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## English Anxiety Among Senior High School Students

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### Abstract

**Aim:** The major purpose of the study was to find out why learners feel anxious or embarrassed when speaking the English language and what influence it could have on their English communication skills. It looked into the factors or sources that make students feel more stressed while speaking English in some situations than in others. It sought to discover the phenomenon of language anxiety from both within and outside of the language classroom settings in a wider social context. Furthermore, it explored whether the factors originated from the learners' own sense of self, from the language learning process, or from the situation or social environment they were a part of.

**Methodology:** A qualitative research methodology was used in the study, specifically a phenomenological type that studied the lived experiences of high school students dealing with English anxiety, characterized by emotional distress and self-doubt in English contexts. Through in-depth interviews and observation with 10 students from Abas National High School and Fr. Arnoldus High School who were chosen through purposive sampling, the research examined their emotional responses, challenges, and coping mechanisms.

**Results:** Participants reported fear of mistakes, feelings of inadequacy, and anxiety during English communication. Influencing factors included language proficiency, cultural backgrounds, past experiences, and social pressures. Findings reveal diverse coping strategies such as avoidance, self-regulation, social support, and language enhancement.

**Conclusion:** There is an anxiety in the speaking the English language among the Grades 11 and 12 students from the different strands in Abas National High School and Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated. The examination of students' viewpoints of anxiety related to speaking English demonstrated a range of feelings, from pride and assurance to serious nervousness and trepidation. Students use a variety of coping mechanisms to get through these difficulties. By elucidating these experiences, this study contributes to understanding the complexities of language-related anxiety and offers insights for educators, counselors, and policymakers in fostering supportive environments for language learners navigating English anxiety.

**Keywords:** English Anxiety, Interventions, Coping Mechanisms



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## INTRODUCTION

English holds significant importance as an international language, serving as a crucial tool for global communication, business, and diplomacy. Its widespread use across various domains underscores its role in facilitating cross-cultural interactions and international collaboration (Crystal, 2008). As a dominant language in science, technology, and media, proficiency in English opens doors to numerous opportunities and is essential for global engagement (Graddol, 2006). Understanding its impact is fundamental in addressing educational and professional needs in a globalized world. Given the above present conditions, the Philippines is among the many nations which regard English language as a powerful tool to international elevation, prompting its national educational units to incorporate English as a medium of instruction. Within 15 years of the implementation of this policy, international studies began divulging that students who adapt English as a second language experience language anxiety, specific to speaking. This anxiety nourishes feelings of incompetence, reluctance in communicating, depression, and threat (Burden and Oxford, 2005; Liu and Jackson, 2008).

In the context of education, it is very important that a student should possess effective communication skills using English as the medium of communication in interacting with their teachers in a classroom. However, not all students can communicate themselves effectively in English in a language classroom. A student may have an idea to answer, participate or interact with his/her teacher during the teaching and learning process, but may choose not to answer because one factor that affects a student to participate is his/her language anxiety in speaking English in a language classroom.

Language anxiety, as defined by Gardner and MacIntyre (1993; as cited in Daubney, (2015), is the fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in the second or foreign language or the worry and negative emotional reaction when learning or using a second language. It is classified into four categories namely communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and English classroom anxiety.

The Philippine government implemented Executive Order 210 which mandates strengthening the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system. However, in this process of involving the English language from childhood up until now, there are instances that a student is having a hard time learning and using the English language. According to Sabbah (2018), the receptivity of students to all subjects and a second language directly affects various variables. These factors include anxiety, classroom climate and procedures, cultural shock, attention span, and confidence. In behavioral sciences, anxiety is known to be a sense of worry, nervousness, or discomfort over something with an unsure result and a deep willingness or concern to do or do something (Russell, 2020). Therefore, we can say that all these factors are somehow connected.

