



Speaking anxiety among English majors: A mixed-methods study of psychological, linguistic, and environmental barriers

Ria Sukmawati,¹ Ana Maghfiroh,^{*1} Elok Putri Nimasari,¹ Dwiana Binti Yulianti,¹
Rafael Altoé Frossard²

¹Universitas Muhamadiyah Ponorogo, Indonesia ²Federal University of Espirito Santo, Brasil

This study aims to: (1) identify the psychological causes of speaking anxiety among English Education students; (2) examine the influence of environmental factors, such as classroom dynamics and peer interaction, on students' speaking confidence; and (3) explore linguistic challenges, including limited vocabulary and grammatical competence, that hinder speaking fluency. The study employed a mixed-methods design with an explanatory sequential approach, combining quantitative survey data from 30 students with in-depth interviews involving three selected participants. The findings revealed that fear of making mistakes ($M = 3.70$) and concerns about pronunciation ($M = 3.50$) were the primary sources of speaking anxiety. Qualitative results indicated that linguistic challenges were closely linked to psychological factors and shaped by classroom dynamics. While previous studies have highlighted peer pressure as a major source of anxiety, this study found that peer influence tended to be neutral within a supportive classroom environment. These findings suggest that speaking anxiety is shaped by the interaction of psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors. Therefore, effective interventions should adopt a holistic approach that integrates confidence-building, supportive teaching practices, and communicative activities.

Keywords: speaking anxiety, psychological factors, classroom environment, linguistic challenges, mixed-method research

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*Correspondence:

Ana Maghfiroh
ana_maghfiroh@umpo.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking anxiety is a prevalent issue among English majors and significantly hinders their ability to communicate effectively. Research shows that many English majors experience moderate levels of language anxiety, with speaking anxiety being particularly prominent (Liu & Hong, 2021). This anxiety often leads to behaviors such as overthinking, reluctance to ask questions, and hesitation to participate in class discussions. Core contributors to speaking anxiety include communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Mohamad et al., 2023; Liu & Yuan, 2021). Moreover, classroom environments and teaching practices influence anxiety levels, as supportive and well-managed classrooms help reduce anxiety and encourage student participation (Liu & Hong, 2021). Fear of negative evaluation remains a significant barrier to speaking confidence, especially among undergraduate learners (Wardhani, 2019). Therefore, addressing speaking anxiety is essential, as it can limit students' participation and engagement in language learning.

Previous research has identified several contributing factors to speaking anxiety among EFL learners, including psychological pressures, linguistic limitations, and environmental influences. For instance, learners often feel anxious due to fear of making errors, limited vocabulary, and negative peer responses (Abrar, 2017). Similarly, many Indonesian students lack speaking confidence because they fear being judged (Fauzi et al., 2023). However, most of these studies rely on either surveys or interviews with small samples and tend to focus narrowly on one or two aspects of anxiety. In some cases, researchers have concentrated primarily on psychological elements, without giving sufficient attention to environmental or linguistic challenges (Syahfutra & Wibowo, 2021). Furthermore, comprehensive studies that investigate all three factors simultaneously in the Indonesian EFL context remain scarce (Abrar et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a strong need for more integrated research that considers psychological, linguistic, and environmental causes of speaking anxiety holistically, particularly among English majors in Indonesia.

Additionally, communication apprehension, especially fear of public speaking and being judged, has been found to significantly reduce learners' willingness to engage in English-speaking activities (Sari & Iswahyuni, 2019). Environmental factors such as unsupportive classroom settings, peer pressure, and negative teacher attitudes also contribute to speaking anxiety. Inadequate teacher training and limited classroom resources can further create learning environments that heighten anxiety and discourage active participation, especially in rural or under-resourced areas (Lestari et al., 2024). Creating interactive and supportive learning environments is therefore essential to reduce speaking anxiety. A recent study showed that student assistants can play a key role in promoting engagement and participation in English classes by fostering peer interaction and reducing classroom pressure (Maghfiroh & Zakiyah, 2025). For instance, when classrooms lack positive reinforcement or emphasize competition over collaboration, students may become more anxious and less willing to speak (Hermawan et al., 2023). In addition to these psychological and environmental barriers, linguistic difficulties, such as limited vocabulary, poor grammar, and weak pronunciation, often prevent learners from speaking confidently and increase their fear of making mistakes (Putra et al., 2023).

