



Speaking Anxiety and Factors in Indonesian EFL Tertiary Contexts: Exploring Proficiency Differences

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Abstract

Some people struggle with speaking English clearly due to nervousness, a phenomenon called speaking anxiety. This study examines speaking anxiety levels, their correlation with proficiency, contributing factors, and coping strategies. A survey of 96 Indonesian EFL students revealed that lower proficiency students faced significantly higher anxiety levels. Key factors included fear of negative evaluation (39%), personality traits (53%), and pedagogical influences (67%). Practising outside the classroom (57%) and positive lecturer feedback were effective in reducing anxiety. These findings highlight the importance of supportive learning environments. In conclusion, the study found that speaking anxiety levels were generally low but significantly affected by proficiency. Factors such as evaluation fear, personality, and teaching methods contributed to anxiety, while external practice and supportive feedback helped mitigate it.

1. INTRODUCTION

The core function of language is communication, and speaking is a dynamic, verbal skill that is essential for learning English as a foreign language (Bhandari, 2023). To make the listener understand what we are trying to convey when speaking, we must speak clearly. Thus, some people cannot do this perfectly because of the tension or nervousness they feel before they even try to speak, especially when they talk in a foreign language (EFL speaker). Commonly, it can be their negative thoughts about not being able to speak perfectly because it is not their first language, they fear having a mistake (such as grammatical error or broken pronunciation), or their interlocutors having more advanced knowledge than them that can make their self-esteem go low (Trisanti & Wariyati, 2023). In the psycholinguistics framework, it is called speaking anxiety. Xiang (2023) defines it as the fear, worry, and discomfort individuals experience when speaking a foreign language, especially in social interactions.

Previous studies show that most students experienced speaking anxiety during class presentations, leading to physical symptoms like trembling, sweating, and fast breathing (Trisanti & Wariyati, 2023). Other symptoms are also reported such as trouble concentrating, blanking out, concerns about their appearance while speaking, stuttering, forgetting their thoughts, fear of being judged by peers and lecturers, and anxiety about attracting attention

(Taqwa et al., 2022). According to Yan and Liang (2022), foreign language learners experience speaking anxiety due to four main factors: fright of speaking in a public space, weakness in the aspect of listening comprehension, fear of criticism from peers, and nervousness when interacting with native speakers. Meanwhile, Ardiyansah and Auliya (2023) found that participants' anxiety levels before giving speeches were influenced by factors like the topic, audience size, and how important they perceived the presentation to be. Additionally, according to Putri et al. (2023), students' speaking anxiety was not correlated with students' academic achievement, suggesting that motivation and self-confidence may be more influential in determining students' speaking performance despite the presence of anxiety.

Considering the experience that has happened in the scope of participant focus, it was found that there were some students who still felt nervous and not confident enough to speak in English. This case was discovered during a presentation or when the lecturer asked them a question in the classroom. They typically responded by being silent, pausing in the middle of their sentences, or switching to their native language when they were unable or forgot to find the appropriate term to convey their ideas. Continuing this through the current study, Faqihi (2024) emphasized that lecturers had a significant impact on shaping students' anxiety. Teachers' personalities, behaviors, and reactions to students' speaking mistakes are key factors that can trigger anxiety.

This study intended to explore the speaking anxiety of second-year (batch 2022) and third-year (batch 2021) English Study Program students, as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner. Previous research highlighted a gap in the complementary of speaking anxiety factors and strategies as they did not completely explain the possible factors and strategies that students had. Meanwhile, this study would investigate their anxiety levels, comparing their speaking anxiety with speaking proficiency, factors that induce speaking anxiety, and strategies for managing their anxiety in speaking, ultimately seeking to foster their speaking ability and build a more thorough comprehension of the underlying phenomena.