Because of the use of the English language in the Philippines, many students are engaged in learning activities that will help them to improve their language and communication skills in English. However, some of these students encountered anxiety as they acquired and further manifested the English language. Anxiety is one of the factors that hinder the student's development in the English language. As eloquently studied by Nechita, Nechita, and Motorga (2018), anxiety is a condition that can influence life on multiple levels without having a predetermined way of action.

The major purpose of the study is to find out why learners feel anxious or embarrassed when speaking the English language and what influence it can have on their English communication skills. It will look into the factors or sources that make students feel more stressed while speaking English in some situations than in others. It seeks to discover the phenomenon of language anxiety from both within and out of the language classroom settings in a wider social context. That is to know, whether the factors originate from the learners' own sense of self, from the language learning process, or the situation or social environment they are a part of.



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## FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis has been a prominent theory in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) since its introduction in the 1970s. This hypothesis posits that emotional factors, such as anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence, play a crucial role in language learning, affecting the ability of learners to acquire a second language effectively. The hypothesis suggests that when learners are relaxed, motivated, and feel low levels of anxiety, their "affective filter" is low, allowing input to be acquired more easily and facilitating language acquisition.

Krashen's hypothesis is grounded in several theoretical foundations:

#### Input Hypothesis

According to Krashen, language acquisition occurs through exposure to comprehensible input, which is language that learners can understand just beyond their current proficiency level. However, the ability to process this input effectively can be hindered by a high affective filter. When learners are anxious or stressed, their affective filter rises, making it more difficult for them to receive and process input, thereby impeding language acquisition.

#### Affective Variables

Krashen identifies affective variables, such as motivation and anxiety, as critical factors that influence language learning outcomes. Motivation enhances learning by encouraging learners to engage with the language and seek out opportunities for practice. Conversely, anxiety can act as a barrier, preventing learners from taking risks in using the language or engaging fully in language learning activities.

Numerous studies have provided empirical support for the Affective Filter Hypothesis across different learner populations and language learning contexts:

#### Anxiety and Language Performance

Research has consistently shown that high levels of anxiety negatively impact language performance. For example, studies by Horwitz (2001) found that language learners with higher levels of anxiety tend to perform worse in speaking tasks compared to their less anxious peers.

#### Motivation and Language Acquisition

Motivation has been identified as a significant predictor of language learning success. Dörnyei (2009) highlighted the role of motivation in sustaining learners' engagement and persistence in language learning activities, thereby reducing the affective filter and promoting language acquisition.

#### Classroom Environment

Studies examining classroom environments conducive to language acquisition have shown that creating a supportive and low-anxiety atmosphere can enhance learners' ability to acquire a second language (Pawlak, 2005). This underscores the importance of reducing affective barriers in educational settings to optimize language learning outcomes.

Affective Filter Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen offers valuable insights into the role of affective factors in second language acquisition. Supported by theoretical frameworks and empirical research, this hypothesis underscores the

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significance of reducing anxiety and enhancing motivation to facilitate effective language learning. By integrating these insights into language teaching practices, educators can create supportive learning environments that empower learners to overcome affective barriers and achieve proficiency in their second language.

Additionally, the theoretical framework of this study is based on the **Communication Apprehension Theory**. Communication Apprehension Theory, initially proposed by James McCroskey in the 1970s, explores the phenomenon of anxiety or fear experienced by individuals when faced with communication in various contexts. This theory posits that communication apprehension (CA) exists on a continuum, ranging from low to high levels of anxiety, and influences individuals' willingness and ability to engage in communication behaviors. Understanding CA is crucial as it impacts communication effectiveness, interpersonal relationships, and academic or professional success.

Communication Apprehension Theory is grounded in several key principles:

### Trait and State Anxiety

McCroskey distinguishes between trait CA, which reflects a predisposition towards anxiety in communication across situations, and state CA, which refers to temporary anxiety specific to particular communication contexts. Both forms of CA can inhibit individuals from effectively expressing themselves and engaging in interpersonal interactions.

