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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH LAMPUNG

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of English speaking anxiety and academic achievement among second-semester English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung. Despite the recognized importance of speaking skills in EFL contexts, many Indonesian students experience significant anxiety that potentially impacts their academic performance. This research used a quantitative approach. The data were collected from 13 students through the adapted Speech Anxiety Thoughts Inventory (SATI) and speaking assessments evaluated with Brown and Abeywickrama's (2019) rubric. The Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong negative relationship between speaking anxiety and academic achievement (r = -0.876, p = 0.001), with anxiety accounting for 76.7% of the variance in speaking scores. Qualitative analysis of questionnaire responses identified fear of negative evaluation, limited vocabulary, and lack of confidence as primary anxiety sources. While the strong correlation indicates a significant relationship, the study's limitations, including small sample size and correlational design, preclude causal inferences. The finding underscores the need for pedagogical interventions addressing affective factors in language learning and suggests directions for future research with larger samples and experimentally designed.

Keywords: *Speaking anxiety, Academic achievement, EFL learners*

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Introduction

Speaking English has become increasingly important in globalized educational and professional settings, especially in Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language in the school curriculum. Speaking is often the most difficult of the four language skills for EFL learners because of its social-interactive and real-time production requirements (Luoma, 2019). Speaking is complex because it requires the simultaneous coordination of several elements, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, while also involving cognitive and affective aspects (Nation & Newton, 2019).

Anxiety has become a major obstacle to learning a second language within affective domains. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) was defined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) as a unique complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors connected to language learning in the classroom. According to MacIntyre (2020), speaking anxiety is a form of FLCA that pertains primarily to the anxiety and emotional response that come with speaking a second language. Test anxiety, communication anxiety, and the worry of receiving a poor grade are common causes of this anxiety (Horwitz, 2021).

The negative consequences of speaking anxiety on language ability have been repeatedly shown in earlier studies. Language anxiety and academic performance among Pakistani university students were found to be significantly correlated negatively by Awan et al. (2020). In a similar vein, Nur Ulfa and Nawawi (2022) found that nervousness was a significant factor affecting junior high school pupils' speaking ability in Indonesia, along with a lack of confidence and insufficient vocabulary. Similar results have been observed in international research across a variety of cultural contexts, indicating the cross-cultural significance of anxiety in language learning (Botes, Dewaele, & Greiff, 2020; Chen, Cheng, & Chuang, 2022). Due to cultural, institutional, and pedagogical differences that may affect this relationship, context-specific research is still required despite strong evidence associating anxiety with poor language performance on a worldwide scale. Few empirical studies have examined the relationship between speaking anxiety and academic achievement among English education majors in Indonesian higher education, particularly in remote universities such as Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung. This group is very important as their future employment as English teachers will be significantly impacted by their speaking ability.

Speaking anxiety has been studied in a number of Indonesian educational contexts, but there are still a number of unanswered questions. First, university-level EFL teacher candidates, particularly those at regional private universities, are understudied because most current research focuses on junior or senior high school students. Second, there are still a few studies examining the connection between speaking anxiety and academic achievement, as measured quantitatively using standardized rubrics, such as Brown & Abeywickrama (2019). Third, most studies use big samples, but they frequently don't go far enough in using mixed-method approaches to pinpoint certain anxiety origins. Furthermore, no published study has examined how second-semester English Education students' anxiety directly affects their speaking performance using validated anxiety tests like SATI in the setting of Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung (Rezaeisharif et al., 2021). Therefore, to close the methodological and contextual gaps in the current work, a targeted investigation of speaking anxiety and its quantifiable influence on accomplishment in this particular academic setting is required.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) and Cognitive Interference Theory (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992) are integrated in the theoretical framework that directs this investigation. According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, emotional variables like anxiety might produce a mental block that prevents language generation and processing. According to Cognitive Interference Theory, anxiety depletes cognitive resources that may be used to complete tasks, which lowers performance. The combination of Eysenck and Calvo's Cognitive Interference Theory (1992) and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) offers a thorough explanation of how anxiety impacts language performance.

