



**Speaking Anxiety of English Department Students at
Universitas Islam Malang**



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ABSTRACT

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Language learning, particularly the acquisition of proficiency in a second language, is a complex and multifaceted process. Within the realm of English language education, one notable challenge faced by students is the phenomenon of speaking anxiety. The English language, often considered a global lingua franca, holds paramount importance in various academic and professional spheres. Therefore, understanding and addressing whether or not gender can impact speaking anxiety among English department students; and whether or not grade level differences can influence speaking anxiety are crucial for fostering effective language acquisition and communication skills.

This study employed a mixed method approach. In this investigation, the research was conducted with individuals hailing from the first and third semester cohort of the English Department at the Universitas Islam Malang. A total of 90 students, encompassing both male and female participants, were selected to constitute the sample for this study. The research employed purposive sampling. To ascertain whether or not gender and students in higher semester exhibit greater confidence and fluency in speaking English compared to those in the initial semester, two distinct research instruments have been devised for data collection. The instruments encompass the utilization of the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) questionnaire and an interview protocol.

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that female students exhibiting significantly higher anxiety levels than their male counterparts. It can be seen from the mean score of male students and female students is 68.0400 and 85.8000. The result makes it evident that female language learners experience heightened anxiety in the speaking class compared to males. Furthermore, for the second research questions related to the impact of gender on English speaking anxiety, the result of this study demonstrates statistically significant differences between grade levels. It can be seen from the mean score of first and third semester that is 62.7000 and 57.1000. It means that the anxiety level of the first-semester students was significantly higher compared to those of third-semester learners.

In conclusion, this study illuminates the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon and its impact on language learning and communication proficiency. Through comprehensive research and analysis, it becomes evident that speaking anxiety is a prevalent issue among English learners, affecting various aspects of their academic and social lives. Educators and language instructors must implement effective strategies and interventions to mitigate speaking anxiety and create a supportive learning environment conducive to language acquisition and confidence-building.

ABSTRAK

Jihad, Muhammad Syaiful, 2024. Kecemasan Berbicara Mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Malang. Tesis, Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Program Pasca Sarjana. Universitas Islam Malang: Pembimbing (1), Dr. Dzul Fikri, S.S., M.Pd

Kata Kunci: *Kecemasan berbicara, mahasiswa semester 1, mahasiswa semester 3*

Pembelajaran bahasa, khususnya perolehan kemahiran dalam bahasa kedua, merupakan proses yang kompleks dan memiliki banyak segi. Dalam bidang pendidikan bahasa Inggris, salah satu tantangan penting yang dihadapi siswa adalah fenomena kecemasan berbicara. Bahasa Inggris, yang sering dianggap sebagai lingua franca global, mempunyai arti penting dalam berbagai bidang akademis dan profesional. Oleh karena itu, memahami dan mengatasi apakah gender dapat berdampak pada kecemasan berbicara di kalangan mahasiswa jurusan Bahasa Inggris; dan apakah perbedaan tingkat kelas dapat mempengaruhi kecemasan berbicara sangat penting untuk mengembangkan penguasaan bahasa dan keterampilan komunikasi yang efektif.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran. Dalam penyelidikan ini, penelitian dilakukan terhadap individu yang berasal dari angkatan semester pertama dan ketiga Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Malang. Sebanyak 90 siswa, yang mencakup peserta laki-laki dan perempuan, dipilih untuk menjadi sampel penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menggunakan purposive sampling. Untuk memastikan apakah gender dan siswa di semester yang lebih tinggi menunjukkan kepercayaan diri dan kefasihan yang lebih besar dalam berbicara bahasa Inggris dibandingkan dengan siswa di semester awal, dua instrumen penelitian yang berbeda telah dirancang untuk pengumpulan data. Instrumen yang digunakan meliputi penggunaan kuesioner FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) dan protokol wawancara.