### Influence on Communication Behaviors

High levels of CA can lead individuals to avoid communication situations, experience physiological symptoms (such as increased heart rate or sweating), and exhibit communication behaviors that hinder effective message delivery and reception.

Empirical research has provided substantial support for Communication Apprehension Theory across diverse contexts and populations:

### Academic Settings

Studies by McCroskey and Richmond and Daly and McCroskey have found that high CA is associated with poorer academic performance, particularly in tasks requiring oral communication (e.g., presentations, class discussions). Students with high CA may avoid participating in class, which limits their opportunities for learning and skill development.

### Professional Contexts

In workplace settings, individuals with high CA may struggle with networking, public speaking, and expressing ideas effectively to colleagues or clients. High CA can hinder career advancement and limit opportunities for professional growth.

### Interpersonal Relationships

CA can also impact interpersonal relationships by influencing individuals' ability to initiate conversations, share thoughts and feelings, and resolve conflicts constructively. High CA may lead to social withdrawal and feelings of isolation.

Lastly, this study is also anchored on the **Self-efficacy Theory in Second Language Acquisition**. Albert Bandura's Self-efficacy Theory has been an influential framework in understanding the cognitive and motivational processes involved in second language acquisition (SLA). This theory posits that individuals' beliefs in their own abilities to succeed in specific tasks, including language learning, significantly influence their motivation, persistence, and performance. Self-efficacy beliefs are shaped by past experiences, social influences, and cognitive appraisal of one's capabilities, and they play a crucial role in determining the effort and perseverance learners invest in language learning tasks.



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Self-efficacy Theory is built upon several key principles that are particularly relevant to SLA:

### Beliefs in Ability

According to Bandura, individuals develop beliefs about their capabilities based on their past experiences, observations of others, and feedback received from their environment. In the context of language learning, learners with high self-efficacy believe they can effectively learn and use a second language, which enhances their motivation and engagement in learning activities.

### Outcome Expectations

Self-efficacy beliefs are intertwined with outcome expectations, which refer to learners' expectations about the consequences of their actions. Positive outcome expectations reinforce learners' confidence in their language learning abilities, whereas negative expectations can undermine motivation and persistence.

Empirical studies have provided substantial support for Self-efficacy Theory in SLA, highlighting its relevance across different learner populations and educational settings:

### Language Learning Performance

Research by Pajares and Schunk (2001) and Ushioda (2009) has demonstrated that learners with higher self-efficacy tend to demonstrate better language learning outcomes. These learners are more likely to set challenging goals, persist in the face of difficulties, and utilize effective learning strategies, which contribute to their linguistic proficiency.

### Motivation and Persistence

Self-efficacy beliefs influence learners' motivation and persistence in language learning. Studies by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) have shown that learners with strong self-efficacy are more intrinsically motivated to engage in language learning activities and are less deterred by setbacks or challenges.

### Language Learning Strategies

Effective use of language learning strategies is closely linked to self-efficacy beliefs. Learners with high self-efficacy are more likely to employ adaptive strategies such as seeking opportunities for practice, seeking help when needed, and persisting in language learning tasks (Zimmerman and Bandura, 2004).

Self-efficacy Theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the cognitive and motivational aspects of second language acquisition. Supported by theoretical foundations and empirical research, this theory highlights the pivotal role of learners' beliefs in their own capabilities in shaping their language learning experiences and outcomes. By integrating insights from Self-efficacy Theory into language teaching practices, educators can create supportive learning environments that empower learners to develop confidence, motivation, and proficiency in their second language.



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## Objectives

This study sought to explore the intricacies of English anxiety in this specific context, aiming to understand the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon and its impact on students' language learning experience and overall well-being. The researcher then asked the following questions:

1. How do Senior High School learners view English speaking anxiety?
2. What are the common difficulties of Senior High School learners when speaking the English language?
3. How do the students with English speaking anxieties cope with these challenges?

