

Exploring the Role of Speaking Anxiety in Non-Native English Speakers' Communication Skills

Francissa Isaiah Danielle S. Colon¹, Jesenie D. Alcalá², Nina Hyscent E. Beduya³, Joan J. Vasquez^{4*}

^{1,2,3,4}Sto. Tomas College, Danao City, Cebu, Philippines

Abstract: This research aims to explore the role of speaking anxiety among the non-native English speakers' communication skills. This study also aims to determine the role of speaking anxiety to the communication skills of non-native English learners, as well as the coping mechanisms and strategies used by the participants to overcome this speaking anxiety. In light of this, the researchers intended to determine what their experiences are in learning and speaking the English language and assess the factors that affect these experiences. Purposive sampling was used for choosing participants in the study. This study used a qualitative approach with the use of semi-structured interview that explore the speaking anxiety of non-native English speakers' communication skills. The study was conducted in Sto. Tomas College, Danao City, Inc. An educational institution in Danao City, Cebu. Twenty first-year college students whose native languages were not English were the respondents of this study. Based on the data gathered, the results highlight the factors like fear of judgement and pressure, the impact of anxiety to their speaking skills as well as the ways to cope with the anxiety in speaking the English language. This study will help people achieve an understanding of the experiences of the non-native English speakers and how their anxiety gravely affects their communication skills.

Keywords: Communication skills, coping mechanism, factors, impact non-native, speaking anxiety.

1. Introduction

Communication is important in our everyday living. Speaking involves two or more people who make two-way communication; it is one of the language skills in everyday life used for communication. In today's globalized world, communication often requires knowing more than one language. English, in particular, has become a global language that connects people from different countries and cultures. It is the primary language used in international business, science, technology, and diplomacy, (International Language Center, 2024). English learners consider speaking as the most important language skill to be mastered since English is in a powerful position as a medium for international communication (Crystal, cited in Akkakoson, 2016). However, speaking in a foreign language could be influenced by psychological aspects: anxiety and self-confidence. Speaking skills has its components to be mastered by English learners. Thus, it is inevitable that components may evoke anxiety in speaking. According to Brown (2000), anxiety is characterized as a mental state

associated with feelings of unease, frustration, self-doubt, or worry. This emotional condition fosters sensations of inadequacy, hesitation, depression, and threat (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

In the case of the Philippines, English is classified as a secondary language (Kirkpatrick & Deterding, 2011), primarily used for official partaking in administration, law, business, education, media, etc. It is also recognized as one of the two official languages of the country, the other of which is Filipino. This status of English in the Philippines as a secondary language corresponds to the Outer Circle classification in Kachru's Circles of English model (Schneider, 2011). English is one of the country's official languages and is used as a medium of instruction in education, with more than 14 million Filipinos using it (Cabigon, 2015). However, the study by Blas et al. (2018) revealed that self-confidence and self-esteem contribute to the success of learning the language. Therefore, the students' performance in the classroom setting may depend on the level of their self-esteem and self-efficacy. Despite learning English for many years in school, students cannot communicate in English effectively. Filipino students are less successful in learning English than expected. In other words, learning and using English as a second language remains a challenging task (Ying et al., 2021). For instance, the Philippines had the lowest reading comprehension in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). This shows that speaking anxiety among non-native English speakers remains a significant challenge in fully mastering the language. The proficiency in the Philippines is weakening due to the Filipinos declining mastery of competencies in the English language, especially in oral communication.

Anxiety in the foreign language classroom is experienced by almost all students (Asih, 2012; Zulueta et al., 2023). As stated by J. Cantal (2022), it significantly revealed that, as the score of the respondents in self-administered self-esteem scale increases, their scores in self-administered Public Speaking Class Anxiety scale decreases. Thus, as the respondents tend to have high levels of self-esteem, their level of Public Speaking Class Anxiety gets lower. There is a negative correlation between respondent's level of self-esteem and level of public speaking anxiety. As the level of self-esteem gets higher, the level of public speaking anxiety of the respondent's gets lower. At present time, non-native English speakers continue to face

*Corresponding author: joanyang13@gmail.com

struggles due to speaking anxiety. In light of this, the researchers intended to determine what their experiences are in learning and speaking the English language and assess the factors that affect these experiences. This study will help people achieve an understanding of the experiences of the non-native English speakers and how their anxiety gravely affects their communication skills.