While many studies have examined speaking anxiety among general language learners, relatively few have focused specifically on English majors or examined how psychological, environmental, and linguistic factors intersect to influence their speaking performance. To address this gap, the present study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of these interrelated factors. The objectives of this research are threefold: first, to identify the psychological causes underlying English majors' fear of speaking; second, to investigate how environmental influences, such as classroom dynamics and peer interactions, affect students' speaking confidence; and third, to examine the linguistic challenges, such as limited vocabulary or grammatical competence, that hinder their ability to speak fluently.

This research hypothesizes that speaking anxiety among English majors is shaped by a complex interaction of internal fears (such as fear of negative judgment), limited opportunities of real-life speaking practice, and struggles with linguistic accuracy. Additionally, external pressures, such as unsupportive classroom atmosphere or peer comparisons may exacerbate these fears. It further argues that creating inclusive, encouraging learning environments, along with incorporating practical, student-centered speaking activities, can significantly help students reduce anxiety and improve their oral communication skills.

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in sequential manner to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This design was selected to address the gap identified in the introduction, where previous research often examined isolated factors or relied on a single method, thereby overlooking the interaction among psychological, linguistic, and environmental contributors to speaking anxiety among English majors. Initially, quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of ten Likert-scale items distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' levels of speaking anxiety across three key dimensions: psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors. Participants indicated their level of agreement with each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The quantitative data were then analyzed to determine the prevalence and intensity of speaking anxiety among the participants. Subsequently, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews to explore in greater depth, students' personal experiences, perceptions, and contextual factors influencing speaking anxiety.

This design was selected because it allows qualitative findings to explain and elaborate upon quantitative results, thereby addressing the complexity of speaking anxiety more effectively than either method alone. The explanatory sequential approach is particularly suitable for investigating psychological constructs such as anxiety, where numerical data provide a general overview, while rich, contextual narratives offer deeper insights (Creswell, 2020; Toyon, 2021).

Research Setting and Participants

This research was conducted in the English Education Department of a private university in East Java, Indonesia, an institution recognized its comprehensive English language programs, particularly those emphasizing active speaking skills through both coursework and extracurricular activities. Despite this institutional focus on oral communication, a considerable number of students continue to experience notable anxiety when speaking English in academic settings. This persistent issue provided the impetus for the present study, which aims to investigate the underlying factors contributing to speaking anxiety among English majors.

The participants were students enrolled in the second, fourth, and sixth semesters of the English Education program. Selecting participants from different academic levels was intended to ensure a broad and representative exploration of the intersecting psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors discussed in the introduction. A total of 60 questionnaires were disseminated electronically via Google Forms, of which 30 were completed, yielding a response rate of approximately 50%. Despite this moderate response rate, the sample included students from multiple semesters, ensuring representation across different stages of academic experience and levels of speaking exposure. This distribution contributed to a more balanced understanding of speaking anxiety among learners with varying degrees of proficiency and experience.

In terms of gender distribution, the majority of participants were female (76.7%), while male students accounted for 23.3% of the sample. This pattern reflects the typical demographic composition of English Education programs in Indonesia. Although gender was not a primary focus of this study, it may influence students' confidence and anxiety in speaking English, suggesting an area for further investigation in future research.

From the pool of respondents, three students were purposively selected to participate in the qualitative phase through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The selection was based on their self-reported levels of speaking anxiety as well as their demonstrated speaking proficiency, ensuring that the qualitative data captured a diverse range of experiences and perspectives aligned with the research objectives (Dahal et al., 2024).