Universitas Brawijaya was chosen as one of the institutions from Indonesia for the focus of this study because it is one of the accreditable Indonesia institutions that reflect the need for this study which is the higher education in tertiary levels and also as the place that the researcher used for the observation. The English Study Program students were chosen as they have speaking classes in their course learning and speaking proficiency towards English as their second language. Furthermore, the importance of conducting this research on speaking anxiety among second-year and third-year English Study Program students emerged from the significant effect that anxiety had on students' overall educational experience and achievement as they still have foreign classes to attend which can motivate them to participate in speaking activity in the class and reduce their speaking anxiety. Understanding and managing speaking anxiety was seen as critical to developing an encouraging and supportive academic environment in which students could communicate effectively and participate in classroom activities. This research focused on discovering and understanding the speaking anxiety experienced among second-year and third-year English Study Program students, considering their differences in speaking proficiency in the English language. Understanding and managing speaking anxiety was seen as critical to developing an encouraging and supportive academic environment in which students could communicate effectively and participate in classroom activities. This research focused on discovering and understanding the speaking anxiety experienced among second-year and third-year English Study Program students, considering their differences in speaking proficiency in the English language.

This study was based on Horwitz's et al. (1986) Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) theory, which offers valuable insights into how individuals experience the system of

understanding a new language. Regarding this theory, personal thoughts, behaviors, and the specific pressures and demands within the classroom environment have been involved in creating a language learning experience. By emphasizing the complex and multifaceted nature of foreign language anxiety, the framework sheds light on how various factors can influence both the emotional and practical aspects of language acquisition. Furthermore, Horwitz et al. (1986) expanded on this idea by examining the connection between psychological factors and the intricate challenges involved in mastering a second language.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)

This study employed the Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) theory rooted from Horwitz et al. (1986). This theory explains that FLA is a “Distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. This theoretical framework highlights the various factors and consequences of anxiety in second language acquisition. Students often say they “know” a grammar rule but “forget” it when multiple grammar points need to be recalled and applied at the same time, such as in an oral exam or exercise (Horwitz et al., 1986). If a student realizes they’ve made a mistake, their anxiety may increase. Self-aware learners may view themselves differently than how they perceive themselves.

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), created by Horwitz et al. (1986), assesses the level and intensity of anxiety experienced by learners in foreign language settings. FLCAS has proven effective in defining language anxiety, largely due to its well-designed items, which are rooted in the experiences faced by foreign language learners who struggle with anxiety. These learners often expressed concerns related to testing, communication, and the fear of negative evaluation from their peers in the language learning environment.

In the academic framework, students mainly feel anxiety when they have to present in the classroom or when the lecturer asks them a question in the classroom. Most of the students typically responded by being silent, pausing in the middle of their sentences, or switching to their native language when they were unable or forgot to find the appropriate term to convey their ideas. This manifestation emerges because they have to produce and perform the second language. Many symptoms have been disclosed such as difficulty in concentrating, their mind going blank, concerns about their physical appearance when speaking, stuttering, forgetting what they were going to say, constant worries about being evaluated by classmates and lecturers, and nervousness about drawing attention to themselves (Taqwa et al., 2022).

2.2. Students Speaking Anxiety Levels and Speaking Proficiency Levels

This study would like to explain the effect of speaking proficiency on students’ speaking anxiety levels. In a previous study by Putri et al. (2023), researchers did not find any significant difference between student speaking anxiety and their speaking proficiency. Based on the findings, it was found that the participants were experiencing moderate speaking anxiety levels (53.3%) with a fair category of speaking achievement (73.3%). With a sig value (2-tailed) $.071 > 0.05$, the null hypothesis was validated, and the alternative hypothesis was negated. This finding suggests that speaking anxiety alone does not significantly impact students’ speaking performance. Meanwhile, this study assumes that speaking proficiency would influence speaking anxiety which is against Putri et al.’s (2023) finding.

Besides that, Dikmen (2021) found a significant connection between Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) and speaking proficiency among Saudi EFL students. Higher FLSA levels were associated with lower speaking proficiency, indicating that anxiety negatively impacts oral communication. The study shows that listening anxiety has the biggest impact on

EFL performance compared to other types of anxiety. This is because listening requires complex mental processes, which can increase anxiety and make it harder for students to speak and improve their language skills (Dikmen, 2021). Listening anxiety influences how speaking anxiety and speaking proficiency are connected. Difficulty understanding spoken language can also increase speaking anxiety, as students might worry about making mistakes or responding incorrectly in conversations. Thus, the combination of listening and speaking anxieties can reduce speaking ability, making students more hesitant to engage in oral communication.