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa perempuan menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan yang jauh lebih tinggi dibandingkan siswa laki-laki. Hal ini terlihat dari nilai rata-rata siswa laki-laki dan siswa perempuan adalah 68,0400 dan 85,8000. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pelajar bahasa perempuan mengalami kecemasan yang lebih tinggi di kelas berbicara dibandingkan dengan laki-laki. Selanjutnya, untuk pertanyaan penelitian kedua terkait dampak gender terhadap kecemasan berbicara bahasa Inggris, hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan secara statistik antar tingkat kelas. Hal ini terlihat dari nilai rata-rata semester I dan III yaitu 62.7000 dan 57.1000. Artinya, tingkat kecemasan mahasiswa semester I jauh lebih tinggi dibandingkan mahasiswa semester III.

Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini mengungkapkan sifat multifaset dari fenomena ini dan dampaknya pada pembelajaran bahasa dan kemampuan komunikasi. Melalui penelitian dan analisis komprehensif, menjadi jelas bahwa kecemasan berbicara adalah isu yang umum diantara pembelajar bahasa Inggris. Hal ini mempengaruhi berbagai aspek kehidupan akademik dan sosial mereka. Pendidik dan instruktur bahasa harus menerapkan strategi dan intervensi yang efektif untuk mengurangi kecemasan berbicara dan menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang mendukung untuk akuisisi bahasa dan pembangunan rasa percaya diri.



CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an initial introduction aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the thesis, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent subchapters. Within this chapter, you will find the following elements: section 1.1 provides the research background, section 1.2 outlines the research problems, section 1.3 delves into the research objectives, section 1.4 discusses the research's significances, section 1.5 outlines the scope of the research and, and finally, section F presents definitions of key terms."

1.1. Research Background

Students studying English must possess a proficient mastery of the English language, encompassing both written and spoken proficiency (Kurniasih et al., 2020). Among the four fundamental abilities in the English language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, speaking is frequently regarded as one of the most crucial skills, playing a pivotal role in human life. It is often seen as the primary mode of communication for conveying meaning through the use of words. This significance can be attributed to the fact that humans have been using spoken language for communication long before the development of reading and writing abilities. This perspective aligns with Asyfa's et al., (2019) assertion that, among these four skills, speaking appears to be the most vital. Hence, it holds significant importance to excel in speaking skills, particularly in the context of English, which serves as a crucial means for global communication. English functions as the lingua franca, serving as the bridge language that facilitates communication between speakers of diverse languages worldwide. Badrasawi et al. (2020) also noted another benefit, emphasizing that proficiency in English enables individuals to effortlessly engage in communication and interaction with people from various parts of the world.

In the realm of English Language Teaching within Indonesia, the ability to speak is frequently employed as the primary point for evaluating the proficiency of an English learner. Individuals often assess someone's proficiency in English by their capacity to engage in oral communication. Individuals who embark on language

learning are typically expected to develop proficiency in speaking the target language. According to Batiha et al., (2016), speaking is regarded as a pivotal skill because the progress in language acquisition hinges on a learner's participation in oral activities. Bensalem (2021) has also asserted that the enhancement of English competence among students relies on their ability to master spoken English. In other words, the evaluation of students' English proficiency is closely linked to the quality of their speaking skills. Consequently, to determine whether students possess strong English language skills, they must be capable of showcasing their speaking abilities. Nonetheless, numerous students continue to grapple with speaking English or expressing their speaking prowess. This challenge is not limited to English language education majors, as many students within this field also experience feelings of insecurity when called upon to converse in English. A similar trend can be observed in various Indonesian industries, where assessing a candidate's English proficiency often involves a crucial English interview as a significant step in the recruitment process (Asysyfa et al., 2019; Tercan and Dikilitas, 2015). These industries primarily emphasize the assessment of speaking skills over other language abilities. This prevailing practice underscores the perception that English speaking proficiency is commonly regarded as a noteworthy language skill.