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Quantitative Phase

The questionnaire was developed based on the theoretical framework of foreign language classroom anxiety, which encompasses three key dimensions: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These dimensions have been widely recognized in second language anxiety research and continue to be applied in recent empirical studies (Liu & Yuan, 2021). The items in this study were adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a well-established and validated instrument in second language acquisition research. Several items measured students' fear of making speaking errors, anxiety during language tests, and discomfort when interacting with peers in English-speaking activities. These indicators align with commonly identified components of foreign language classroom anxiety and are supported by recent studies in English language learning contexts (Liu & Yuan, 2021).

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. It consisted of two types of items: (1) ten closed-ended Likert-scale statements designed to measure students' speaking anxiety across psychological, environmental, and linguistic dimensions, and (2) three open-ended questions that invited participants to describe their experiences, challenges, and strategies related to speaking English.

Participants rated their agreement with each Likert-scale statement using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (Strongly

Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). In addition, the open-ended responses provided supplementary qualitative data, capturing students' personal perspectives and complementing the quantitative findings. Prior to the main study, the questionnaire was pilot tested to assess its reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Qualitative Phase

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data were collected from two sources: (1) students' responses to the open-ended questionnaire items and (2) semi-structured interviews with three purposively selected participants. The open-ended responses provided preliminary insights into students' experiences, while the interviews enabled a deeper exploration of key themes related to speaking anxiety.

The interviews, which lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes per session, were conducted in a quiet and private setting on campus to ensure a comfortable and open communication environment. The interview protocol was developed based on the quantitative findings and relevant literature and was designed to explore participants' emotional experiences, the challenges they faced, and the strategies they employed to cope with speaking anxiety across psychological, linguistic, and environmental dimensions. The semi-structured format provided flexibility for the researcher to explore key aspects, including students' feelings and confidence when speaking English, difficulties related to vocabulary and grammar, interactions with peers and lecturers, and strategies used to manage speaking anxiety. This flexibility also enabled the researcher to probe emerging themes during the interviews, ensuring that the data captured the complex interplay of factors previously identified as underexplored (Okyar, 2023).

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using Microsoft Excel, a widely accessible and user-friendly software program suitable for researchers with limited experience in more advanced statistical packages. The raw data exported from Google Forms were systematically organized in Excel, with each row representing an individual participant's responses and each column corresponding to a specific questionnaire item or demographic variable.

Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to summarize the data effectively. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical variables, such as gender and semester, using Excel's COUNTIF function and basic arithmetic formulas. For the Likert-scale items, measures of central tendency and dispersion, namely the mean and standard deviation, were computed using Excel's AVERAGE and STDEV.S functions, respectively. These statistics provided an overview of the average levels of speaking anxiety as well as the variability in participants' responses.

To enhance the interpretability of the findings, visual representations such as bar charts and pie charts were generated in Excel. These graphical displays illustrated the distribution of responses across items and demographic groups, facilitating a more intuitive understanding of the data patterns.

The use of Excel was intentional, as it offers a straightforward and transparent analytical approach that aligns with the descriptive aims of the study and the researcher’s familiarity with the software, thereby ensuring accuracy and efficiency without requiring advanced statistical expertise.

Following the descriptive analysis, a thematic categorization approach was applied to group questionnaire items into three dimensions psychological, environmental, and linguistic factors. This categorization enabled the analysis to directly addresses the research questions and provided a structured understanding of the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety among English majors.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using the six-phase thematic analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts; (2) generation of initial codes to identify meaningful features; (3) searching for themes by grouping codes into broader patterns; (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence and distinctiveness; (5) defining and naming the final themes; and (6) producing a comprehensive report of the findings.

To enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the analysis, two researchers independently coded the transcripts and subsequently compared their coding to resolve discrepancies, thereby reaching consensus on the final thematic structure.