2.3. Speaking Anxiety Factors

Horwitz (1988) identified three types of performance anxiety that may affect students learning a foreign language: 1) communication apprehension, where nervousness arises from interacting in a foreign language; 2) test anxiety which manifests from a fear of failing, being tested, or getting bad scores; and 3) fear of negative evaluation, where learners worried about negative feedback that may or may not happen to them before or because they have thoughts involving negative biases, such as unfavorable perceptions and judgments from others.

Although those three factors can be a reason behind the students' speaking anxiety, there are also internal and external factors that contribute to their speaking anxiety. According to Ardiyansah and Auliya (2023), EFL learners who experience speaking anxiety tend to have traits of anxiety. This trait of anxiety refers to an individual's persistent personality trait that causes a persistent tendency towards anxiety. Meanwhile, as language learning threatens learners' self-concept, they may develop some specific views regarding language learning and its application that lead them to a belief they have to speak native-like (Tanveer, 2007). Self-efficacy could be correlated with learners' speaking anxiety in learning a foreign language. It refers to a person's reliance on their competence to successfully complete tasks like learning a new language (Jabbarifar, 2011). According to Raofi et al. (2012), students with high self-efficacy are often more confident in their language skills, which helps reduce their anxiety levels. Meanwhile, students with low self-efficacy may doubt their skills, leading to higher anxiety, fear of failure, and avoidance of language-related tasks.

In addition, the external factors that contribute to the students' speaking anxiety are from the pedagogical and social-cultural aspects. Pedagogical instruments such as the learning environment and lecturer also can give learners anxiety in speaking. Faqihi (2024) explained that traditional teaching methods that only focus on grammar also can give students anxiety because lecturers tend to only concentrate on how perfectly the student is speaking in the foreign language grammar. Additionally, EFL learners often study in environments where the target language is not the primary language spoken. This setting provides limited and sometimes inaccurate exposure to the language. The lack of practice opportunities can hinder their language development and lead to feelings of embarrassment or stress when they are required to speak, both inside and outside the classroom (Tanveer, 2007).

2.4. Strategies for Managing Speaking Anxiety

Given the identified factors and consequences of foreign language anxiety, it is crucial to implement strategies that mitigate its impact on the learning process. Recognizing that foreign language anxiety can affect both lecturers and learners may be the most important first step. Horwitz et al. (2010) noted that learners often feel a sense of relief when they realize that others also experience anxiety about language learning and that someone understands their struggles. As a key element in language learning, lecturers can ease the learning process and lower students' anxiety levels by focusing on both the specific traits related to anxiety and the educational factors that take part in heightened anxiety. Yet, it is essential to note that students' responses may vary to any specific education method approach and that some learners' speaking anxiety is intrinsic to foreign language learning. Another way to help students feel

less anxious is to give them more chances to use the language outside of class. This can assist them to feel easier when speaking the language (Xiang, 2023). By getting used to speaking to many other people in a foreign language, learners would feel more confident if they were inquired to do an oral activity in front of the class. Language classes should assist the learners in forming more reasonable expectations and appropriate strategies due to the factors in learners' unrealistic beliefs. Acknowledging making mistakes is a natural part of language learning and is one way for the lecturers to encourage the learners. It would be beneficial if learners prioritized making their point over making mistakes.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach with survey design since the survey numeric responses can be objectively quantifiable and measurable. A quantitative study was selected to reveal the participants' anxiety levels, the factors that influence them the most, and the strategies they use in managing speaking anxiety. A quantitative approach was chosen to assess participants' anxiety levels, identify the underlying factors that involve their anxiety, and examine the strategies students used to manage it, all through numerical measurements. Surveys were employed as the primary data collection method to quantify anxiety levels among the focus participants. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and ensured accurate findings to support the study.