A. Literature Review

1) *On Factors Contributing to Speaking Anxiety Among Non-Native Speakers*

Speaking anxiety can take a variety of factors, which greatly hinders students' ability to engage in oral activities. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, (1986) discovered that foreign language anxiety sourced from three factors: Communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety are all factors to consider. Some students tend to hinder their ability to avoid unimagined responses or acts when they are unable to perform speaking fluently. Park and Lee, (2005) emphasized that confidence is one of the personal factors associated with anxiety. The students are hesitant to communicate in a second or foreign language, particularly when it comes to skills that require direct responses (listening and speaking). Du (2009) emphasized that students who can manage and have a strong sense of self-confidence can deal with any situation in the classroom. Students with a lack of self-confidence are unable to control their performance in the classroom because they avoid making any errors that are part of the learning process. Mohamed Noor, Rafek, Megat Khalid, and Mohammad (2015) highlights that students' communication apprehension is one of the causes of their speaking difficulties. Shyness is generated by fear or anxiety about communicating with others and is linked to communication apprehension. Communication apprehension arises in language learning from personal issues of the learner when they encounter difficulties in the learning process. They struggle to understand the utterances or to make others understand what they were talking about. Communication anxiety is known as a problem with interpersonal communication ability. When a learner is afraid to talk it has less control over how they respond to communicative situations. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) highlighted that when students are worrying about making mistakes and feeling humiliated, it indicates that they are not achieving the target language. So, some students tend to hinder their ability to avoid unimagined responses or acts when they are unable to perform speaking fluently. Park and Lee, (2017) emphasized that confidence is one of the personal factors associated with anxiety. Thamnu (2017), Hutabarat and Simanjuntak (2019), and others identified internal factors as significant contributors to speaking anxiety. Internal factors include learners' personality and proficiency. Personality characteristics of learners such as fear of making mistakes, self-inferiority, pressure, high ambitions, and negative attitudes towards English significantly impact learners confidence and comfort in speaking the language. To add, lack of proficiency, specifically in grammatical accuracy, knowledge, vocabulary and pronunciation factors that contribute to anxiety. That most of

the non-native English speakers experience anxiety as they find it difficult to find the right words, use correct grammar and pronounce words accurately, leading to speaking anxiety. Similarly, Daud »et al.« (2019) reported that social, linguistic, and personal factors contribute to speaking anxiety. Thus, it is essential to highlight that speaking anxiety potentially makes English Foreign Language (EFL) learners feel reluctant to speak in the target language. Chiu »et al.« (2016); Kurakan (2021); Tanveer (2007) state that a significant factor that contributes to the speaking anxiety of the students is limited vocabulary. This factor affects the ability of the learners to communicate effectively using the English language. It also shows their anxiety when speaking the language, especially when they're communicating. Studies reveal that a considerable percentage of learners' struggle with vocabulary, leading to disruptions in conversation and heightened anxiety in classroom settings Sha'ar & Boonsuk, (2021). According to Valdez (2018) and Labicane (2021) anxiety is a universal issue among language learners that external pressures, competition, proficiency levels and teacher engagement significantly contribute to speaking anxiety. In addition, grammatical difficulties play a crucial role in speaking anxiety that the learners often find it difficult to construct grammatically correct sentences which can lead to performance anxiety. Psychological and physical signs are common results of fear of speaking, according to Sutarsyah (2017) and Altun (2023), causing students to avoid speaking scenarios and impacting their self-assurance and abilities. A study by Emerald and Farid (2024) and Mukminin and Arif (2015) reported that the students felt anxious when speaking English because of a lack of vocabulary and grammar, fear of negative responses and being evaluated, low self-esteem to speak in English, and teacher-centered style.

2) *On the Impact of Speaking Anxiety has on the Communication Skills of Non-Native English Speakers*

According to Chen & Chang's (2004) research shows that anxious students produce fewer words during class performances, leading to mental block and pressure to learn English due to fast vocabulary and grammar teaching. According to Vitasari et al (2010), learners who have anxiety can result in poor educational achievement and poor communication skills that can hinder learners' growth. This can lead to struggling in organizing thoughts, keeping focus and expressing opinions and ideas. Learners who fear judgment can cause long-term distress, limiting career development and personal growth. Also, a slow learning environment can hinder personal growth and progress. Basic (2011) further indicates that anxious learners tend to be passive and quiet in class. In addition, high levels of anxiety can lessen students' belief in themselves, further affecting their academic performance. Thus, it shows the weakening impact of anxiety in communicating effectively in real scenarios. Similarly, Ormrod et al. (2016) emphasize that anxious learners face numerous challenges in global educational settings, including difficulties in paying attention in class and expressing what they have learned. Raja (2017) stated that anxiety is a state of foreboding of fear caused by the expectation of things that can be

threatening. Students who felt anxiety while speaking in front of the class had encountered difficulties in language and reduced their self-confidence and they made mistakes in their speech. Anxiety reduces motivation among language learners, as confirmed by Kankam & Boateng (2017) and Al Majali (2020), who found that the impact of anxiety extends beyond academic performance, affecting the enjoyment of lessons and social activities. Similarly, N.A. Zuhri *et al.* (2022) note that the impact of speaking anxiety on students' learning process is low motivation to learn in a foreign language. Kankam & Boateng (2017) and Kumar (2018) have reported that anxiety affects EFL learners' performance, leading to inconsistencies in their speaking skills. Harahap & Rozimela (2022), noted that students with high levels of speaking anxiety often struggle to think clearly, resulting in mistakes during speaking tasks. It results in a negative impact on students by causing them to blank, stammer, be afraid, nervous, and stumble. According to M. Altun (2023) language anxiety is a usual problem among learners who are learning the language, frequently leading to lack of proficiency in the target language. It can reduce motivation, decrease competency and lessen participation in classroom performances, especially when students who are fluent in speaking English will dominate the class.

