



An Analysis of Anxiety in Speaking Class Among Students at BEC Academy in Learning English

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Received: 2026-03-27 Revised: 2026 04-09 Accepted: 2026 05-18</p> <p>Keywords: Speaking Anxiety; EFL Learners; Teaching Strategies; Vocational Education</p> <p>DOI: 10.24256/ideasv14i1.10004</p> <p>Corresponding Author: Ni Ketut Mangku niketutmangku@gmail.com Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Buleleng, Bali</p>	<p><i>This research investigates speaking anxiety among students at BEC Academy, where oral communicative ability is highly associated with related to professional preparation. The study aims to evaluate (1) the level of students' speaking anxiety, (2) the factors contributing to their anxiety, and (3) the instructional strategies employed by the English instructor to reduce anxiety during speaking activities. A mixed method research design was implemented. Quantitative data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) administered to 19 students, while qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and semi structured interviews with selected students and the instructor. The findings reveal three main results. First, the majority of students experienced moderate speaking anxiety. Out of 19 students, 12 students (63.2%) were categorized as having a moderate level of speaking anxiety, 6 students (31.6%) were classified as having a high level of anxiety, only 1 student (5.3%) demonstrated a low level of speaking anxiety. Second, the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety include fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation, anxiety triggered by specific speaking tasks, influence of classmates, instructors and classroom atmosphere, self-confidence and negative self-perception, influence of past negative experiences, linguistics difficulties and language complexity, and external and situational factors. Third, this study found that the instructor implemented several strategies to reduce anxiety, including creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, providing positive reinforcement, using pair-based role play, providing scaffolding and structured preparation, applying delayed corrective feedback, and adjusting instructional tasks based on students' observable emotional responses.</i></p>

1. Introduction

Speaking is one of the most complex skills to develop in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Brown (2004) defines speaking as a two-way process of creating meaning which involves producing, receiving, and understanding information at the same time. In EFL context, students are required to have language proficiency, cognitive processing, and socio-affective readiness at the same time. Furthermore, speaking demands immediate language production. It means learners have to formulate ideas, retrieve vocabulary, construct grammatically appropriate sentences, and articulate pronunciation under time pressure.

From a cognitive perspective, Sweller (1988) stated that tasks involving simultaneous processing of multiple elements may overload working memory, particularly when learners experience performance pressure. Consequently, speaking performance depends not only on linguistic competence but also on learners' emotional and cognitive regulation. Besides, in EFL context, learners are largely dependent on classroom interaction as their primary means of practicing oral communication. This dependency increases students' anxiety when speaking which was due to students are being observed by other students and teachers. Previous findings also support that a lack of opportunities for authentic communication often contribute to learners' speaking anxiety and hinder their active participation in oral activities (Parasulu et al., 2023; Theriana, 2023).

Speaking anxiety is one of the main barriers to verbal communication, which includes fear of negative judgment, nervousness, and anxiety when tested (Horwitz et al., 1986). This condition not only increases students' "affective filters" (affective filters) that limit their ability to produce language effectively (Krashen, 1982), but also manifests in behaviors such as hesitation, avoiding eye contact, and reduced participation in class (Kurniawati & Lintangari, 2024; Nugroho & Hapsari, 2024). More than just the internal characteristics of the student, this anxiety is also strongly influenced by factors of the classroom environment and the teacher's instructional practices, such as teacher-focused methodologies or the correction of errors that are too frequent (Young, 1991).

Therefore, the right pedagogical approach, a supportive classroom environment, and constructive feedback from teachers have been proven to be able to significantly minimize anxiety and improve students' emotional responses in language learning (Wahyuni, 2023; Wirentake, 2025). To overcome this speaking anxiety, the implementation of effective learning strategies is crucial. Creating a non-threatening learning atmosphere, providing positive support, allocating sufficient preparation time, and implementing cooperative activities such as pairwork and role-playing have been proven to reduce pressure when performing because responsibilities are distributed among students.

In addition, the provision of directional help (scaffolding) through examples

of dialogue and lighter questions is also very helpful in reducing the burden of students' thoughts and doubts when practicing speaking. In this case, teacher creativity and student-centered teaching methods play an important role in designing engaging communication activities to break down these emotional barriers (Artini & Padmadewi, 2021; Padmadewi et al., 2024). Ultimately, these systematic and adaptive learning practices have been shown to have a positive impact on increasing students' confidence as well as active participation during classroom speaking tasks (Nuraeni et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2025).