3.2. Participants

The research participants are second-year (n = 33) and third-year (n = 63) undergraduate students from the English Study Program, because they already passed the speaking advanced learning course that can affect their speaking proficiency level in speaking a foreign language. A total of 96 students voluntarily completed the questionnaire used to gather the data by random sampling.

3.3. Instruments

The researcher obtained the data by using a questionnaire that can be accessed via Google Form with a total of 23 questions consisting of 2 questions to measure English proficiency and speaking skills by students' self-assessment, 18 questions to measure anxiety level (with a measurement number: 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Somewhat Disagree, 4: Somewhat Agree, 5: Agree, 6: Strongly Agree) adopted from Horwitz et al. (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), 1 question about internal factors taken from the previous studies by Ardiyansah and Auliya (2023) and Tanveer (2007), 1 question about external factors taken from Faqih (2024) and Tanveer (2007), and 1 question to figure out the strategies of speaking anxiety taken from a previous study by Xiang (2023).

3.4. Data Collection

The data collection method employed in this quantitative research is a questionnaire. The researcher aims to objectively assess the participants' level of speaking anxiety. The first step involved designing the questionnaire to seek participants' attitudes towards speaking English with others. The criteria for participants in this research were English Study Program students in their second-year (batch 2022) and third-year (batch 2021) students who attended foreign language classes. Later, the Google Form was distributed to these participants, asking them to fill the form honestly and freely, with assurances that their identities would remain confidential for research purposes. The form was filled out voluntarily by the students from both years.

3.5. Data Analysis

Researchers employed data analysis to attain towards understanding of a wider and more complex research problem that needs to be addressed (Şahin & Öztürk, 2019). After

obtaining the data, the researcher analyzed the anxiety levels of the participants based on their academic year using descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, Sum, and Frequency data). These statistics provided a summary of the mean score, the sum of the overall anxiety score, and standard deviation (research question number 1). The anxiety levels were adapted according to a previous study by Faqihi (2024). In this study, the lowest possible score on the questionnaire was 18 points if the participants scored one point on each item. The highest possible score was 108 points if the participants scored six points on each item. Thus, this study demonstrated three levels of speaking anxiety as depicted in Table 1.

Table 1. Score of Students' Speaking Anxiety

Level	Scores	Level of FLA
1	18-74	Low Anxiety
2	75-92	Moderate Anxiety
3	93-108	High Anxiety

Source: Adapted from Faqihi, 2024

To address the differed in investigating and comparing the anxiety level that was experienced both by low speaking proficiency group ($n = 22$) and high speaking proficiency groups ($n = 28$), the researchers used the independent t-test. Meanwhile, in order to address factors and strategies, the researchers used frequency analysis to know the percentage to examine the factors that involve participants' anxiety and strategies employed by the participants. The final step in completing the data analysis was to make conclusions based on the findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to scrutinize the speaking anxiety level experienced by second-year and third-year English Study Program students, the role of speaking proficiency (high vs low) in affecting speaking anxiety levels, the factors of speaking anxiety, and the strategies the students used to manage speaking anxiety. The foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) containing 18 items assessing speaking anxiety was employed. The Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis showed a value of .788, indicating that the instrument used is highly reliable.

4.1. Speaking Anxiety Levels

The first concern of this study is to assess the levels of foreign language speaking anxiety among students in the English Study Program at Universitas Brawijaya. Students' speaking anxiety was measured using the total score from the FLCAS questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was utilized to analyze the results. As shown in Table 2, the overall mean speaking anxiety level for the entire sample ($n = 96$) was 66.36, with a minimum score of 23 and a maximum of 97. For second-year students ($n = 33$), the mean was 65.81, with a minimum of 44 and a maximum of 82. In contrast, third-year students ($n = 63$) had a mean of 66.65, with a minimum score of 23 and a maximum of 97. Referring to Table 1 regarding classifications of speaking anxiety levels, this study revealed that the overall score for students' speaking anxiety levels represented low anxiety levels. It can be argued that the students in their second-year and third-year studies in an Indonesian EFL tertiary context do not experience high speaking anxiety as the participants have already passed their speaking advanced learning course during their early university days. This confirms a previous study that students with high academic achievement demonstrate a low anxiety level (Azzahra & Fatimah, 2023, Azzahra et al., 2023).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of FLCAS Items