3) *The Coping Mechanisms do Non-Native English Speakers Use to Manage Speaking Anxiety During Communication*

The coping mechanisms do non-native English speakers use to manage speaking anxiety during communication Study among English learners in Indonesia by Netta *et al.* (2020) found that the students utilized various strategies such as preparation, practice, and incorporating hand and body movements when delivering a speech to manage their speech anxiety. Similarly, Akramy (2020) found out that Afghan students utilized strategies such as watching videos of English speakers and engaging in physical exercises. Such as deep breathing before participating in classroom activities. In addition, the use of body language and maintaining eye contact while practicing oral communication are said to be one of the core strategies in order to alleviate the speaking anxiety of the learners. Moreover, according to the study by Shamsuri *et al.* (2021) in Malaysia had found out social media, in particular with YouTube, had contributed in expanding the vocabulary and the understanding of language structures. By seeing English speakers in films, students were able to control their speaking fear and advance their language skills. The students find benefits from observing the English language speakers in videos, which also helps them to manage their speaking anxiety and improves their proficiency in the English language. According to Manquidato (2021), the participants can manage their anxieties by employing effective coping strategies. By just taking the initiative to use the supportive resources, by writing down their thoughts, confronting their shyness and seeking constructive feedback from others, they can be able to address their anxiety related to speaking English. This proactive approach and the willingness to learn, have reduced their anxiety levels. Helping them boost their confidence especially in enhancing their English language speaking skills. Their self-directed methods can also positively influence their

motivation, attitude, and self-assurance. Moreover, Nur and Baa (2022) identified the several strategies being used by the Indonesian EFL students to overcome their speaking anxiety, and that includes good preparation, seeking support from peers, maintaining calmness, and practicing English at home. Theriana (2023) it was stated that the strategies such as practicing positive self-talk, making a visualization, or practice preparation, as well as learning to foster a good supportive environment that employs emotional regulation techniques that contributes to manage the speaking anxiety effectively as well as to enhance the speaking proficient among ESL learners.

B. *Research Questions*

This study aims to explore the role of speaking anxiety among the non-native English speakers' communication skills. To attain the objectives of this study, this research aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main factors that contribute to the speaking anxiety among non-native English speakers?
2. In what way does the speaking anxiety impact their communication skills?
3. What are the strategies or coping mechanisms used to deal with their speaking anxiety?

2. Methodology

A. *Research Design*

This study employed qualitative research design which allows participants, particularly those with seldom heard viewpoints, to express their experiences. Nassaji (2020) stated that this design seeks to understand and explore rather than to explain and manipulate variables. This research aims to determine the role of speaking anxiety to the communication skills of non-native English learners, as well as the coping mechanisms and strategies used by the participants to overcome this speaking anxiety. Purposive sampling was used for choosing participants in the study. Purposive sampling is 'used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). The reasons for adopting a purposive sampling strategy are based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of the study, specific kinds of people may hold different and important views about the ideas and issues at question and therefore need to be included in the sample (Mason, 2002; Robinson, 2014; Trost, 1986).

B. *Sample/Participants*

This study was conducted in Sto. Tomas College, Danao City, Inc. An educational institution in Danao City, Cebu. Twenty First-Year college students whose native languages were not English were the respondents of this study. The target participants were Non-native speakers studying in this institution provided that they are enrolled in any English course at the time of the interview. Purposive sampling was used for choosing participants in this study. Participants in the study were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent

will be sought accordingly.

The respondents of this study were First Year College students who meet the following criteria:

- Students who are Non-native English speakers
- Students who use English more frequently, both in and out of school, but still rely heavily on their native language.
- Experienced anxiety in speaking English

Students who meet the inclusion criteria were eligible to participate in the study.

C. Instrument(s)

This study used a qualitative approach with the use of semi-structured interviews that explore the speaking anxiety of non-native English speakers' communication skills. Open-ended questions were asked to the respondents regarding their experiences in speaking anxiety and its impact on communication. Each interview was performed separately, and the researchers employed audio recording to obtain an accurate transcription of the data. It allowed the researchers to acquire in-depth information and evidence from interviewees while considering the focus of the study (Mashuri, et. al, 2022). On top of that, this style of interview enables comparisons between respondents as well as the ability to spot any emerging patterns or themes.