According to the Affective Filter Hypothesis, learners' capacity to comprehend and communicate language input is hampered by emotional elements like worry. High levels of anxiety cause learners' affective filters to rise, which lowers their desire, confidence, and readiness to speak. This, in turn, restricts how much linguistic information they can efficiently absorb and utilize. The viewpoint is supported by Cognitive Interference Theory, which states that worry directly depletes cognitive resources, especially working memory and attention, in addition to affecting emotions. Anxiety results in intrusive thoughts, anxieties, and self-monitoring behaviors that take up cognitive resources that may be used for linguistic activities. Because of the disruption to their cognitive functioning, even learners with sufficient language proficiency may do poorly.

The two theories are combined in this study to demonstrate how anxiety impacts language performance through both emotional inhibition and cognitive depletion: anxiety interferes with cognitive functioning, which lowers task performance, while simultaneously raising the affective filter, which creates a psychological barrier to language use. Consequently, the observed variables of language anxiety and language performance are described as interrelated results of emotional and cognitive mechanisms, where anxiety both reduces the cognitive resources required for good performance and prevents access to language processing.

Research Methods

The impact of English speaking anxiety (an independent variable) and speaking achievement (a dependent variable) was investigated in this study using a quantitative correlational methodology. The choice of correlational design was made because it allows analysis of relationships between variables without modification, which is suitable for a preliminary study of this phenomenon in this particular setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). During the 2025 academic year, the study was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung. Thirteen second-semester English Education Department students participated in this study, which was chosen using total sampling. Every participant had completed basic speaking classes, ensuring a foundational understanding of spoken English. Eight female and five male students, ages 18 to 20, made up the sample. Although generalizability is limited by the small sample size, a thorough examination of the particular group of interest was made possible. Participants completed the SATI questionnaire in the first phase of data collection, then participated in individual speaking assessments using spontaneous speech tasks. To reduce external influences, both procedures were conducted in a controlled setting.

The data in this study were analyzed using SPSS version 22 through several systematic procedures. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' characteristics and describe the distribution of the research variables, providing an overall picture of the data. Second, a Pearson product–moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between speaking anxiety and students' success. Third, to explore the underlying causes of speaking anxiety, responses to open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed qualitatively, enabling an in-depth interpretation of participants' perspectives. Prior to conducting the main statistical analyses, assumption testing was carried out, including the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test to assess data normality and Levene's test to

examine the homogeneity of variances. All statistical analyses in this study were performed at the significance level α = 0.05.

Results and Discussion

The Speech Anxiety Thoughts Inventory (SATI) by Rezaeisharif et al. (2021) was included in the questionnaire, and the instructor's student grade records were used to collect data for the study. This scale, which consists of 23 Likert scale items that were translated into Bahasa, has undergone a number of psychometric evaluations, such as item analysis using corrected item-total correlation, construct validity assessment using confirmatory factor analysis, structural exploration using exploratory factor analysis, and reliability evaluation using Alpha. All data were calculated using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program, and 13 students from Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung participated in this study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pronounciation	13	2.00	3.00	2.4615	.51887
Grammar	13	1.00	3.00	2.2308	.59914
Vocabulary	13	1.00	3.00	2.2308	.72501
Fluency	13	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.70711
Comprehency	13	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.70711
Valid N (listwise)	13				

The following can be used to characterize the data describing various features of spoken communication. The pronunciation mean and standard deviation were 2.4615 and 51887, respectively, while the grammar mean and standard deviation were 2.2308 and 59914, the vocabulary mean and standard deviation were 2.2308 and 72501, and the fluency and comprehension mean and standard deviation were 2.0000 and 70711. Additionally, the scores for pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension were 1.00 and 3.00, with the lowest and highest scores being 2.00 and 3.00.

The two prerequisites must be met before using the t-test to analyze the data. These are the homogeneity and normality tests. Analysis tests are explained in the discussion that follows.

Pre-Analysis Test

Test of Normality

Determining whether the two data sets follow a normal distribution is the goal of this test. The researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to assess whether the data were normally distributed. The researcher used the Shapiro-Wilk test in this manner. In theory, if p> 0.05, the data distribution is normal. The summary of the Shapiro-Wilk computation results is shown in the following table.