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sum FLCAS	96 (whole participants)	23.00	97.00	66.36	11.01
	33 (second-year)	44.00	82.00	65.81	10.04
	63 (third-year)	23.00	97.00	66.65	11.55

More detailed information about participants' responses to each item is presented in Table 3. It was observed that item number 4 with the statement "*I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am*" was chosen as the highest ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.36$) followed by item 12 "*I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do*" ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.34$), and also item 11 "*I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.*" ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.30$). Meanwhile, the lowest scores involved item 16 "*I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.*" ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.57$). This result provided evidence that students tended to have low confidence in speaking competence and speaking performance, thinking that their peers were more perfect in speaking ability than themselves. However, they believe in their speaking ability to some extent as they are in the same level of education, so they assume that their peers or classmates will not laugh at them while they perform their speaking practice.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Each Item of FLCAS

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	3.50	1.25
Item2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	3.55	1.28
Item3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.59	1.32
Item4	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	4.33	1.36
Item5	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	4.04	1.37
Item6	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.88	1.32
Item7	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.09	1.37
Item8	I would not be nervous speaking a foreign language with native speakers.	3.70	1.41
Item9	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.52	1.33
Item10	I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	3.63	1.09
Item11	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in language class.	4.08	1.30
Item12	I always feel that the other students speak a foreign language better than I do.	4.28	1.34
Item13	I feel very self-conscious about speaking a foreign language in front of other students.	3.80	1.26
Item14	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.29	1.24
Item15	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.30	1.29
Item16	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language.	3.01	1.57
Item17	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	4.02	1.28
Item18	I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	3.70	1.10

4.2. Speaking Anxiety Levels Between Low and High Proficiency Groups

This study also has the significant concern to assess the degree to which speaking anxiety levels by the low speaking proficiency group are statistically different from the high speaking proficiency group. Data on speaking proficiency was collected from the self-assessment rate measure using the 5 Likert scale. Students with a score of 3 were categorized as a low speaking proficiency group ($n = 22$), and students with a score of 5 and above were categorized as a high speaking proficiency group ($n = 28$).

Table 4. Group Statistics of Speaking Anxiety Levels and Speaking Proficiency Group

	Low vs High	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
FLCAS`	3.00 (low)	22	4.00	.59
	5.00 (high)	28	3.50	.57

To compare the mean differences within the two groups, an independent t-test was conducted. The test was organized to find out if there is a contrast in speaking anxiety levels between learners with low and high speaking proficiency. The results showed a significant difference, with the low proficiency group ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .594$) having higher anxiety differentiated from the high proficiency group ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .577$), [$t(44) = 2.83$, $p = .007 < .05$]. The study found that speaking proficiency level does influence students' speaking anxiety and the low proficiency group experienced higher anxiety levels compared to the high proficiency group.

Raofi et al. (2012) noted that learners with strong self-efficacy beliefs are likely to go through lower levels of language anxiety, as they are confident in their language abilities. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy may doubt their capabilities, leading to increased anxiety, fear of failure, and avoidance of language tasks. Confirming previous studies, students with low speaking proficiency groups were found to have higher anxiety levels while the high speaking proficiency groups were found to have lower anxiety levels. Thus, this study also disconfirms Putri et al. (2023) finding that speaking proficiency does not have any effect on speaking anxiety levels.

4.3. Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Anxiety

To reveal the primary, internal, and external factors underlying the students' speaking anxiety, the frequency analysis was computed. As Table 6 shows the primary factor of overall participant's speaking anxiety ($n = 96$) was fear of negative evaluation (fear of negative prejudice in the form of bad images and judgments from others). Fear of negative evaluation emerges when students are afraid of negative evaluations that may or may not happened to them before or because they had thoughts involving negative biases, such as unfavorable perceptions and judgments from others. This factor also aligns with the anxiety levels of the students that showed they had thoughts about other's performance in speaking that may be better than them. Because of this, students' participation in speaking might be decreased stemming from their concern and worry about making errors in front of their peers. They feared that their ideas might not be perfect enough or might be misunderstood by their peers (Taqwa et al., 2022). This fear of making mistakes and negative evaluations could affect their self-esteem or confidence and decrease their motivation to develop their speaking skills.