2. Method

Research Design

This study uses a mixed-method research design because, according to Creswell (2014), this approach allows the integration of numerical data and narrative perspectives to produce much deeper interpretations than if using only one approach. Specifically, a quantitative approach was applied through a structured questionnaire adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) instrument of Horwitz et al. (1986) to measure students' anxiety levels statistically. Meanwhile, a qualitative approach is carried out through observation and interviews where the researcher acts as the main instrument, in line with the views of Merriam and Tisdell (2016), to explore the strategies and experiences of instructors in the classroom naturally. Furthermore, the qualitative data were analyzed using an interactive model from Miles, Huberman, and Saldan at (2014) which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The incorporation of these methodologies ensures a comprehensive understanding of how instructional strategies are implemented in the context of real vocational learning.

Research Participants

The subjects of this study were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of one English instructor and 19 EFL students majoring in housekeeping at BEC Academy. The selected instructor is the one regularly teaches speaking using role play methods, and has a one-year teaching experience. Similarly, the selected students consist of students who learn at least one month and have experience in speaking activities (such as presentations and role-playing), demonstrate varying levels of anxiety, and have willingness to participate. From the 19 students, only 6 participants were selected for the interview stage because they were specifically identified as having high levels of speech anxiety based on the results of the FLCAS questionnaire, so the subjects were considered the most appropriate to delve deeper into their anxiety triggering factors.

Data Collection Method and Research Instrument

To collect the quantitative data such as questionnaire, the researcher

employed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), which has been directly adopted and translated to Indonesian. The instrument consists of 33 Likert-scale items including both positively and negatively worded items measuring communication apprehension (11 items), fear of negative evaluation (5 items), and test anxiety/self-perception (15 items).

Students rated each statement on a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. To make sure consistency in scoring, positively worded items were reversed-coded during data analysis. Total scores were categorized into low, moderate, and high anxiety levels. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the overall anxiety level of the participants. Qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Four classroom observations were conducted to examine students' behavioral indicators of anxiety and the instructional strategies implemented by the instructor.

An observation sheet was used to document students' participation, non-verbal behavior, anxiety manifestations, and classroom interaction patterns. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students who demonstrated higher anxiety levels and with the instructor to gain deeper insights into contributing factors and anxiety reducing strategies.

Data Analysis

Method Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, while to analyze qualitative data, the researcher use theory from Miles et al. (2014), through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) score was calculated using a questionnaire containing 33 statements, where each statement was scored on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" (score 1) to "strongly agree" (score 5).

The total score of each student is accumulated by summing the scores of the entire statement, thus resulting in a possible total score range between 33 to 165. Furthermore, the calculated scores were categorized to determine the level of anxiety of students using the classification system proposed by Alshahrani and Alandal (2015). In this categorization, students who obtained a score in the range of 33–89 were included in the low anxiety category, the score range of 90–108 was classified as moderate anxiety, and a score of 109–165 indicated a high level of anxiety.

3. Result & Discussion

To address the first research question, the FLCAS was administered to 19 students enrolled in a speaking-focused vocational program. The instrument consisted of 33 Likert-scale items, with total possible scores ranging from 33 to 165. Based on the established classification criteria proposed by Alshahrani and Alandal

(2015), scores were categorized into three levels: low (33–89), moderate (90–108), and high (109–165).

The distribution of anxiety levels is presented in Table 1.

Anxiety Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	33–89	1	5.3%
Moderate	90–108	12	63.2%
High	109–165	6	31.6%

Table 1 Distribution of Students' Speaking Anxiety Levels (n = 19)

Table 1 shows that a significant portion of the student group, specifically (63.2%), total of 12 students, were categorized as experiencing a moderate level of speaking anxiety, scoring between 90-108, while 6 students (31.6%) scored between 109-165 falling into the high-anxiety category. Meanwhile, only 1 student (5.3%) demonstrated low anxiety levels, scoring between 33-89.

These results proposed that speaking anxiety is an important concern in this vocational EFL learning process. Further test through the FLCAS responses, through the mean score, fear of negative evaluation founded as the most frequently dimensions of students' anxiety. Many students mentioned that they felt anxious when being asked to speak in front of the class, they mostly worried about the possibility of making mistakes during their presentations. Quantitative data typically supports the idea that speaking anxiety is a major emotional aspect in this situation that affects how much students participate in class.

Factors Contributing to Speaking Anxiety

To address the second research question, qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations were analyzed. The 6 students that experienced high level of anxiety were specifically selected for the interviews. The findings reveal seven major factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety in this vocational EFL classroom which can be seen in table 2.

