialogues rather than group discussions. Zrekat and Al-Sohbani (2022) agreed that students may think they are doing well but often mess up when graded. Students fear being confronted by the class, so they prefer to speak in their comfort zone. Hence, the teachers do not need to force them to come to the stage to speak.

In addition, when they receive no corrections, students can enjoy the class. They are more willing to discuss current events and exciting topics than traditional ones. For this request, the teachers need to update their way of teaching. They can have debates about the latest issues. Furthermore, students often request that teachers consider the short duration of the semester when covering the syllabus. On the other hand, having small classes is more applicable for discussions. Organizing debates and establishing a schedule can effectively alleviate speaking anxiety, as suggested by Ryu et al. (2022). Students also want to participate by volunteering rather than being called into the class. The present study's results indicate that students do not favor receiving corrections from their classmates. On the other hand, they prefer doing dialogues rather than doing corrections. In conclusion, educators should

conduct additional research on anxiety to identify potential solutions and alternatives for fostering a productive speaking class.

V. CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this study was to examine in a tertiary context EFL learners' perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety. This study encourages language learners to enhance their communication skills and self-assurance. It also investigates the factors and nature of language anxiety, including its impact on language education and speaking skills. The findings of the study suggest that language and speaking anxiety is a complicated sensation that is affected by several aspects, such as social, contextual, or personal factors. Lack of speaking practice, poor class relations, lack of confidence, lack of teamwork, public speaking anxiety, large speaking classes, and direct instructor corrections were identified as anxiety factors by study participants. In addition, this study revealed that foreign language speaking anxiety has a range of negative aspects such as demotivation, skipping speaking tasks, and having a fear of communication with the target language. Moreover, the respondents also recommended solutions to language anxiety, such as having small classes and group work, avoiding direct corrections, and providing a relaxed environment for speaking classes. They also feel more comfortable with a supporting teacher. In general, the current study emphasizes the need to understand students' perspectives to build appropriate solutions. Language educators implement more holistic methods for teaching language and support the learners to overcome their anxiety and enhance their self-esteem and communication skills by analyzing the complicated nature of foreign language speaking nervousness and its effect on language learning.

This study offers insightful information about EFL students' experiences with speaking anxiety in a tertiary setting. To reduce anxiety, educators might design smaller, more interactive speaking classes, include peer conversations, and provide indirect feedback. Further studies should examine long-term strategies that gradually boost student confidence.

A. LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The present study was conducted with 80 EFL learners due to fewer students in 2023. Although this addresses valuable insights, the findings may need to be more generalizable to more diverse populations of EFL learners. To emphasize the generalizability of the results, future research could involve a more extensive and diverse population of EFL learners. The study conducted a cross-sectional design, which lowers the ability to provide conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships. The data in this study relied on survey questionnaires as its primary data source. Future studies could be done with observational data or interviews. Further studies evaluating the effectiveness of different methods and

techniques to reduce speaking anxiety could address valuable insights for educators and language learners. Future research could explore how contextual alongside cultural factors, like the teaching methods implemented. By addressing these limitations and conducting further studies, a more comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety among EFL learners can be achieved.

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