Table 6. Percentage of Responses on The Primary Factors in Students' Speaking Anxiety

Primary Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Fear of negative evaluation	37	39
Communication apprehension	32	33
Test anxiety	27	28
Total	96	100

To gain a better understanding of the questionnaire's results, these primary factors related to the FLCAS items were analyzed. As Table 7 shows, item number 4 with the statement "I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am" is the highest factor ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.36$) that contributes to students speaking anxiety which agreed with the Table 6 that fear of negative evaluation was chosen as the primary factor that affect students

speaking anxiety. This item was also selected as the highest item in overall FLCAS items (see Table 3).

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Fear of Negative Evaluation

Item	Statement	Mean	Std.Deviation
Item 4	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	4.33	1.36
Item 12	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	4.28	1.34
Item 17	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	4.02	1.28
Item 2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	3.55	1.28
Item 7	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.09	1.37
Item 16	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	3.01	1.57

Meanwhile, Table 8 shows the item that represented communication apprehension factors, and item number 5 with the statement “*I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.*” was chosen as the highest with a mean of 4.04 and standard deviation 1.37.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Communication Apprehension

Item	Statement	Mean	Std.Deviation
Item 5	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	4.04	1.37
Item 13	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.80	1.26
Item 8	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	3.70	1.41
Item 18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	3.70	1.10
Item 10	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	3.63	1.09
Item 1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	3.50	1.25
Item 15	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.30	1.29

In addition, Table 9 shows the FLCAS items that are related to the test anxiety factor. The highest scores involved item number 11 with the statement “*I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in language class.*” (M = 4.08, SD = 1.30).

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Test Anxiety

Item	Statement	Mean	Std.Deviation
Item 11	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in language class.	4.08	1.30
Item 6	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.88	1.32
Item 3	I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in language class.	3.59	1.32
Item 9	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.52	1.33

Furthermore, looking at the internal factors of all of the participants shown in Table 10, personality (tend to have traits towards anxiety) had strong responses reaching 53%. According to Ardiyansah and Auliya (2023), EFL learners who experience speaking anxiety tend to have traits of anxiety. This trait anxiety refers to the students' persistent personality trait that causes a persistent tendency towards anxiety. Individuals with trait anxiety tend to feel anxious about

many different situations (Horwitz et al., 2010). Students who have perfectionist personalities could also contribute to their anxiety in speaking because of their views on how they must be perfect in communicating with other people, especially in foreign languages. They might not only be anxious about their performance in their speaking skills but also consider their perfectness in grammar, pronunciation, or even their physical appearance.

Table 10. Percentage of Responses to Internal Factors in Students' Speaking Anxiety

Internal Factors	Frequency	Percent
Personality	51	53
Belief	45	47
Total	96	100

Meanwhile, regarding external factors, Table 11 shows that most of the participants (64 students) chose pedagogical (nervous because speaking to the lecturer or having to give a presentation in front of the classroom) as the highest level of external factors in 67%. The absence of practice opportunities can impede language development and cause feelings of discomfort or distress during speaking activities, inside and outside of the classroom (Tanveer, 2007). Teaching and learning method that requires students to give a presentation in class, oral speech, and obligation for students to participate in classroom discussion might contribute to students' speaking anxiety. When they do not have any preparation before going to the class and lecturers ask them to do an oral activity suddenly without giving them time to think or discuss with other peers, their anxiety could be triggered which makes them silent because of the less preparation in forming the word or worried in case the lecturers or audience did not understand what they tried to convey.