However, many language learners in Indonesia perceive speaking as a challenging skill to master. Learning to speak is a difficult task for students because they have to consider grammatical rules, vocabulary, and comprehension. Ali et al. (2020) stated that mastering English proves challenging due to its myriad rules encompassing pronunciation, intonation, fluency, tone of voice, stress, structural elements, word selection, and the effectiveness of communication. According to Brown and Lee (2015), speaking is often regarded as the most challenging skill to acquire due to its demand for proficiency in various aspects such as retrieving vocabulary, selecting appropriate grammatical structures, and possessing sociocultural competence. Speaking involves a combination of writing and listening skills, demanding a deeper understanding of grammar and the ability to apply this knowledge in real-time. Consequently, proficient English speakers must possess a sophisticated linguistic skill

set to effectively communicate orally (Fauzi et al., 2021; Tyana et al., 2021). Secondly, the challenge may stem from the limited exposure to spoken English in Indonesia. Language learners often struggle to practice their English in authentic settings, with most classroom activities offering only sporadic opportunities for English practice, and many students rarely using English outside the classroom due to a lack of everyday situations that necessitate its use. Additionally, anxiety appears to be a significant factor for English speakers (Yih et al., 2017). This condition is also showed by some data indicating that Indonesian learners still have a significantly low level of English proficiency. For instance, the 2018 English Proficiency Index, published by English First, a leading global institution for English language education, ranks Indonesia at the 51st position out of 88 non-English speaking countries in the world, indicating a “very low” level of adult English proficiency. This proficiency index serves a valuable purpose in providing general insights into the English-speaking proficiency of Indonesians (EF SET, 2022).

In the study conducted by Dansieh et al. (2021), it was found that there is a considerable number of students struggle with public speaking and find it daunting to engage in oral presentations. It is in line with Pristiyaputri et al. (2023) in which they stated that anxiety is an inherent element that cannot be circumvented in the process of learning. It typically surfaces in productive skills, particularly in speaking, as it represents one of the challenging tasks within the context of acquiring a foreign language. When asked to speak in English, these students often exhibit fear, nervousness, and even resistance, opting for silence. Speaking is often regarded as a challenging skill, and these challenges can significantly impact students' speaking abilities, especially when dealing with a foreign language. Additionally, speaking tends to provoke anxiety among students, particularly in a classroom setting. Many learners experience heightened anxiety when required to engage in speaking activities. In fact, speaking is widely recognized as the most anxiety-inducing language skill in foreign language contexts. These behaviors suggest that students are grappling with symptoms of language anxiety, a common occurrence in people's everyday lives (Daud et al., 2019; Ikhsaniyah, 2022; Sulfiani, 2020).

This issue can be attributed to several factors, namely psychological factor and linguistic traits. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), anxiety is a psychological issue among students that can have an impact on their willingness to engage in language practice. This anxiety encompasses sensations such as stress, nervousness, and worry when communicating in English, whether it be in monologues or dialogues with others. Individuals may experience nervousness and sweating when required to speak in English, including delivering English presentations in front of their peers. Moreover, Ahmetovic et al. (2020) has pointed out that anxiety poses a significant challenge to students learning a new language, impacting their language acquisition process and speaking performance. They emphasized that anxiety has garnered significant attention in language education settings as it represents a substantial hurdle that language learners must overcome. Mesri (2012) highlights that anxiety has been the focal point of extensive research in second language acquisition (SLA), and its absence plays a pivotal role in bolstering self-confidence.

Aside from the psychological factor, students also faced the problems in speaking are cause by linguistic competence. Research conducted by Matsuda and Gobel (2004) reveals a negative correlation between anxiety levels and proficiency in a second language, including academic performance in foreign language courses. In essence, higher levels of anxiety tend to coincide with lower levels of success in second language learning. Moreover, reduced anxiety is often reflected in a greater willingness to take risks and engage in more adventurous language-related activities. Furthermore, students tend to experience heightened anxiety when presented with questions or asked to perform in front of their peers due to their fear of making mistakes and thoughtless competence (Thamnu, 2017). These challenges in speaking proficiency can be attributed to linguistic competence issues, such as a limited vocabulary, poor grammar, difficulty in generating ideas for speech, improper intonation, and inappropriate pronunciation.

Moreover, the teacher's role in the teaching-learning process significantly impacts the development of students' speaking skills. However, teachers often fail to create opportunities for students to practice speaking extensively. Consequently,

students find it challenging to overcome difficulties related to both linguistic competence and psychological aspects. In reality, consistent language practice can gradually reduce anxiety, enabling students to address their linguistic competence issues (Ahmetovic et al., 2020). This statement suggests that individuals with anxiety tend to avoid activities that require them to communicate in a foreign language due to their fear of making errors and concerns about the associated risks.