## METHODS

### Research Design

This qualitative research study delved into the actual experiences of people from various cultural backgrounds, with an emphasis on English language anxiety in particular. The study used a phenomenological method to understand how English language anxiety affects learners of the 5 selected Grades 11 and 12 Senior High School students of Abas National High School and 5 Grades 11 and 12 Senior High School students of Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated along with their views towards speaking, challenges encountered, and their coping mechanisms.

This study used phenomenology since its main objective is to describe the English speaking anxiety of the selected Grades 11 and 12 senior high schools students. It is a qualitative research approach that focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and how they make sense of those experiences. Originating from the work of Edmund Husserl and later expanded by Martin Heidegger, phenomenology aims to explore and describe phenomena as they are experienced subjectively (Smith, 2008). This approach emphasizes understanding the essence of experiences from the participants' perspectives, without preconceived notions or theoretical impositions. Creswell and Poth (2018) highlight that phenomenological research in education helps uncover the essence of students' learning experiences, providing a deeper understanding of how they perceive their educational environment and challenges.

### Population and Sampling

The study was conducted at Abas National High School and Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated. It involved 10 purposely chosen Grades 11 and 12 Senior High School students who willingly subjected themselves to study. The 5 participants from Abas National High School were from the GENERAL ACADEMIC STRAND (GAS) as it is the only strand offered in this school and the 5 participants from Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated were from the HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES STRAND (HumSS). To ensure a diverse sample, participants were recruited from various cultural backgrounds, i.e, the Ilokano and Indigenous Ethnic groups enrolled in the school. Purposive sampling was used. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Crossman, 2020). They were selected based on their self-reported levels of English language anxiety and willingness to share their experiences.

### Instrument

Multiple instruments were employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews served as a primary tool, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' personal experiences and perceptions of anxiety related to English learning. Through open-ended questions, the 10 purposely selected participants from the two participating schools articulated their feelings, triggers, and coping strategies in detail. Complementing these interviews, structured surveys were administered to gather quantitative data on levels of English anxiety among participants. Lastly, observations in the classroom further enriched the data by recording non-verbal behaviors and contextual factors that contributed to anxiety. By integrating these diverse methods, the study leveraged triangulation to cross-verify findings and gain a holistic view of English anxiety, ensuring a robust and nuanced analysis of the issue.



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Triangulation was employed to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings by integrating multiple data sources, methods, or perspectives. By combining different types of data—such as interviews, and observations—researchers can cross-verify and obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach helps mitigate the limitations and biases associated with a single method, providing a richer and more nuanced perspective on the research question. For instance, while interviews offer detailed personal insights, focus groups reveal collective experiences, and observations capture contextual behaviors, triangulating these sources allows for a more robust analysis of complex issues (Flick, 2018).

### Data Gathering Procedures

The information gathered in this research study was based largely on the responses of the participants through interview, observation, and a questionnaire that was administered. The questionnaire consisted of different questions which elicited the experiences of the participants with regard to their English speaking anxieties along with their views on speaking, challenges encountered, and their coping mechanisms. The responses of the participants were compiled, transcribed, analyzed, and themed.

Prior to the collection of data, a letter seeking permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Head Teacher of Abas National High and Principal of Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated. Upon receiving the letter of approval and response, permission was also sought from the teachers of the different strands, the parents, and the participants. With the permission granted, the researcher engaged with the participants in a dialogue that sought to uncover their personal experiences and viewpoints. The interview was followed with a questionnaire that was administered. In this research study, the questionnaire used encouraged open-ended responses from the participants for more in-depth information. This allowed the researcher to collect open-ended data which gave way to explore the thoughts of participants, their feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic and to delve deeply into personal and sensitive issues. Lastly, the researcher conducted classroom observations by recording non-verbal behaviors and contextual factors that contributed to anxiety.

### Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis to make sense of the data gathered. It is an approach to classifying, evaluating, and understanding patterns, otherwise known as themes (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016) Coding, categorization, and the search for repeating themes are just a few of the procedures that made up the analysis. Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative studies because of the flexibility of its process, which is suited to an attempt to explain English language learning anxiety learning.

### Ethical Considerations

The research procedure was conducted in accordance with ethical standards to protect participants' rights to informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality. Prior to the conduct of the study, the permission was obtained from the Head Teacher of National High School and the Principal of Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated, the different Subject Teachers of Senior High School, the parents of the participants, and the participants. Likewise, the purpose of this study was also communicated to the participants prior to the conduct of interviews and survey.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings, analysis of the data collected, conclusions, and recommendations on the study. The findings were presented in relation to the research objectives stated in the study. The method used to analyze the data has been discussed in the previous chapter.



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## Findings

### 1. How do Senior High School learners view English speaking anxiety?

#### 1.1 What do you usually feel whenever the teacher lets you speak in front or during classes using the English language?

##### Views on English Speaking Anxiety

A range of attitudes and emotions concerning public speaking within a classroom or similar setting were elicited from the participants. One viewpoint expressed a mix of pride and nervousness when called upon to speak, indicating a sense of accomplishment alongside apprehension about being the center of attention. Another perspective emphasized primarily feeling nervous and shy about public speaking, reflecting a more inhibited approach to speaking in front of others. Additionally, one student described experiencing intense nervousness leading to physical symptoms like uncontrollable shivering, expressing disappointment in their perceived inability to effectively engage in public speaking. Concerns about making mistakes, pronunciation, and grammar were highlighted by another participant, indicating a level of anxiety surrounding the technical aspects of speaking. Despite these anxieties, some students conveyed a determination to do their best despite feeling nervous, while others simply stated feeling nervous without further elaboration. The overall portrayal captures a spectrum of emotions ranging from pride and determination to anxiety and self-doubt, reflecting the complexity of public speaking experiences within an educational context.

From the data collected, two themes emerged; **1) Emotional tension** (nervousness, fear of embarrassment, and worry about what others say) and **2) Physiological effects** (shivering/trembling).

##### **Nervousness**

Effective communication in English is crucial in today's globalized world. However, for many individuals, nervousness presents a significant hurdle in developing and utilizing English speaking skills to their fullest potential. The majority of the participants responded that whenever they were asked to speak using the English language, they usually felt nervous. For example, Participant 1 said,

*"I feel **nervous and shy** because my weakness is public speaking especially in front of my teacher."*

Similar responses were also elicited from Participants 2 to 10.

*"I feel **nervous** because **all of the audience's attention are found on me**. My body shivers uncontrollably which forces me to stop speaking when in front. I tend to feel disappointed of myself because I can't do public speaking." (Respondent 3)*

***Nervous**, worrying about making mistakes, concerns about pronunciation and grammar. (Respondent 4)*

According to Hashemi (2011), language learners typically show fear, anticipation, and nervousness as they learn a foreign language. Language anxieties may derive from the learners' sense of "self". It is also important to be knowledgeable about one's personal characteristics to understand and articulate a language and to imagine oneself while practicing a language.

##### **Fear of embarrassment/Worry about what others say**

Learners seem to be more anxious about how others may perceive them and how awful it may become when their lack of knowledge and low confidence come up when trying to use the English language. Although they have sometimes confidence in utilizing the language, they are afraid of what other people would think about them. This has been manifested in the responses as stated:



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*"I feel nervous and anxious. **I am not comfortable by people looking at me as if they are going to judge me.**" (Participant 8)*

*"I often feel proud because I was called to speak in front of my classmates to express my thoughts and ideas about our topic, but there is also a side of me who feel nervous because **a lot of people's attention are on me.**" (Participant 10)*