Table 2. Results of Normality Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		13
Normal Parameters[a]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.76055758
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.225
	Positive	.225
	Negative	-.132
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.812
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.525

a. Test distribution is Normal.

The significance value in the Shapiro-Wilk section is 0.525, indicating that the probability value or Monte Carlo Sig. value (2-tailed) of all variables is more than 0.05, which can be explained based on the results of the normality test in the preceding table. The researcher concluded that the residual value is normally distributed as a result.

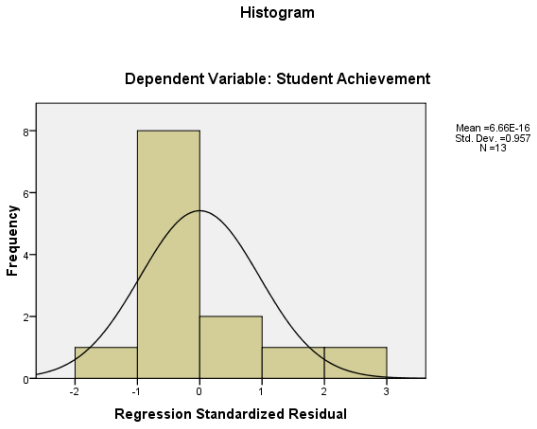

Figure 1. Histogram of Normality Test

A histogram is the picture up top. According to Santoso (2021), a histogram is deemed normal if the data distribution is bell-shaped and not

skewed to the left or right. The bell-shaped histogram above is regarded as typical since it is neither tilted to the right nor left.

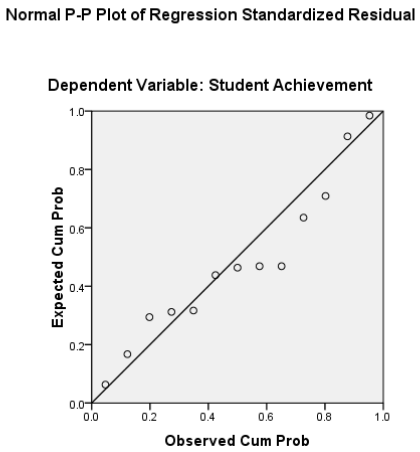

Figure 2. Normality Test With P – P Plot

Figure 2 depicts a P-P plot. The distribution of objects along the diagonal line can be used to understand a P-P plot. If the objects in a P-P plot are dispersed widely from the diagonal line and do not follow it, it is deemed to have failed to meet the normalcy assumption (Ghozali, 2020). The P-P Plot's form surrounding the regression line is depicted in the graph above, which explains the curve. The data are dispersed around the diagonal line and follow its direction, as the P-P Plot above illustrates. Consequently, the regression model satisfies the normality assumption or has a normal distribution.

Test of Homogeneity

To determine whether the scores of one group had homogenous variance in comparison to those of other groups, a homogeneity test was used. Theoretically, the data are homogeneous if the value of the F-test obtained (Fo) is less than the value of the F table (Ft); the data are not homogeneous if the value of the F-test obtained is more than the value of the F table. The table below displays the calculation's outcome.

Table 3. Results of Homogeneity Test

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2094.192	12	232.688	3.792	.069
Within Groups	53.500	11	17.833		
Total	2147.692	23			

The above homogeneity test results show that the significance level is above 0.05, with a significance value of 0.069. Thus, it can be said that the two variables have the same variance (homogeneous) when it comes to the data on the effect of English speaking anxiety on student accomplishment.

Test of Hypothesis

The final phase of this research is hypothesis testing. It is employed to demonstrate whether or not the hypothesis, "There is an impact of English speaking anxiety on student achievement," is accepted. The researcher then employed the t-test procedure to validate the hypothesis. The hypothesis is then accepted if the value of t obtained is greater than that of the t-table at the significant level of 0.05. These are the conditions for testing the hypothesis. On the other hand, the hypothesis is rejected if the value of t obtained is less than the value of t-table at the significant level of 0.05. The following table displays the summary of the entire computation.