According to Faqih (2024), the personality of the lecturers, classroom behaviors, and negative attitudes toward student errors or mistakes can provoke students' speaking anxiety. This could make the students question their skills or feel embarrassed because of their skills. Additionally, traditional teaching practices for instance that prioritize grammar, could contribute to students speaking anxiety. Lecturers often had a strong emphasis on how students need to have perfect grammar in speaking as students these days prioritize more understanding than structure in communicating a foreign language with others. This study has an implication for educators to bring a convenient atmosphere to the L2 classroom.

Table 11. Percentage of Responses of External Factors in Students' Speaking Anxiety

External Factors	Frequency	Percent
Pedagogical	64	67
Social-cultural	32	33
Total	96	100

4.4. Strategies Employed to Manage Speaking Anxiety

The last concern of this study is to see the strategy that the students used to reduce their speaking anxiety. This option of the answers was taken from Xiang (2023). Table 12 reveals that “practice by speaking the foreign language outside the classroom” was chosen as the highest response in 57% by 55 students as the strategy they used to manage their speaking anxiety, followed by “lecturers being encouraging and giving correction in a non-judgmental way” in 27% by 26 students. Fostering a harmonious and reassuring space can help minimize learners' anxiety when it comes to speaking (Xiang, 2023). Practising with peers in non-

classroom environments could help learners feel more at ease and less tense because they are aware that their peers will not show any negative reaction if the students make any mistakes in speaking. In the case of practising with their friends outside of the classroom, their anxiety lessens because they know that their friends are still in the process of studying just like them. So, if the students make any mistakes, their friends would most likely help correct their mistakes in a way that they would not feel intimidated or demotivated.

Besides practising outside of the classroom, the findings also revealed that lecturers were being encouraged and giving corrections in a non-judgmental way as other strategies for students to cope with their speaking anxiety. According to Horwitz et al. (1968), before lecturers deal with anxious students, they must first admit the existence of foreign language anxiety. After they are aware of the phenomenon, they can support anxious students by helping them learn how to cope with in-class situations or make the learning experience more engaging and less pressuring. Lecturers can create an interactive learning environment by utilizing media and technology such as online quizzes (*quizziz or kahoot*) or giving examples in the learning context of what is trending at that time so students can be more invested in the material they are learning. In addition, lecturers can also help reduce students' anxiety in oral activity in the classroom by giving them enough time to think about an answer to a question that the lecturers give. This could help students feel more prepared to answer a question than if lecturers directly asked or called them out suddenly.

Table 12. Percentage of Responses of Strategies in Managing Students' Speaking Anxiety

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Practice by speaking the foreign language outside the classroom	55	57
Lecturers being encouraging and giving correction in non-judgmental way	26	27
Share feeling of the same anxious with fellow students	10	11
Playing language games	5	5
Total	96	100

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored speaking anxiety levels, differentiation of speaking anxiety levels and speaking proficiency, contributing factors, and coping strategies among second-year and third-year students in an Indonesian EFL tertiary context. The findings indicate that the participants encountered low anxiety in speaking. Meanwhile, there was a profound effect of speaking proficiency on their speaking anxiety levels. The core reasons for students' speaking anxiety were fear of negative evaluation, internal causes by personality traits, and external factors by pedagogical instrument. Students who felt they were not good enough as their peers often hindered their speaking participation and self-confidence. Strategies used by students to minimize anxiety included self-practice outside the classroom and seeking non-judgmental support from lecturers. These approaches not only reduced stress because of anxiety but also contributed to the establishment of a more inclusive and motivating language learning setting.

Given the limitations of this study, future research could explore deeper into how personal qualities and the learning environment influence EFL learners' speaking anxiety, particularly examining personality traits, language learning beliefs, and cultural factors. Investigating different teaching methods, classroom activities, and student-led strategies such as relaxation exercises and positive thinking could help mitigate anxiety. Expanding the study to various academic levels and cultural backgrounds would provide a broader understanding, while mixed-methods research and diverse instruments could yield more comprehensive insights. Additionally, exploring factors like self-confidence and motivation could aid

educators in supporting learners, and sharing findings on social media could raise awareness, helping students manage anxiety and build confidence in speaking English.

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