The elicited responses above have exemplified how the participants have been affected by the audience who surround them. Confidence plays a pivotal role in successful communication. However, nervousness erodes confidence levels, leading to self-doubt and reluctance to speak up. In language learning contexts, fear of making mistakes or being judged can undermine one's willingness to practice English speaking skills. This lack of confidence becomes a barrier to improving proficiency and achieving fluency, as individuals may avoid opportunities for language practice and interaction. The responses find similarities with other research findings such as Anwari (2019); Ahmed & Ahmed et al. (2017; Rafada (2017); Wong (2009); and Jackson (2002) who declared that most ESL learners had engaged with speaking anxiety for the reason that their peers kept laughing at them when they were speaking. Respondents become uneasy and anxious about their capability of delivering their ideas. They often felt cautious about others' perceptions of their language performance, thinking that anytime they might be adversely evaluated by their audience.

### Physiological effects (shivering/trembling)

Effective communication in English requires not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to convey ideas confidently and clearly. However, physiological responses such as trembling or shivering can significantly impair one's ability to speak English fluently and confidently. Respondents 3 and 7 confirmed that they had experienced anxiety through some physiological symptoms, particularly trembling or shivering of the body. As shared:

*"I feel nervous because all of the audience's attention are found on me. My **body shivers uncontrollably which forces me to stop speaking when in front.** I tend to feel disappointed of myself because I can't do public speaking." (Participant 3)*

*"I feel nervous and **trembling.**" (Participant 7)*

This revealed the participants' abrupt physical reaction to their speaking anxiety in English. This echoes what Lababidi (2016) found that fifty-three percent (53%) of the higher education students admitted that they were trembling or shivering when they knew that they would be called to speak in English in class.

## 1.2 How do you describe the process of speaking? Provide certain situations for your answer.

### PROCESS OF SPEAKING

This part explored speaking as a process, providing a range of viewpoints and insights into how people understand and use language. One participant emphasized the link between the brain and verbal expression, viewing speaking as the cognitive capacity to articulate words. Another emphasized the mental component of being ready to speak by comparing the procedure to organizing ideas, much as in an interview. In a similar vein, an alternative viewpoint emphasizes speaking as the act of expressing thoughts, words, and ideas from the mind, stressing the mental process associated with verbal expression.



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Linguistic difficulties are mentioned prominently, especially when speaking English. Another student reports having trouble pronouncing complex words and feeling self-conscious about possible grammatical faults.

Similar to presenting a project or giving a speech, another participant highlights the intricacy of speaking, particularly when using Standard English. This includes the necessity for coherent ideas, proper vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and clear delivery. Lastly, there are thoughts on the emotional side of speaking. Some students display anxiety and shyness, especially when speaking in front of an audience since they believe it to be a sign of weakness. When combined, these viewpoints provide a comprehensive explanation of the speaking process that considers linguistic, emotional, and cognitive aspects.

Apparently, two themes emerged; **1) Speaking is used to formulate thoughts and express ideas** and **2) Speaking is challenging.**

### **Speaking is used to formulate thoughts and express ideas**

Speaking English fluently and coherently is essential for articulating thoughts, expressing ideas, and engaging in meaningful discourse. Anxiety related to speaking skills can significantly impact individuals' ability to formulate thoughts and communicate ideas effectively in English.

Speaking anxiety often disrupts cognitive processes involved in formulating thoughts and organizing ideas (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1996). Fear of speaking in English may lead to cognitive overload, affecting individuals' ability to retrieve vocabulary, structure sentences, and convey meaning coherently (Derwing & Munro, 1997).

Persuasive speaking is the type of speaking that most people engage in the most. This type of speech can involve everything from arguing about politics to talking about what to eat for dinner. Persuasive speaking is very connected to the audience, as the speaker must, in a sense, meet the audience halfway. Persuasion, obviously, is not entirely controlled by the speaker persuasion occurs when an audience assents to what a speaker says. Consequently, persuasive speaking requires extra attention to audience analysis.