The analysis focused on identifying key themes related to psychological aspects of speaking anxiety (e.g., fear of negative evaluation), environmental influences (e.g., peer pressure and teacher support), and linguistic challenges (e.g., limited vocabulary and grammatical difficulties).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants’ Demographic Profile

The study involved 30 English major students, predominantly female and primarily drawn from the fourth and sixth semesters. Their demographic distribution is illustrated in the figure 1 and figure 2 below:

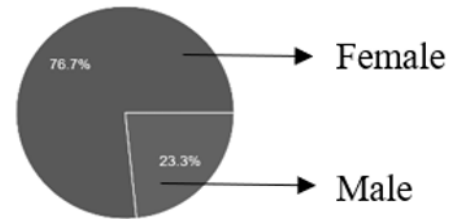


FIGURE 1 | Gender Distribution

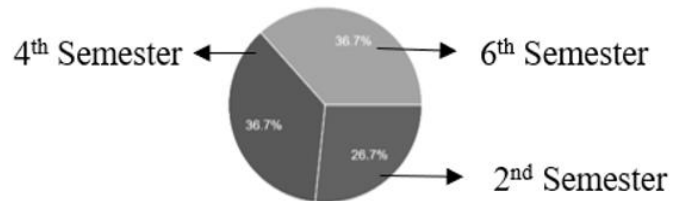


FIGURE 2 | Semester Distribution

Based on the demographic data, the majority of the participants were female. Furthermore, most participants were enrolled in the fourth and sixth semesters, while only a smaller proportion came from the second semester. This distribution indicates that the sample largely represents students with moderate to advanced exposure to English learning in the program.

Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Anxiety

A total of 30 students completed the online questionnaire, which measured various dimensions of speaking anxiety using ten Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to analyze the data.

Interpretation of Results

The findings reveal that the most prominent source of speaking anxiety among participants is fear of making mistakes (M = 3.70), followed by anxiety in formal speaking situations such as presentations or tests (M = 3.50), and concerns related to pronunciation (M = 3.50). These results confirm the argument presented in the introduction that psychological and linguistic factors are central contributors to speaking anxiety among English majors, highlighting both emotional and skill-based related challenges.

TABLE 1 | Descriptive Statistics of Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire (N = 30)

Statement	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Factor
I worry about making mistakes when speaking English.	3.70	1.02	1	5	Psychological
I feel supported by my teacher when I speak English.	3.57	1.07	1	5	Environmental
I feel anxious about speaking English during tests or presentations.	3.50	1.07	1	5	Psychological
I worry about my pronunciation when speaking English.	3.50	0.97	1	5	Linguistic
I feel nervous when I have to speak English in front of the class.	3.40	1.07	1	5	Psychological

Conversely, the relatively low mean score for fear of being judged by peers (M = 2.77) suggests that, while some students experience apprehension about negative evaluation,

many demonstrate emotional a degree of confidence or emotional resilience in peer interactions. This finding reflects the complex relationship between individual psychological

factors and social environmental influences.

Teacher support received a comparatively high mean score (M = 3.57), emphasizing the important role of the classroom environment in mitigating speaking anxiety. This result reinforces the significance of supportive teaching practices and positive teacher–student relationships in fostering a low-anxiety learning atmosphere. Additionally, moderate levels of confidence (M = 3.00) and concerns about vocabulary sufficiency (M = 2.90) indicate that speaking anxiety is influenced not only by fear but also by students perceived linguistic competence. These findings suggest that both psychological and linguistic dimensions interact in shaping students’ speaking experiences.

Interestingly, while the survey results show that peer pressure was generally perceived as neutral (M = 3.00), the interview data reveal that some students still hesitate to speak due to fear of negative evaluation by their classmates. This discrepancy may arise because questionnaire data reflect general trends across participants, whereas interviews capture more personal and context-specific experiences. Thus, although peer influence may not appear dominant at the aggregate level, it remains significant for certain individuals in specific situations. Overall, these findings address the research gap identified in the introduction by demonstrating how psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors interact to shape speaking anxiety among English majors in a holistic manner.