Factor	Description	Sample Student Comment
<i>Fear of Making Mistakes and Negative Evaluation</i>	Students were nervous about making mistakes in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary use.	"I am afraid of grammar and mistake in speaking. If I make mistakes, I feel embarrassed." S13
<i>Anxiety Triggered by Specific Speaking Tasks</i>	Oral presentations, spontaneous question-and-answer sessions, and unprepared speaking tasks were identified as one of the factors.	"I feel very nervous during presentations because everyone is looking at me." S7
<i>Influence of Classmates, Instructor, and Classroom Atmosphere</i>	The fear of being evaluated by the classroom environment and social interactions.	"When the teacher corrects me in front of the class, I feel more nervous and don't want to speak again." S15
<i>Self-Confidence and Negative Self-Perception</i>	Learners are not confident with their speaking ability.	"I don't believe in my speaking ability. I always feel that my English is worse than others." S13
<i>Influence of Past Negative Experiences</i>	Past experiences of being corrected publicly or receiving negative reactions contributed to ongoing anxiety	"I was corrected in front of the class before, and from that time I feel afraid to speak English. I am afraid of speaking again" S7
<i>Linguistic Difficulty and Language Complexity</i>	Limited vocabulary, difficulty constructing grammatically accurate sentences, and pronunciation challenges also contributed to anxiety.	"Sometimes I know what I want to say, but I don't know how to say it in English." S19
<i>External and Situational Factor</i>	Learner speaking in front of many classmates, classroom layout and limited response time increased their nervousness during speaking activities.	"When I have to speak in front of many people and within a limited time, I feel very nervous." S4

Table 2 Factors contributing Students' Speaking Anxiety

Instructor's Strategies to Reduce Students' Speaking Anxiety at BEC Academy

To answer the third research question, classroom observations and instructor interviews were analyzed to identify the instructional strategies employed to

reduce students' speaking anxiety. The findings reveal five major strategies consistently implemented in the classroom.

1. Creating a Supportive Classroom Atmosphere

In the process of speaking exercises in the classroom, the instructor prioritized the speaking itself over grammatical accuracy and the teacher always encourages the students to focus on meaning of the sentences rather than strict attention to sentence rules. On the other hand, in order to support the student's achievement, the teacher frequently using positive reinforcement, such as verbal praise including "Good," "Yes," and other similar affirmations. Furthermore, the instructor frequently encourages the students that errors are a part of learning and it is not a big problem in learning. The observational data explicitly functioned as a proof that this encouraging environment correlated with lower down the visible anxiety, especially in subsequent sessions. As the result, the students seemed more engage in speaking activities, even when their responses were not always entirely accurate.

2. Implementing Role Play as a Pair-Based Speaking Strategy

Role play was regularly implemented as a central instructional strategy. The instructor gave a condition in which the students worked in pairs to perform short dialogues and simulated hospitality-related scenarios, in which this strategy is a part of role play activity. This strategy gives the student a chance to share responsibility for exercise speaking rather than individually performance. From this strategy, it can be seen that the students demonstrated higher motivation and lower down the avoidance behaviors during pair-based role play activity comparing with their result in individual-response tasks. Even though that small act of hesitation was still found in some students, the overall participation is increased during collaborative speaking sessions. The together interaction appeared to be able to lower down the performance pressure and increase the students' confidence.

3. Providing Scaffolding to Support Speaking Performance

The instructor consistently provided structured support before asking students to speak. Scaffolding strategies included modeling example dialogues, supplying key vocabulary, offering guiding questions, and explaining task expectations clearly. Therefore, it is found that many students experience less anxiety as they feel more confident in expressing what they want to say and organize their ideas in English. Additionally, the observation data indicate that students' responses reported a higher coherence and fluency when scaffolding strategy was implemented. Giving a linguistics support through the students' exercise reported could decrease the cognitive pressure in learning and the speaking anxiety.

4. Using Question-and-Answer Techniques with Anxiety-Sensitive Response

Question-and-answer sessions were also used as part of speaking instruction. On the other hand, the instructor had been observed in employing an approach related to anxiety-sensitive in the classroom. In this strategy, the instructor gave the students chance to finish their statements before providing any feedback, instead of interrupting on their speaking to correct errors. Additionally, the correction that given by the teacher is more general and the teacher hold their chance to not mention the specific name of the students in front of the class. This correcting strategy helped maintain the confident of the students' during speaking English. Even a small hesitation still can be found in the classroom, the students seem doesn't avoid the participation in the classroom.