D. Data Collection Procedures

The researchers wrote a letter to the school president and school program head at Sto. Tomas College-Danao City, Inc. (STC-D), to ask permission to proceed with data collection within the school premises. After that, the researchers secured an informed consent to the respondents to ensure that their identity and all data collected were kept confidential and private. Then, the researchers started to gather the data. The researchers explained the study's purpose. The interview was carried out using appropriate questions adopted from related research and questions created by the researchers. Given that the questions are open-ended, the respondents elaborated on their experiences. The data collected were examined to identify themes and patterns about the impact of speaking anxiety in communicating effectively.

E. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, specifically Braun and Clark's Data Analysis Process, was also used to analyze the data in the qualitative phase to identify recurring patterns or themes related to feedback and speaking anxieties (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method consisted of six phases: (1) familiarization of data; (2) generation of codes; (3) combining of codes into themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) determining the significance of themes; and (6) writing up and reporting of findings, and the answers will be recorded for data accuracy. The collected data was instantly transcribed after collection in order to identify themes or patterns about the role of speaking anxiety in communication skills. Using the themes found, the researchers then produced an in-depth account of the phenomenon under study. An in-depth understanding of the study about the phenomenon was possible from this explanation. To make sure that the themes

are supported by the data and that nothing has been missed, they return to the data at the end. It's crucial to uphold objectivity and transparency throughout the analysis process by keeping a thorough record of the decisions and justifications made.

3. Results

Speaking anxiety is prevalent among non-native English speakers and is caused by factors such as fear of judgement and pressure during high-stakes situations. As a result, their communication skills are impacted which makes them less confident, trembling, and have a mental block. This anxiety can be mitigated through the different coping mechanisms such as video tutorials, practice, self-conditioning, exposure and interaction. This study highlights the role of speaking anxiety in non-native speakers' communication skills.

This section presents the themes generated from data analysis on how speaking anxiety affects the non-native speakers' communication skills and the factors contributing to it. To support these themes, representative quotes from the respondents' answers were included. Based on these responses, it is obvious how speaking anxiety impacts communication skills and how different coping mechanisms help in managing this anxiety. Below is a detailed analysis of the key themes that emerged from the responses.

A. What are the Main Factors that Make you Feel Anxious when Speaking English?

1) Fear of Judgement

The theme the Fear of Judgement emerged during the data analysis. According to Dr. Hannah Rose (2022), feeling fearful of negative evaluation by others causes a speaker to focus on their awkward appearance or the number of long gaps in their speech. They are likely to perform worse when fear of negative evaluation or high levels of anxiety are present. Poor presentation was then noted to cause observers to develop negative feelings towards the performer, worsening their feelings of rejection. This instigated a vicious cycle of worsening anxiety and performance. Leong and Ahmadi (2017) also highlighted that when students are worrying about making mistakes and feeling humiliated, it indicates that they are not achieving the target language. So, some students tend to hinder their ability to avoid unimagined responses or acts when they are unable to perform speaking fluently.

"During that time, I have a lot of what-ifs, like what if I *mispronounce* the word or cannot say the next word, and they will *make fun of me*." (Respondent #7)

"... my weakness is.. when *someone judges me* and I cannot handle myself to face everyone because *I fear their judgment towards me* then I feel so nervous, and I cannot feel hope for myself." (Respondent #9)

"In front of my classmates, especially when I'm reporting. Every time the teacher is around, I really feel nervous because I fear that I'll make mistakes, then we also have a classmate who speaks English well so I'm afraid of making mistakes and *being mocked afterwards*." (Respondent #15)

"Some people will *look down on you* and if you make a mistake, people will *have a lot to say and mock you*."

(Respondent #4)

"I think.. they cannot communicate very well and.. they are afraid to express their ideas and opinions using the English language because they *are afraid to be judged*." (Respondent #12)

These responses emphasize the concerns of being judged and mocked by peers, teachers or a native English speaker hindering them to learn, make progress and develop their communication skills. This fear of making mistakes makes the learner reluctant to speak, participate and avoid social interactions in the class worrying about how others perceive and evaluate them. Overall, the answers show that fear of being judged in speaking English language is one of the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety and is one of the reasons that the learners are hesitant to participate and speak in front of people. It also decreases one's self-look and shows vulnerability to learning that concerns them about criticism, rejection or feeling inadequate.