Dimension-based Categorization of Quantitative Data

Following descriptive statistical analysis, a thematic interpretation approach was applied to group the questionnaire items into three dimensions: psychological, environmental, and linguistic factors. This section presents the dimension-based categorization of quantitative data to illustrate these groupings more clearly.

Psychological Factors

Psychological barriers emerged as the most significant contributors to speaking anxiety among English majors. The highest mean score was observed for fear of making mistakes (M = 3.70), followed by anxiety in formal speaking contexts such as tests or presentations (M = 3.50), and general nervousness when speaking in front of the class (M = 3.40). Confidence levels were moderate (M = 3.00), while fear of being judged by peers was present but less pronounced (M = 2.77). These findings underscore the internal emotional challenges faced by students and support the argument presented in the introduction that psychological factors constitute a central of speaking anxiety.

Environmental Factors

Teacher support received a relatively high rating mean score (M = 3.57), indicating that students generally feel encouraged by their instructors, an important factor in mitigating anxiety and fostering a supportive classroom climate. Peer pressure, however, was rated at a neutral level (M = 3.00), suggesting that while classmates may influence students’ experiences, they are not the primary source of anxiety. This nuanced finding highlights the role of the classroom environment as both a potential source of support and a contextual influence, aligning with the study’s emphasis on environmental factors.

Linguistic Factors

Concerns about pronunciation (M = 3.50) and limitations in vocabulary (M = 2.90) indicate persistent linguistic challenges that affect students’ confidence and speaking fluency. Additionally, comfort with speaking activities was slightly above neutral (M = 3.13), suggesting that many students are still in the process of developing both their language competence and self-confidence. These findings reinforce the role of linguistic limitations as key contributors to speaking anxiety.

Overall, the quantitative findings confirm that speaking anxiety among English majors is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by the interaction of psychological fears, linguistic challenges, and environmental influences. Psychological factors, particularly fear of making mistakes and test-related anxiety, emerge as the most dominant contributors, while linguistic difficulties further influence students’ confidence. Meanwhile, the classroom environment, especially teacher support, serves as a mitigating factor, although peer influence appears less prominent. These results directly address the research gap identified in the introduction by providing a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the factors shaping speaking anxiety.

To enrich the quantitative findings, representative quotes from the qualitative data are presented below to illustrate how these dimensions manifest in students lived experiences.

TABLE 2 | Representative Quotes by Theme

Theme	Participant Quote
Psychological Fear	“I’m afraid if my grammar is wrong... people will laugh or criticize me.”
Linguistic Challenges	“Sometimes I get confused choosing vocabulary and arranging the sentence.”
Environmental Factors	“I feel more confident when my teacher smiles... it gives me comfort.”
Coping Strategies	“I practice every day, even just talking to myself. It helps a lot.”

These excerpts support the survey findings and provide deeper insight into students’ lived experiences, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of speaking anxiety.

The findings reveal that psychological and linguistic factors are the primary sources of speaking anxiety among participants. While environmental support, especially from teachers, plays a mitigating role, students continue to experience internal hesitation and skill-related insecurities. These insights provide a foundation for triangulating the results with the qualitative findings in the subsequent section.

Qualitative Findings

This section presents the results of the qualitative phase, which aimed to explore students’ personal experiences and perceptions of speaking anxiety in greater depth. Guided by [Braun and Clarke’s \(2006\)](#) six-phase thematic analysis framework, the analysis was based on thirty open-ended questionnaire responses and three semi-structured interviews. These findings provide a deeper understanding of the multidimensional factors contributing to speaking anxiety

among English majors, addressing the research gaps identified in the introduction and complementing the quantitative results through data triangulation. The analysis generated three overarching themes: psychological barriers, linguistic challenges, and environmental influences, as well as a fourth theme related to coping strategies, which reflects how students attempt to manage and reduce their anxiety.