5. Adjusting Instruction Based on Students' Anxiety Levels

Next findings indicates that the instructor exhibited adaptability by doing modification on the instructional method in response to students' discernible emotional states or anxiety. When students expressed signs of hesitation, silence, or small sign of anxiety, the instructor start to alter the structure of the task given. The modification consisted of simplify the instruction, a longer chance to preparation or change the teaching interaction more into pair based rather than individual task. From the four observed meetings, a continuously reduction in visible signs of anxiety was noted. This result indicates that the ability of the teaching in flexible teaching strategies could help the students to engage their participation and support their emotional condition in every speaking activity in the learning process.

4. Discussion

The results of this research deliberate that speaking anxiety is an important matter in this vocational English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom setting. The quantitative data, such as the questionnaire implemented in this study revealed that most of the students experiencing a moderate level of speaking anxiety, with a considerable number exhibiting high anxiety levels. This observation results related with Horwitz et al (1986) theory of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) as a context dependent construct.

The idea that public speaking situations and the expectation of peer judgment are important sources of anxiety in EFL course is further supported by the widespread fear of receiving a poor grade. The qualitative findings further reveal that fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation were the most dominant contributing factors. This aligns with Horwitz et al's (1986) framework and is consistent with empirical findings by Kurniawati and Lintangari (2024) and Nugroho and Hapsari (2024), who reported that learners' fear of being judged for grammatical or pronunciation errors significantly increases speaking anxiety.

Even in the absence of explicit negative reactions, students perceived

speaking mistakes as embarrassing. This fear significantly reduced their willingness to participate voluntarily and increased hesitation before responding. In addition, task-related anxiety was particularly evident during individual response activities. Observation data indicated that spontaneous question-and-answer sessions triggered more visible anxiety behaviors than pair-based tasks.

This finding supports Young's (1991) argument that teacher-fronted questioning and whole-class performance may intensify learners' sense of exposure. Wahyuni (2023) similarly highlights that structured and supportive task design plays a critical role in reducing situational speaking anxiety. In contrast, structured collaborative activities seemed to reduce visible anxiety indicators. These findings suggest that task format strongly influences students' emotional responses. Another factor that contributes to speaking anxiety is social dynamics in the classroom which also played a significant role.

Some students felt intimidated by peers who were perceived as more proficient. Also, observation findings indicate that students were more relaxed when feedback was delivered in a non-threatening manner. This is also investigated by Hu (2025) that teacher classroom feedback played major role in speaking anxiety among students. Low self-confidence and negative self-perception emerged also as a key psychological factor. Many students expressed doubt about their speaking ability and frequently compared themselves to others.

This negative self-perception intensified anxiety, especially when students were required to speak in front of the whole class. Students categorized as having higher anxiety levels reported stronger feelings of inadequacy and lower willingness to communicate. This finding resonates with MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) model, which emphasizes the role of perceived competence in shaping communicative behavior.

Similar findings were reported by Theriana (2023) and Parasulu et al. (2023), who found that students' self-confidence strongly predicts their participation in collaborative speaking activities. Trauma from being humiliated, criticized severely after committing a mistake in speaking English in the past has been a contributor to learners' anxiety level. This could lead to students being less motivated to be involved in the English-speaking activities. The findings align with research by Horwitz et al. (1986) that stated that once the students are negatively evaluated and criticized, it may result in students being more hesitant to participate in any communicative activity in class.

Horwitz et al. (1986) in their research also found that learners are prone to experiences difficulties to communicate in English when they are limited to vocabularies and linguistic resources, which contribute to their high speaking anxiety. Learners find it hard to express their ideas fluently which according to Ratminingsih et al. (2018), this could lead to increasing nervousness and hesitation during speaking activities. Lastly, classroom conditions such as speaking in front of many classmates, classroom layout and limited response time increased students'

nervousness during speaking activities. These conditions created additional pressure that influenced students' confidence and participation when speaking English in the classroom. Ozdemir and Erten (2020) found that condition such as intensive error correction competitive speaking activities in classroom greatly contribute to higher anxiety level and a decrease in willingness to engage in speaking. Overall, all these factors in response to research suggest that students' anxiety level at BEC Academy is influenced by an interaction of internal psychological factors such as fear and confidence, linguistic challenges such as vocabulary restraint and language ability, and external classroom conditions.