2) Pressure and High-Stakes Situations

Another theme emerged is Pressure and High-Stakes Situations. Ormrod et al. (2016) emphasize that anxious learners face numerous challenges in educational settings, including difficulties in paying attention in class and expressing what they have learned. Raja (2017) stated that anxiety is a state of foreboding of fear caused by the expectation of things that can be threatening. Students who felt anxiety while speaking in front of the class had encountered difficulties in language and reduced their self-confidence and they made mistakes in their speech. According to Leyaley (2023), it has been observed that learners remain passive and silence occurs when students are encouraged to explain themselves and share their ideas by using the English language. Sometimes they even ask if they can share their ideas using their own dialect or in a language that they feel confident to use like the Philippine national language, Filipino.

"For example, during our *graduation*, I was assigned to do the pledge of loyalty, so I felt more anxious at that moment because there were a lot of people watching me. (Respondent #15)

"I think that was during *my interview*, and my interviewee is a professional, and then at that moment, I *felt pressured*, and she spoke English well, and it's hard for me to understand." (Respondent #3)

"I would rather speak Cebuano or Filipino rather than in English because I feel *pressured*. I just stay silent, especially in *oral recitations*." (Respondent #10)

"I cannot do my best because I feel anxious when I'm *facing a crowd*. And I cannot speak directly especially if it is a hard topic because I need to think more. That's why I feel so *nervous and pressured*." (Respondent #9)

"Let's say for example, in school... I was *tasked to host* our Junior and Senior High School *promenade*. But it usually depends on the situation that I am in. Especially in big events like when I hosted in school. I was *anxious and pressured* at that time, because I was afraid of being judged. (Respondent #11)

The responses show that the respondents have fear of making

mistakes due to pressure in a classroom or formal setting. One can feel nervous and pressured when speaking in front of many people. This situation leads them to experience speaking anxiety when communicating in English. Overall, their responses indicate that they feel anxious and pressured when speaking English because they are afraid of negative evaluation. They are capable of managing, but they lose confidence due to the fear of being judged by others, which creates pressure. It is possible to feel pressured and nervous.

B. How do you Think Your Anxiety Affects Your Ability to Communicate Effectively in English? can You Recall a Time when Your Speaking Anxiety Interfered with Your Ability to Express Yourself Clearly?

1) Lack of Confidence and Self-Doubt

One of the emerging themes is the Lack of Confidence and Self-Doubt. Park and Lee (2005), emphasized that confidence is one of the personal factors associated with anxiety. The students are hesitant to communicate in a second or foreign language, particularly when it comes to skills that require direct responses (listening and speaking). Du (2009) stated that students who can manage and have a strong sense of self-confidence can deal with any situation in the classroom. According to Fritriana, et al. (2020), lack of self-confidence can be made-up of several different aspects such as guilty feeling, shyness turned inward, unrealistic expectations of perfection, false sense of humility, fear of change or making mistakes, depression, etc. Students with a lack of self-confidence are unable to control their performance in the classroom because they avoid making any errors that are part of the learning process.

"It lowers *my self-confidence and my trust in my abilities* because I am scared to communicate." (Respondent #11)

"The biggest impact is that they don't communicate properly in class, especially English majors, so even if you're an English major, you'll... be behind others who speak fluently because you only know Cebuano and if a teacher asks questions, they are *hesitant and embarrassed to answer* in English." (Respondent #19)

"It makes *us lose our self-confidence* that can lead to *avoidance* in speaking English. Some people degrade others that cannot speak English properly. ...because of that, we do not have the confidence to express ourselves using English and fear to speak using the language." (Respondent #6)

The responses show that a lack of confidence can have a significant impact on speaking, making people hesitant and embarrassed to communicate especially in English language. Overall answers indicate that anxiety about communication reduces people's belief in their own capabilities resulting in fear and lack of self-confidence. Mohamed Noor, Rafek, Megat Khalid, and Mohammad (2015) highlights that students' communication apprehension is one of the causes of their speaking difficulties. Shyness is generated by fear or anxiety about communicating with others and is linked to communication apprehension. It is one of the reasons why students felt hesitant to participate in class discussion resulting in creating an educational gap in which even individuals

studying English feel overshadowed by classmates who speak the language more fluently. Individuals' hesitation to communicate verbally is made harder by societal pressure, this environment promotes a cycle of avoidance in which students stop from practicing the language, resulting in a major lack of self-confidence and an inability to express themselves effectively in English.

2) *Physiological Effects (Trembling, Freezing)*

Another recurring theme is the Physiological effects, specifically trembling and freezing. According to Weber (2008), feelings of numbness are often accompanied with trembling, and can also be the result of the intense feelings of anxiety that occur during a panic attack. If the students themselves do not believe that they are able to speak, it has become a big problem for them. As Lawtie (2004) stated that speech difficulties can be affected by a person's emotional state, speech is often clearer when a person is feeling confident and relaxed, and this is one of the most important factors to consider when communicating with people who have speech difficulties.