Table 4. Results of T Test Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.117	2.369		.049	.962
	English Speaking Anxiety	.926	.062	.976	14.882	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Student Achievement						

According to the analytical results shown in Table 4, the value of t obtained (14.882) was more than that of the t table (1.77093) at the significance level of 0.01, which was less than 0.05. The theory is accepted as a result. This indicates that students' academic performance at Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung is impacted by anxiety related to speaking English.

The results of the questionnaire indicate that students with low levels of anxiety typically receive good speaking scores, whereas students with moderate or even high levels of anxiety typically have low speaking scores. This indicates that anxiety will negatively impact students' speaking achievement. According to the students' responses on the questionnaire, "will not be able to finish my speech and my speech will not impress the audience" is one of the factors making students feel anxious. They believe their English language proficiency is far lower than that of their friends and do not comprehend the language properly. Thus, it may be concluded that students' nervousness impacts their speaking performance.

According to Hashempour & Merhad (2019), academic anxiety can have a detrimental effect on students. It can also lead to poor performance, particularly in language learning; students with high anxiety scores will perform poorly when speaking, while those with low anxiety scores will perform well. Additionally, a lack of vocabulary, a disparity in prior English knowledge, a poor comprehension of the language, and a lack of confidence are all contributing factors to students' fear.

The study's findings indicated that student achievement (Y) is significantly impacted by the English speaking anxiety variable (X). The computed t is 14,882 > than the t-table of (1.77093) based on the t-test results displayed in the preceding table, with a significant value (sig) of 0.01, which indicates <0.05. indicating that Ho is rejected while Ha is accepted. Thus, it can be said that anxiety related to speaking English significantly affects students' academic performance at Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be said that second-semester Universitas Muhammadiyah Lampung students' anxiety significantly affects their English speaking proficiency. The statistical results demonstrate that the generated t-value (14.882) is higher than the t-table value (1.77093) with a significant value of 0.01 (< 0.05). While students with lower anxiety levels typically do better, individuals with higher anxiety levels typically have worse speaking scores. Increased nervousness and poor speaking performance seem to be caused by a number of factors, including a small vocabulary, inadequate prior English knowledge, a lack of comprehension, and low self-confidence.

But there are a number of drawbacks to this study. First, the results can not be applied to wider EFL situations because the sample was restricted to one semester and one university. Second, the study only employed quantitative metrics and excluded qualitative information that would have shed more light on students' individual anxiety experiences. Third, this study did not look at other potentially important factors, including instructional strategies, the classroom setting, or coping mechanisms.

In order to better understand the nature of speaking anxiety and how it interacts with other factors, it is advised that future studies employ a mixed-methods design that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Larger, more varied samples from other institutions might be used in studies, and other factors, including instructor support, speaking

practice frequency, and students' psychological coping mechanisms, could be investigated.

The results of this study are in line with other empirical evidence that speaking anxiety is still a significant problem in EFL learning when compared to other studies conducted over the past five years. For instance, Ajiza et al. (2024) discovered that both internal and external factors contributed to Indonesian EFL students' ongoing high levels of anxiety in speaking lessons, which is consistent with the current conclusion that anxiety has a detrimental impact on performance. In a similar vein, Rama et al. (2024) found that 70% of university EFL students had moderate to high speaking anxiety, which was linked to psychological elements including low self-esteem and fear of receiving a poor grade. Furthermore, Khafidhoh, Wijayati, and Risa (2025) noted that shyness, trembling, and nervousness were major reasons for speaking anxiety among EFL students and emphasized the need for preparation and confidence in reducing anxiety. The new research supports the finding that speaking anxiety is consistently associated with worse speaking performance and emphasizes the need for teaching methods that address anxiety's emotional and cognitive components. According to the implications of these findings, English language instructors should implement supportive and anxiety-reducing pedagogical strategies, like fostering a positive classroom environment, expanding opportunities for low-pressure speaking exercises, promoting peer cooperation, and offering constructive criticism. According to current research highlighting the significance of supportive learning environments for anxious EFL learners, these methods may help students feel less nervous when speaking, increase their confidence, and eventually enhance their oral proficiency.

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