Collectively, these factors play a significant role in overall experience of learners' anxiety level during English classroom speaking activities. This indicates the need to identify instructional strategies that can help mitigate learners' anxiety level, both emotional and linguistic aspect of oral performance tasks. Task-related anxiety was particularly evident during individual-response activities. According to the data gathered through classroom observation, the spontaneous question-and-answer sessions creating a new trigger for a more visible anxiety behaviors than pair-based tasks.

This finding gives an empirical support through Young's (1991) theory that stated that questioning strategy proposed by the teacher and performance by all of the students in the classroom may increase the learners' motivation of participation. Wahyuni (2023) similarly stated that that structured and supportive task design give a strong support in reducing situational speaking anxiety. The instructor's teaching strategies in this study could become an example on how classroom interventions could reduce students' speaking anxiety.

In order to create a supportive classroom environment, the teacher implement a positive reinforcement and accepting mistakes, supported by the theory from Young's (1991). Similarly, Artini and Padmadewi (2021), along with Padmadewi et al. (2024), found out that inclusive and emotionally supportive teaching approaches could help lower students' emotional barriers, which can help to encourage the students to participate in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class. In this study, it was found that pair-based role play enriches the objectives of collaborative learning.

The observation data revealed that role play implementation relate with theory from MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) that showed willingness of communicated affected by the decrease of speaking anxiety. Additionally, similar with the result in this study, Parasulu et al. (2023) judged that collaborative speaking structures influencing more relaxed and less-pressured communicative environments, thereby could press down the anxiety in public speaking apprehension. The use of scaffolding strategies such as modeling dialogues and providing preparation time, also give a strong support in decreasing the speaking anxiety of the students.

This result supported by a theory from Krashen's (1982) about Affective Filter Hypothesis which underlined the supportive instructional condition reduce

any active barriers and support the production of language of the students. Nuraeni et al. (2025) and Lestari et al. (2025) also give a support to this finding in which stated that structured preparation and speaking tasks with guidance has been seen give a positive contribution in reducing the pressure cognitive and anxiety during speaking performance. Additionally, the instructor strategies to give corrective feedback with a high consideration with the students' level of anxiety is an effective strategy to lower down the fear of negative evaluation.

By postponing the correction and avoid the public embracement, the instructor had been effectively reducing the fear of evaluation. Nugroho and Hapsari (2024) and Wirentake (2025) supported this finding by highlighting the importance of adaptive and reflective teaching strategy in managing students' emotional condition during speaking activities. From these findings, the data was supported by Young's (1991) theory that said speaking anxiety is a product from classroom environment and the other specific context when it happens.

The engagement of support in students' emotional condition, collaborative task design, scaffolding techniques and adaptive instruction demonstrates that speaking anxiety is not a fixed learning characteristics of an individual, it is related with the instructional method. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context such as in BEC Academy, the instructional method that function to decrease the speaking anxiety is really important to support a greater achievement and participation in speaking.

5. Conclusion

This study proposed to investigate the level students' speaking anxiety, factors that affected the anxiety and the instructional strategies implemented by the teacher to reduce it in BEC Academy. The first findings in this study indicate from the 19 students, 12 students (63.2%) were categorized as having a moderate level of speaking anxiety, 6 students (31.6%) were considered to have a high level of anxiety, only 1 student (5.3%) demonstrated a low level of speaking anxiety. The dominant dimensions of speaking anxiety that has been identified through the FLCAS responses was fear of negative evaluation; it can be seen from students' nervousness when they need to speak in front of classmates and their fear about making mistakes.

The next qualitative findings found out seven major factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety such as fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation, anxiety triggered by specific speaking tasks, influence of classmates, instructors and classroom atmosphere, self-confidence and negative self-perception, influence of past negative experiences, linguistics difficulties and language complexity, and external and situational factors. The data for these findings showed that psychological condition and external factor in the classroom collaborate with each other to create the emotional response of the students.

The last result in this study is in response to these factors of anxiety expressed

by the students, the instructor implemented five main instructional strategies to reduce speaking anxiety such as creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, implementing pair-based role play, providing scaffolding before speaking tasks, applying anxiety-sensitive corrective feedback during question-and-answer sessions, and adjusting instructional practices based on students' observable anxiety levels.

Observation findings demonstrate that these strategies were associated with increased student participation and a gradual reduction in visible anxiety indicators across classroom meetings. Observation findings demonstrate that these strategies were found to be associated with increased student participation and a gradual reduction in observable indicators of anxiety across classroom meetings.

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