"For example, when I am going to present in front, I *tremble* and forget what I am going to say." (Respondent #8)

"I always observe that I'm *trembling* even though I haven't even begun to talk because I'm so nervous. If I'm in the... actual situation it would be difficult for me to explain because of the nervousness" (Respondent #16) "Another thing is that every time I speak in front of the class and our instructor, I *freeze* and feel nervous. Knowing that I am facing many people, and some speak English very well, I become anxious." (Respondent #14)

"I think if I were to rate it 1-100, it would be like around 75 because I'm the type of person that, while talking, *stutters* and *trembles*, I get nervous." (Respondent #2)

According to the answers given by the respondents, they also feel a terrible physiological impact through nervousness and anxiety when communicating in public, especially in English. All the participants feel nervous and anxious when they are speaking in public, and this hinders their capacity to communicate well. The participants also mention being anxious in speaking in front of others who will possibly speak English more fluently, implying a fear of being watched or assessed. These physiological consequences and emotional reactions indicate that the respondents feel in public speaking anxiety, an all-too-common circumstances. This anxiety can disrupt their ability to communicate properly, contributing to lowered confidence and self-esteem.

3) *Cognitive Effects (Mental block, Stuttering)*

Cognitive Effects such as Mental Block and Stuttering, also emerged during the data analysis. Many individuals face challenges when it comes to speaking English fluently, especially if it is not their native language. This can lead to mental blocks that impede progress in language learning (Nurizmi, et al, 2023). According to Udoagwu (2022), A mental block is a psychological obstacle or limiting mindset that prevents you from completing important tasks and achieving success. Mental blocks are invisible barriers standing in the way of your productivity. Harahap & Rozimela (2022), noted that students with high levels of speaking anxiety often struggle to

think clearly, resulting in mistakes during speaking tasks. It results in a negative impact on students by causing them to blank, stammer, be afraid, nervous, and stumble.

"For example, when I am going to present in front, I tremble and *forget what I am going to say*." (Respondent #8)

"I think if I were to rate it 1-100, it would be like around 75 because I'm the type of person that, while talking, *stutters* and *trembles*, I get nervous." (Respondent #2)

"..I cannot focus then I also forget what I'm going to say." (Respondent #16)

"Sometimes I... *forget what I'm going to say*, especially when I'm speaking in English." (Respondent #10)

"In my case, I *stutter* when I feel anxious every time I try to communicate." (Respondent #9)

The respondents specify that anxiety and nervousness can affect their cognitive abilities as a learner, it includes their intellectual capabilities, their concentration or focus as well as their speech fluency. It was also indicated that there are numerous learners who have stated that these signs of r symptoms like shaking, stuttering and as well as forgetfulness in every conversation, especially in communication or particularly in every serious situation like class discussion or in giving a PowerPoint presentation in the class and also in speaking in a foreign language into people who are naturally English language speakers. This response implies that anxiety can result in negative effects towards the learners. Not only in Physical health but also in the mental health of the learner that can hinder the clear thinking, but as well as their effective communication. These challenges in recalling information and sustaining the focus only emphasizes on how the stress can negatively influence the cognitive processing of a certain student that can result in hesitation and interruptions in speaking the English language or even in English communication.

C. *What Strategies or Techniques do You use to Manage or Reduce Your Speaking Anxiety when You're Communicating in English?*

1) *Video Tutorials*

Video Tutorials emerged as the most mentioned strategy by the respondents. According to Shamsuri et al. (2021), the use of social media, particularly platforms like YouTube, contributed to expanding vocabulary and understanding of language structure. Students benefited from observing English speakers in videos, which helped them manage speaking anxiety and improve their language proficiency.

"You are going to eventually get used to speaking English if you communicate using the language often and *watch video tutorials* about grammar and pronunciation." (Respondent #1)

"The strategy that I do is *watch English videos with tutorials*. I also try to understand and think first before I try to communicate my thoughts." (Respondent #18)

"Since we are living in a modern time, we are dependent on technology and social media. On social media, we can find different *video tutorials on YouTube* that can help in improving grammar and pronunciation." (Respondent #7)

The interviewees' responses show that video tutorials are one

of the means of coping mechanisms to lessen nervousness in speaking. As they enhance their skills in speaking fluently in English they have found effective strategies to easily improve their speaking skills and the way they communicate. Watching video tutorials about English, grammar, and pronunciation can help the speakers to improve their communication skills.

2) *Practicing and Self-Conditioning*

Another theme that emerged is Practicing and Self-Conditioning. Netta et al. (2020) found that the students utilized various strategies such as preparation, practice, and incorporating hand and body movements when delivering a speech to manage their speech anxiety. Theriana (2023) reported that strategies such as positive self-talk, visualization, reframing anxious thoughts, preparation and practice, fostering a supportive learning environment, and employing emotional regulation techniques contribute to effectively managing speaking anxiety and enhancing speaking proficiency among learners.