There are many studies investigated the connection between gender and foreign language anxiety. For instance, Mohtasham and Farnia (2017) investigate whether or not EFL university students' gender differences affect their perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety. The study demonstrated that females exhibit significantly higher levels of anxiety compared to males during impromptu speaking activities. Moreover, the research conducted by Ali (2017) revealed that females exhibited higher levels of anxiety compared to males. Ahmetovic et al. (2020) research indicated that although there was an insignificant difference in motivation to speak English as a foreign language between males and females, gender significantly influenced foreign language classroom anxiety. Tien (2018) also reported that female learners encountered more English-speaking anxiety than their male counterparts. Moreover, Rabia (2010) stated that male students achieved higher academic results than their female peers. Females were also more inclined to openly express their feelings of anxiety, particularly in a female-dominated environment. Badrasawi's et al. (2020) research contended that the absence of a statistically significant difference in mean scores based on gender suggested that both male and female adult learners in the ESL/EFL context experienced nearly equal levels of speaking anxiety. This corroborated findings from other relevant studies indicating no gender disparity in speaking anxiety, like Matsuda and Gobel (2004) study, despite previous research suggesting a significant connection between gender and anxiety, revealed through MANOVA that gender had no significant effect as an independent variable on overall student anxiety. Nevertheless, gender did emerge as a noteworthy predictor of performance among first-year participants.

With all of the things in mind, this study investigated how genders impact the speaking anxiety of English department students; and whether or not the higher semester English department students have lower anxiety and fluent than the students who in the first semester. Brown and Lee (2015) posits that personality factors, such as gender, foreign language anxiety, shyness, willingness to communicate, and others, constitute integral components of affectivity crucial for achieving success in language learning. Additionally, Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) contends that gender, as a psychological factor, exerts influence on language learning and holds a significant role in foreign language acquisition. Several researchers, including Badrasawi et al., (2020); Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014); Tien (2018), have examined variations in anxiety levels between female and male language learners globally, yielding conflicting outcomes. Even though foreign language anxiety has recently been a focus among educators and investigators in the field of education, there are no broad examination of this term yet, particularly its connection to gender. This present research is deemed to be distinct from some aforementioned relevant studies because this study not only investigate how gender can impact foreign language anxiety of English department students, but also whether or not the higher semester English department students have lower anxiety and fluent than the students who in the first semester. Meanwhile, the majority of previous studies explained above investigated several causes as well as strategies in coping speaking anxiety of EFL university learners regarding the activities in the speaking class. Moreover, because most of the previous studies analysed the data quantitatively, in this recent study, the data are analysed using mix-method design to gather more in-depth data about the foreign language anxiety of English department students. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate foreign language anxiety to offer advantages to the learners, aiding them in managing their anxiety when speaking English as well as to assist educators in addressing English students who encounter anxiety when speaking and providing them with effective strategies to alleviate this issue.

1.2. Research Problem

In this part, the author presents the formulation of problem analysed, such as:

1. Does gender impact speaking English anxiety?
2. Do the third semester students have lower anxiety in speaking English than the first semester students?

1.3. Research Objectives

Re-count to the report of the problem above, the purposes of this study are:

1. To identify how genders impact the anxiety of speaking.
2. To investigate whether or not the third semester students have lower anxiety than the first semester students.

1.4. Research Significance

The current study is expected to have a positive impact on the English Department students, especially for students at the University of Islam Malang. Moreover, the aims of this study are to determine the student's anxiety when they speak English in public. The significance of this study is defined into theoretically, conceptually, and practically. Theoretically, the finding of this study supports previous studies in which gender and different grade level impact students' language anxiety. Conceptually, this study gives more insight about the essential of how gender and different grade level impact students' speaking anxiety. Practically, the significance of this study can be divided into some parts, namely:

1.4.1. For English Department Students

The findings of this research are expected to offer advantages to the learners, aiding them in managing their anxiety when speaking English.

1.4.2. For English Department

Reference of English department program, especially in speaking skill.