Psychological Barriers

A dominant theme emerging from both the interviews and open-ended responses was the presence of strong psychological barriers that hinder students from speaking English confidently. Many participants described feelings of nervousness, fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, and fear of negative evaluation from both peers and instructors. Several students also reported experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety, such as sweating, trembling, and stomach discomfort, when required to speak in front of the class.

The pressure of being observed while speaking was frequently identified as a source of psychological discomfort. One participant stated, *“The gaze of the audience sometimes makes me feel inferior... if I’m too nervous, my stomach hurts, and that ruins my confidence.”* Students frequently mentioned that their anxiety was not solely related to language ability but also to the fear of being judged, laughed at, or misunderstood. Some internalized a fear of failure that discouraged them from participating in discussions or delivering presentations. Another participant shared, *“I’m afraid, if my grammar is wrong... I feel like people will laugh or criticize me.”* Overall, the findings confirm that psychological factors are not only pervasive but also deeply internalized, significantly influencing students’ willingness to take linguistic risks in academic settings.

Linguistic Challenges

The second theme identified relates to linguistic limitations, which significantly contribute to speaking anxiety. Students pointed to insufficient vocabulary, grammatical difficulties, and pronunciation issues as key challenges that undermine their confidence and fluency. Many respondents reported struggling to construct sentences, retrieve appropriate vocabulary, or pronounce words accurately, particularly in spontaneous speaking situations.

One participant expressed, *“Sometimes I get confused choosing vocabulary and arranging the sentence. It makes me panic.”* Another shared, *“I still have very little vocabulary to speak English fluently... I know what I want to say in Bahasa Indonesia, but not in English.”* These linguistic challenges often intensified students’ fear of making mistakes, reinforcing the psychological barriers discussed earlier. The perception of lacking “appropriate vocabulary” or “correct grammar” frequently led students to avoid speaking opportunities altogether.

Environmental Influences

The third theme highlights the role of the social and academic environment in shaping speaking anxiety. Participants’ responses indicate that teacher support and peer dynamics play a crucial role in influencing speaking confidence. Positive reinforcement from instructors, such as

encouragement, patience, and supportive feedback, was associated with reduced anxiety. In contrast, unsupportive or overly critical peers contributed to increased pressure and fear of negative evaluation.

One participant remarked, *“I feel more confident when my teacher smiles or pays attention... it gives me comfort.”* Another shared, *“Sometimes I don’t speak because I’m afraid of my friends judging me or correcting me in front of others.”* Additionally, large class sizes, formal speaking settings, and performance-based assessments were perceived as anxiety-inducing. Students preferred smaller groups or casual settings, where they felt safer and less scrutinized."

Coping Strategies and Confidence-Building Activities

Despite experiencing anxiety, many students demonstrated awareness of strategies to manage their speaking difficulties. A recurring strategy was consistent practice, whether through self-study, speaking with peers, or engaging in informal English conversations. One student noted, *“I practice every day, even just talking to myself. It helps a lot.”*

Other strategies included:

1. Self-preparation, such as organizing ideas and rehearsing sentence structures before speaking tasks;
2. Relaxation techniques, including deep breathing and positive self-affirmation;
3. Use of digital media, such as YouTube and social media, to improve pronunciation and vocabulary;
4. Seeking supportive partners, including friends or mentors who provide encouragement.

A participant explained, *“Before speaking, I usually write the order of the sentence, memorize the sequence, and understand the topic well. If I prepare, I feel more confident.”* Another added, *“Having a comfortable classroom with teachers and friends who support me really helps.”* This theme illustrates that while anxiety remains a challenge, students actively engage in developing coping mechanisms and building confidence.