Furthermore, the responses can be corroborated by the initial study of Carney et al. (2010) which showed that communicating using the English language causes positive changes in the physiological, psychological, and behavioral domains of a person as they provide persuasion to people. This relates to the dominance of the participants' responses. As Participant 6 answered,

*"Speaking the English language enables us to communicate well with others and when we use proper words, we can easily persuade others in our talks."*

Still by Carney et al. (2010), persuasive speaking seeks to influence the beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviors of audience members. In order to persuade, a speaker has to construct arguments that appeal to audience members and has to be confident when delivering his message.

If students fail to express their thoughts when they make use of English they will also fail to persuade others about their views and claims on different topics worthy of discussion. The ability to persuade is crucial in the world of communication. On a day-to-day basis, one needs it to convince his/her classmates, his/her teachers, or anyone around him/her when he/she talks to them. If a person can master the art of persuasive communication, he/she can win the support of others, unify his/her team, and encourage them to work together. (Williams, 2007).

### **Speaking is challenging**

Speaking English fluently and confidently presents challenges for language learners, and anxiety related to speaking skills can significantly impact individuals' language acquisition and communication abilities.

Speaking anxiety is a common challenge among language learners, affecting their ability to communicate effectively in English-speaking environments (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1996). Fear of speaking, making mistakes, and being misunderstood



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can create psychological barriers that hinder language fluency and spontaneity (Derwing & Munro, 1997). This has been strengthened from the lines of Participants 4, 5 and 8:

*"Ti panagsao ket normal kadatayon ngem ti panagsao ti English ket narigat lalo ti panagsao ti sango ti kaadwan nga tao." (Speaking is normal for us; however, speaking in English is difficult specially in front of a crowd) (Participant 4)*

*"Speaking is normal for us. But speaking in English can be more challenging for us in terms of pronouncing difficult words. When I was in elementary school, there was a time when I spoke English in our class, but I still felt embarrassed because I might have wrong grammar and mispronounced words." (Participant 5)*

*"For me, the process of speaking is very complicated, especially when it is regarding the Standard English language. I must create thoughts, use of appropriate vocabulary, grammatically correct and deliver them clearly for the receiver to understand properly. Just like presenting a project or giving a speech." (Participant 8)*

According to Ortega (2009), understanding and applying grammatical structures correctly requires not only memorization but also the ability to adapt these structures in real-time conversations. This complexity can be overwhelming for learners, particularly those who are still mastering basic language skills. Performance pressure during speaking tasks may exacerbate anxiety, leading to speech hesitations, errors, and difficulties in maintaining coherent communication (Phillips, 1992). Simplified tasks reduce cognitive load, making it easier for learners to focus on language use rather than on complex task demands. According to Robinson (2007), task simplification involves breaking down complex tasks into smaller, more manageable components. This approach allows learners to gradually build their skills and confidence as they master each component.

### 1.3 Can you enumerate at least three (3) important roles of speaking in your part as a student and as a future professional?

#### Roles of Speaking

Speaking has several advantages and develops abilities that are essential for both professional and personal growth. From the different responses, the following has been elicited. First of all, speaking improves one's polished and effective professional speaking style. Additionally, it helps to increase vocabulary in English and increases confidence in the ability to articulate thoughts assertively and clearly.

Speaking also has a major role in developing teamwork, enhancing communication abilities, and promoting mutual understanding between people. Speaking is important for students because it gives them the chance to express their ideas, engage in class debates, and develop confidence that will serve them well in their future employment. Speaking clearly is essential in group settings and during presentations. It also acts as a channel for information dissemination and knowledge exchange.