“You are going to eventually get used to speaking English if you *communicate using the language often* and watch video tutorials about grammar and pronunciation.” (Respondent #1)

“I always do this since I am a non-native English speaker. First, my coping mechanism is *to practice and have preparation* because these two are very important. Through this, it helped me become more confident in speaking.” (Respondent #17)

“For me, before I start presenting, I always *rehearse* what I am going to say in the presentation so that I can properly convey my ideas.” (Respondent #1)

As non-native English speakers, one of the anxieties everyone has experienced is the speaking skills and the way of communication. The learners often consider not talking in English in times of communication because they are afraid to be judged by those who speak the English language fluently. The respondents found out that, in order to deal with that kind of circumstance in learning, self-conditioning is one of the most effective strategies. Therefore, self-conditioning is the greatest way to be motivated in the learning process.

3) *Interaction and Exposure*

Another recurring theme is interaction and exposure wherein non-native speakers are exposed to the language. Research studies have shown that social interaction and communication involving native speakers or just fluent English speakers are critical to language learning. In particular, real-life and authentic communication using the target language is of immense importance as they help language learners develop their proficiency in the target language (Hedayati, Nur, Emery, & Pavlyshyn, 2016; Jiang & Li, 2018). For example, it has been reported that social interaction results in improved motivation, communicative competencies, language skills, and interest in learning (Wang, 2014). Additionally, being involved in social interactions with fluent speakers using the language encourages ‘negotiation of meaning’ between language learners and native speakers, thus improving language proficiency of the learners (Hedayati et al., 2016; Ueno, 2019). Above all, interaction and exposure could be an enjoyable learning experience. In a study conducted by Ueno (2019), participants were reported to be

very positive about interacting with other speakers beyond formal language learning contexts. Similarly, Ahmmed (2017) emphasizes the advantages of engaging in conversations with peers, which include increased confidence and comfort in public speaking situations.

“I will interact with people who speak English fluently so that my speaking skills will be enhanced.” (Respondent #6)

“Second, there is *gradual exposure* where you have to be exposed and *interact* with those who use the first language.” (Respondent #17)

“For me, be positive and *interact* with those groups of people who speak English.” (Respondent #3)

To overcome the speaking anxiety, the respondents recommended building up confidence by conversing with skilled English speakers and slowly exposing oneself to English-speaking environments. Slow exposure to English-speaking environments is also advisable in lessening nervousness and into the habitual use of the language with time. Furthermore, maintaining a good attitude and participating in group interactions allows for space to develop and exercise. Generally, such methods and measures are the basis for overcoming speaking anxiety.

4. Discussion

A. *The Factors Contributing to the Speaking Anxiety*

The study reveals that the concerns of being judged and mocked by peers, teachers or a native English speaker hindering them to learn, make progress and develop their communication skills. It shows that fear of being judged in speaking the English language is one of the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety and is one of the reasons that the learners are hesitant to participate and speak in front of people. Participants noted that making mistakes due to pressure in a classroom or formal setting leads them to experience speaking anxiety when communicating in English. This align with the study by Leong and Ahmadi (2017), which highlighted that when students are worrying about making mistakes and feeling humiliated, it indicates that they are not achieving the target language. Participants also indicate that they feel anxious and pressured when speaking English because they are afraid of negative evaluation.

B. *The Impact of Speaking Anxiety has on the Communication Skills of Non-Native English Speakers*

The findings highlight that anxiety affects the student's ability to communicate in English language, particularly in speaking situations. There were three dominant themes: self-doubt and lack of confidence, physiological effects, and cognitive effects. Students are fearful of making mistakes or being criticized by others who are superior to them. Societal and school pressure makes students to steer clear of talking and lose self-confidence. Anxiety and frustration come in the form of freezing and trembling. Public speaking, especially speaking in a foreign language, leads to nervousness, criticism, fear, and comparison, making communication more challenging. Forgetfulness, stuttering, and interrupted concentration are results of anxiety when they deliver their message. This affects

academic success and natural language usage. Generally, the findings highlight the emotional, physical, and cognitive difficulties go hand in hand to limit students' confidence and communicative ability. All these problems can be overcome with confidence-enhancing exercises, anxiety-free speech practice, and coping mechanism

C. The Coping Mechanisms do Non-Native English Speakers Use to Manage Speaking Anxiety During Communication

A non-native English speakers experience speaking anxiety specially when talking to a fluent English speakers. The learners often consider not talking in English in times of communication because they are afraid to be judged by those who speak the English language fluently. The respondents found out that, in order to deal with that kind of circumstance in learning, self-conditioning is one of the most effective strategies. Therefore, self-conditioning is the greatest way to be motivated in the learning process. To overcome the speaking anxiety, the respondents recommended building up confidence by conversing with skilled English speakers and slowly exposing oneself to English-speaking environments. Slow exposure to English-speaking environments is also advisable in lessening nervousness and into the habitual use of the language with time. Furthermore, maintaining a good attitude and participating in group interactions allows for space to develop and exercise. Generally, such methods and measures are the basis for overcoming speaking anxiety. Based on the data gathered, the results highlight the ways to cope with anxieties in speaking the English language.