Overall, the qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative results by illustrating how psychological, linguistic, and environmental factors interact to shape anxiety among English majors. Psychological barriers, such as fear of mistakes and low confidence, are closely intertwined with linguistic challenges and are often amplified by unsupportive environments. At the same time, many students demonstrate adaptive coping strategies, including regular practice, thorough preparation, and the creation of supportive learning contexts.

These insights suggest that effective interventions should address not only linguistic skill development but also psychological and environmental dimensions. Therefore, educators are encouraged to implement collaborative speaking activities, foster supportive classroom environments, and provide individualized guidance to help students overcome their anxiety.

This study employed a mixed methods approach to examine speaking anxiety among English Education students from a multidimensional perspective, focusing on psychological factors, classroom environment, and linguistic challenges. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a more comprehensive understanding of

speaking anxiety, highlighting not only its dominant factors but also the ways in which these factors interact within the classroom context.

Psychological Factors as the Main Trigger of Speaking Anxiety

One of the key findings of this study is that speaking anxiety is strongly influenced by psychological factors, particularly the fear of making mistakes and concerns about pronunciation (Liu & Hong, 2021; Mohamad et al., 2023). These findings indicate that students tend to hesitate in participating in speaking activities due to heightened self-awareness and fear of producing incorrect language forms. This finding is consistent with the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) framework, which conceptualizes anxiety as arising from communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Liu & Yuan, 2021).

However, unlike some previous studies that emphasize test anxiety as the dominant factor, the present study found that fear of linguistic inaccuracy, particularly grammatical and pronunciation errors, plays a more significant role. This difference may be explained by the instructional context, where accuracy and correctness are strongly emphasized. As a result, students tend to associate speaking performance with error avoidance rather than meaningful communication. Consequently, they may experience increased pressure to produce accurate language, which amplifies anxiety even in low stakes speaking situations.

Furthermore, the convergence of quantitative findings, showing high mean scores for fear of making mistakes, and qualitative insights, revealing students' concerns about negative judgment from peers and lecturers, suggests that psychological anxiety is reinforced by both internal perceptions and external expectations. This indicates that speaking anxiety is not merely an individual emotional response but is also shaped by the learning environment and evaluative practices. Therefore, addressing psychological factors requires not only fostering students' confidence but also re-evaluating classroom practices that may inadvertently heighten sensitivity to errors.

The Role of Classroom Environment and Teacher Support

The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' speaking anxiety. The findings indicate that supportive teacher behavior, including empathy, positive facial expressions, and encouraging body language, contributes to creating a comfortable learning atmosphere that enhances students' confidence. This aligns with previous research suggesting that positive classroom environments can reduce anxiety and promote active participation (Liu & Hong, 2021). In addition, this study highlights the role of teachers' non-verbal communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice, as important elements in reducing students' anxiety. These subtle yet impactful behaviors help create a psychologically safe space in which students feel more willing to participate in speaking activities.

In contrast to earlier studies that highlight the contribution of peer-related factors to speaking anxiety (Wardhani, 2019; Hermawan et al., 2023), the findings of this study indicate that peer influence tends to be neutral or less significant. This is

consistent with the quantitative finding showing a neutral level of perceived peer pressure, as well as qualitative responses indicating that, although some students still experience concern about peer judgment, it does not strongly inhibit their participation. This difference may be explained by the supportive classroom climate reported by participants, where teacher encouragement and generally positive peer interactions help reduce the fear of negative evaluation. Furthermore, collaborative learning activities and interaction within familiar peer groups may contribute to a more relaxed learning environment, thereby reducing perceived pressure during speaking activities. These findings suggest that the influence of peers on speaking anxiety is context-dependent and shaped by classroom interaction patterns and instructional practices. In addition, cultural and institutional factors may also play a role, as supportive learning environments can reduce students' sensitivity to peer evaluation, making peer-related anxiety less dominant across contexts.