1.4.3. For Educators

The results of this research are expected to assist educators in addressing English learners who encounter anxiety when speaking, providing them with effective strategies to alleviate this issue.

1.4.4. For other Researchers

This study is envisaged to serve as a point of reference for future researchers seeking to delve deeper into the anxiety problems that students encounter while learning English or other languages.

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This study is limited to the investigation of the impact of gender on speaking English anxiety and whether or not the third semester of students are more confident and fluent than the students who in the first semester by using closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview. This study focuses on the first and third semester English Department students in Universitas Islam Malang. Moreover, limitations of this research could include various factors that may affect the generalizability and validity of the findings, they are:

1. **Sample Size and Composition:**

The composition of the sample does not represent broader university student population, leading to potential biases in the results.

2. **Demographic Variability:**

The research does not account for diverse demographics within each gender or grade level, such as cultural, socioeconomic, or academic differences, which could impact speaking anxiety differently. Furthermore, this study does not sufficiently address cultural variations in speaking anxiety, as different cultures may have distinct communication norms and expectations.

3. **Temporal Factors:**

The research does not consider changes in speaking anxiety over time. Anxiety levels may vary throughout the academic year or across different stages of university education.

4. **Methodological Issues:**

The methods used to measure speaking anxiety have limitations. For instance, self-report surveys may not capture the full complexity of the phenomenon, and social desirability bias could influence participants' responses.

5. **Extraneous Variables:**

Other factors, not considered in the study, could influence speaking anxiety, such as prior public speaking experiences, personality traits, or extracurricular activities.

6. **Research Design:**

The research design cannot capture the dynamic nature of speaking anxiety. Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how speaking anxiety evolves over time.

7. **Contextual Factors:**

The study does not account for differences in speaking anxiety across various academic contexts, such as presenting in different courses, disciplines, or in various types of speaking situations (formal presentations, group discussions, etc.).

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Speaking skill refers to the ability to produce and convey verbal messages effectively using a particular language. It is one of the four main language skills, alongside listening, reading, and writing. Speaking involves not only the pronunciation of words but also the organization of ideas, grammatical accuracy, and appropriate use of language in various social and cultural contexts.
2. Anxiety, in this context, refers to a feeling of apprehension, tension, or unease that individuals may experience in language-related situations. This can manifest in different ways and may have implications for language performance and communication.



Speaking anxiety, in the context of language learning, refers to the fear, nervousness, or apprehension that individuals may experience when required to speak in a particular language, especially in public or unfamiliar settings.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

After getting the findings and discussion in the previous chapters, some points about the impact of gender in relation to the speaking anxiety; and the level of speaking anxiety of first and third semester students in Universitas Islam Malang can be drawn and described in this chapter. The final chapter of this thesis covers two issues. Section 1 is the conclusion of the whole research. Section 2 presents the suggestion for students, teachers, and other researchers.

6.1 Conclusion

This investigation explored the effects of gender and grade disparities on the perceptions of English-speaking anxiety among university students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The findings disclosed that female language learners enrolled at Universitas Islam Malang exhibited a heightened level of apprehension in English oral communication when compared to their male counterparts. With respect to the observed trend of heightened anxiety among female students in contrast to their male counterparts when engaging in English discourse within the classroom, the study's results postulated that this phenomenon could be ascribed to a cultural characteristic prevalent in Asian societies.

A noteworthy revelation emerging from this study pertains to the indication that grade differences can impact the degree of English-speaking anxiety experienced by students at Universitas Islam Malang. The study's outcomes revealed that students in the first semester experience a greater degree of anxiety when speaking English in comparison to their counterparts in the third semester. First-semester students, characterized by limited exposure to English-speaking environments, undergo a process of adjustment to a novel academic and social milieu where English serves as the primary language of instruction. Conversely, third-semester students, having likely encountered more exposure to English through classes, interactions, and daily experiences, have developed a heightened familiarity with the language, contributing

to increased confidence in English oral expression. Novice learners, often marked by lower language proficiency, may experience heightened anxiety when attempting to communicate, with the fear of making errors or being misunderstood being more pronounced in the early stages of language acquisition. Through increased exposure and practice, students in the third semester have witnessed enhancements in their language skills, resulting in a greater sense of comfort in self-expression and the development of strategies to surmount linguistic challenges.