Based on the findings of the study, various strategies can be done to lessen the anxiety of students in speaking the English language. The data indicate that speaking anxiety can greatly hinders students' ability to communicate effectively. Suggested strategies to reduce students' anxiety in speaking English include:

1) Exposure Therapy

Exposure Therapy is important in helping learners develop self-esteem and lessen anxiety over time. This exposure might mean starting with small progress and low-pressure speaking tasks like presenting in front of a larger audience. It is a psychological treatment that was developed to help people manage their fears. When people are fearful of something, they tend to avoid the feared objects, activities or situations, (American Psychological Association, 2017). Non-native English speakers with speaking anxiety can alleviate their anxiety through exposure to the Language. Regular exposure to the language is essential to progress in English whether it be improving fluency, pronunciation, speaking & listening, writing & grammar, vocabulary & reading and the additional exposure at home is a real opportunity to ensure an increase in their progression. Similarly, Ahmmed (2017) emphasizes the advantages of engaging in conversations with peers, which include increased confidence and comfort in public speaking situations.

2) Implementing Anxiety Reducing Techniques

Implementing these techniques is important for helping students to manage their speaking anxiety in order to

communicate effectively. It involves various strategies, addressing both the cognitive and physiological aspects. Techniques like applying deep breathing, practicing self-meditation and exposing students to help lessen their speaking anxiety using the English language. Deep breathing involves inhale and exhale to calm nerves in order for students to express what they want to say. It is necessary to incorporate this technique especially before and during the presentation. Meditation is important to teach the mind to focus and redirect thoughts, fostering a sense of relaxation and awareness of the present happening. Cognitive techniques such as positive self-talk and visualization helps students to replace negative thoughts and visualize themselves succeeding in class discussion and speech presentation. For example, encouraging students with words of affirmation to boost their self-confidence. Gradually expose learners to speaking activities such as public speech presentation, role playing, oral recitation and reporting to help them manage their speaking anxiety. By practicing and learning these anxiety reducing techniques, learners can gain self confidence in speaking the English language especially when they're communicating.

3) Fostering a Low-Pressure Atmosphere

To effectively address English speaking anxiety among non-native English speakers, it is recommended to foster a low-pressure atmosphere wherein students aren't scared to communicate with their co-students. A welcoming environment helps students to fully communicate their thoughts, feelings and opinions without fear of judgment and mockery. Also, teachers can help students to feel safe in order for them to participate and engage in class discussion. Through these, learners can improve their communication skills with the guidance and encouragement of supportive teachers. Then, when a student makes mistakes, it should be perceived as learning opportunities rather than failures, as it allows them to willingly communicate while using the English language. Fostering a low-pressure environment is important for helping learners with speaking anxiety in overcoming their struggles as it also allows them to gain self-confidence.

4) Utilizing Online Tutorial and Activity

In order to address English speaking anxiety among non-native speakers effectively, it is advised to incorporate online tutorials and activities into learning methods. Using online tutorials and activities can help in reducing English speaking anxiety effectively. These activities comprise interactive tutorials, role-playing exercises, self-recording via videos, gamified practice, and interaction with online forums. The use of native speaker tutorials, structuring virtual speaking practice, and gradual exposure to English-speaking surroundings are also useful. These resources and practices establish a responsive, non-critical, and interactive platform for the non-native speakers to feel secure and establish communication.

5. Conclusion

The study confirmed that speaking anxiety is a common problem among non-native English speakers in their communication skills. Thus, speaking anxiety definitely affects the capabilities of the learner to communicate successfully.

That they worry about making mistakes and feeling humiliated, makes the language learners reduce motivation to learn. Therefore, they examine the main factors that contribute to speaking anxiety, its effects on communication and strategies or methods used by the learner. To cope with speaking anxiety, learners adopt various strategies of coping mechanisms, including preparing and practicing, interacting with fluent English speakers to foster a positive environment and utilizing online resources by watching video tutorials to enhance not just their vocabulary but also their listening and communication skills.

Furthermore, understanding speaking anxiety has a big role in providing effective interventions that can help non-native English speakers improve their communication skills and conquer their fear of speaking is also essential. Overall, the finding suggests the need for supportive learning environments wherein it can reduce anxiety by building strategies and encourage confidence. By addressing the primary causes of speaking anxiety and promoting effective coping techniques, learners can improve their fluency and communication skills in English.

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