Linguistic Challenges Interacting with Psychological Factors

The findings of this study indicate that linguistic challenges, particularly limited vocabulary and pronunciation concerns, act as significant barriers to students' speaking performance (Putra et al., 2023). This is consistent with previous studies that identify linguistic limitations as key contributors to speaking anxiety in EFL contexts. However, this study further reveals that linguistic difficulties do not function independently, but are closely intertwined with psychological factors, particularly students' self-confidence.

This interaction helps explain why students with similar levels of linguistic competence demonstrate different levels of participation in speaking activities. Students who perceive their language ability as inadequate are more likely to experience heightened anxiety and fear of making mistakes, which in turn, reduces their willingness to speak. This finding suggests that the impact of linguistic challenges is amplified by students' psychological responses rather than the linguistic limitations alone. Additionally, this relationship may be influenced by the instructional context, particularly in settings where accuracy is emphasized over communicative effectiveness. Such an emphasis may increase students' sensitivity to errors and reinforce anxiety. Therefore, addressing speaking anxiety requires a more integrated approach that combines linguistic development with psychological support and a supportive classroom environment (Abrar et al., 2022).

Theoretical and Practical Implications: A Holistic Approach

The findings of this study suggest that speaking anxiety arises from the dynamic interaction of psychological factors, classroom environment, and linguistic challenges, rather than from a single dominant source. This supports the view that foreign language anxiety is a multidimensional construct, while also extending previous research by demonstrating how these factors interact within a specific classroom context. The stronger influence of psychological factors, alongside the mitigating role of the classroom environment, indicates that addressing speaking anxiety requires more than simply improving linguistic competence.

From a practical perspective, these findings imply that effective interventions should adopt a holistic approach that integrates confidence-building strategies, supportive teacher practices, and structured language learning activities. In particular, the importance of teachers' non-verbal communication highlighted in this study suggests that pedagogical training should include not only instructional techniques but also interpersonal and affective skills. Furthermore, the finding that peer influence become less dominant in a supportive environment indicates that classroom design and interaction patterns play a crucial role in shaping students' anxiety experiences. Collaborative learning, positive reinforcement, and low-pressure speaking opportunities can significantly reduce anxiety and encourage participation. Therefore, English language instruction should incorporate psychological, social, and pedagogical dimensions to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

This study contributes to the existing literature by demonstrating that speaking anxiety is influenced not only by individual psychological factors but also by classroom dynamics and instructional practices. In particular, the finding that peer influence may diminish in a supportive learning environment offers new insight into the context-dependent nature of speaking anxiety in EFL settings.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety among English Education students by demonstrating that it arises from the interaction of psychological factors, classroom environment, and linguistic challenges. The findings reveal that fear of making mistakes, particularly those related to grammar and pronunciation, plays a more prominent role than test anxiety in shaping students' speaking behavior. This highlights the importance of students' perceptions of linguistic accuracy in influencing their anxiety levels.

In addition, this study underscores the role of teachers' non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and body language, in creating a supportive learning environment that can reduce anxiety and encourage participation. The finding that peer influence tends to be less significant in a supportive classroom context further suggests that speaking anxiety is shaped by situational and pedagogical factors rather than fixed social pressures. These insights contribute to the existing literature by showing that the impact of anxiety-related factors is context-dependent and influenced by classroom dynamics.

Overall, the findings suggest that addressing speaking anxiety requires a holistic approach that integrates linguistic development, psychological support, and supportive teaching practices. Language instruction should therefore not only focus on accuracy and fluency but also consider students' emotional and social experiences within the classroom.

Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples across different educational contexts to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Further studies may also examine the effectiveness of specific pedagogical

interventions, such as supportive feedback, anxiety-reduction strategies, and communicative activities, in reducing speaking anxiety. In addition, longitudinal research could provide deeper insights into how speaking anxiety develops over time as learners progress in their language learning.

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