6.2 Suggestion

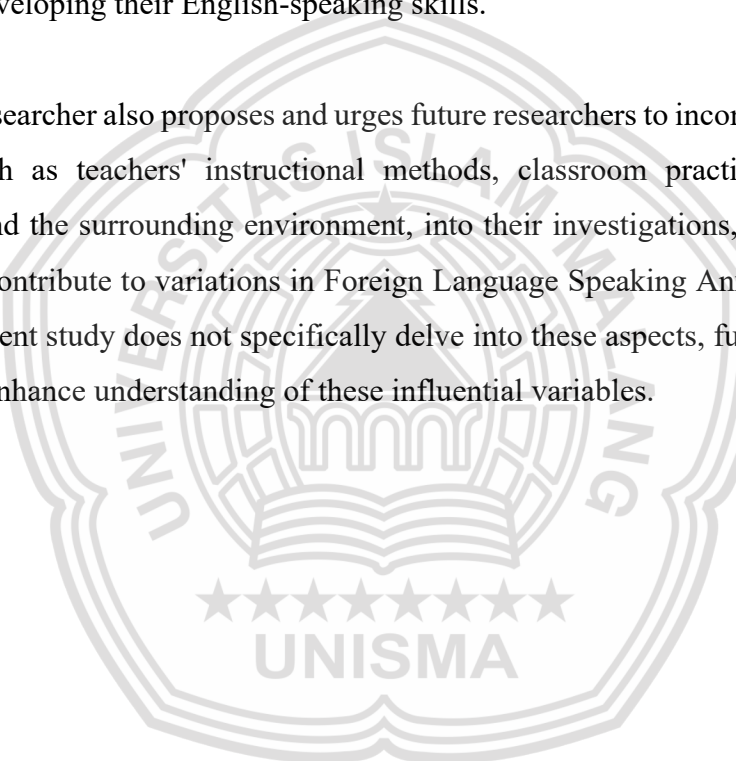
The findings of this study carry potential benefits for EFL educators and curriculum designers. Despite the communicative approach's emphasis on fluency in English classrooms, students exhibit reservations and concerns regarding grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, pronunciation, and communication clarity. Therefore, it is recommended that EFL educators adopt teaching and learning methods that concurrently enhance students' linguistic competence and performance. Additionally, given the study's results aligning with the trend observed in other studies, indicating higher anxiety among female students when speaking English in the classroom, Rahmi (2023) suggests attributing this to a cultural characteristic of Asian society. Consequently, language instructors are advised to consider both cultural factors and individual differences when addressing English-speaking anxiety among female students, offering emotional support and guidance within the EFL learning context.

Consistent with the study by Tercan and Dikilitas (2015), highlighting those Chinese students, driven by face-saving concerns and a reluctance to speak publicly, require more "wait-time" when communicating in English, similar circumstances are observed in the EFL classroom at Universitas Islam Malang. To foster English-speaking participation and mitigate apprehension, EFL teachers are encouraged to incorporate more English-speaking activities, emphasizing a student-centered learning environment. The study also reveals that supportive scaffolding by EFL instructors correlates with a reduction in learners' anxiety when speaking English, resulting in a

positive washback effect on English language teaching and learning for learners across both English and non-English majors.

While public speaking in English poses anxiety for many students, the researcher suggests that recognizing and overcoming this challenge can significantly enhance communication skills and boost confidence. Students are advised to establish achievable language goals, such as contributing at least one comment or question during a class or group discussion, and to enhance their use of English in various contexts and situations. Acknowledging progress and self-reward for overcoming challenges are further recommended, as positive reinforcement can motivate learners to continue developing their English-speaking skills.

The researcher also proposes and urges future researchers to incorporate critical variables, such as teachers' instructional methods, classroom practices, teachers' demeanour, and the surrounding environment, into their investigations, as these may significantly contribute to variations in Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA). While the current study does not specifically delve into these aspects, further research is advised to enhance understanding of these influential variables.



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