Through speaking activities, students learn to speak confidently in front of large audiences, share their knowledge on specific topics, and refine their communication skills by exchanging ideas with peers. As emphasized in the Ilocano language of Participant 8,

*"Kas maysa nga estujante, ti communication ket maysa iti important nga parte ti panagsao, daytoy ket makatulong tapno maiwar/express ti karirikna ken makaited ti impormasyon. skills- masapul nga addaan ka ti effective nga panagpatang iti sango ti audience mo that you will be able to motivate and convince others. Building relationships- baben iti daytoy, mapatibker iti nasya-at nga connection iti maysa ken maysa."*

communication is a vital part of speaking, helping individuals express their feelings and convey information effectively. It is important to have the skills to engage the audience and build strong connections, thereby fostering robust relationships.



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Apparently, three themes emerged; **1) Speaking is for professional development and confidence building;** **2) Speaking is used for effective communication skills,** and **3) relationship building.**

### Speaking is for professional development and confidence-building

Effective speaking skills are not merely a tool for communication but a cornerstone of professional development and confidence building for students. Speaking proficiency equips students with essential communication skills that are indispensable in the professional world. Whether presenting ideas in class, participating in group discussions, or delivering formal presentations, students who can articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively stand out. These skills are invaluable in job interviews, where the ability to communicate confidently and professionally can make a significant impression on prospective employers.

Moreover, mastering speaking fosters critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among students. Engaging in debates, defending viewpoints, or presenting arguments requires students to analyze information critically, organize their thoughts logically, and articulate their positions effectively. These cognitive processes not only strengthen their academic performance but also prepare them for the complexities of decision-making and leadership roles in their future careers.

Beyond academic and professional contexts, speaking proficiency empowers students to become effective advocates for causes they believe in. Whether advocating for social justice, environmental sustainability, or community initiatives, students can use their speaking skills to inspire change, mobilize support, and amplify their voices on issues of importance. This advocacy not only enhances their leadership potential but also instills a sense of responsibility and civic engagement. This is being supported by the response of Participant 5 saying:

*"Speaking is important for me as a student because it helps me to share my ideas, join class talks, and gain confidence for the future. As a professional, speaking well will be crucial for presentations and working with others."*

Moreover, proficiency in speaking encourages lifelong learning and personal growth. Students who prioritize developing their speaking skills seek opportunities to refine their abilities, expand their knowledge base, and engage with diverse perspectives. This continuous pursuit of improvement not only enriches their educational experience but also equips them with the adaptability and resilience needed to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape. This is strengthened with Participant's 7 response saying:

*"In speaking, the confidence of each student is shaped here, where everyone learns how to speak in front of many people. In speaking, each student can share knowledge about a certain topic. In speaking, students hone their communication skills with their fellow students where they can exchange ideas about various things."*

Furthermore, in a research entitled, "The Impact of Communication Skills Training on Career Success" authored by Smith, J., Johnson, A., & Brown, C. and published under the Journal of Applied Communication Research, the findings of this research underscored the importance of speaking proficiency in shaping career trajectories and enhancing professional development. By investing in communication skills, organizations can cultivate a workforce that is not only competent in their technical skills but also adept at navigating interpersonal interactions and advancing their careers with confidence. This study provides compelling evidence that speaking skills are indeed crucial for professional success and confidence-building, highlighting the significance of effective communication in today's competitive job market.

Speaking English fluently and confidently is a fundamental goal for language learners, and anxiety related to speaking skills can significantly impact individuals' confidence levels. Confidence in speaking English positively correlates with language acquisition and proficiency (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1996). Learners who feel confident in their speaking abilities are more likely to engage in communication, practice language skills, and take risks in using English (Derwing & Munro, 1997).



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## Speaking is used for effective communication skills

Speaking is not just a mode of expression but a fundamental skill that underpins effective communication in various aspects of students' lives. Speaking facilitates clear and articulate expression of ideas and information. In academic settings, students regularly engage in discussions, presentations, and debates where they must convey their thoughts coherently to peers and instructors. Proficiency in speaking enables students to communicate complex concepts, share insights, and contribute meaningfully to class discussions, thereby enhancing their learning experience and academic performance.

Effective communication in English is essential for successful interaction in various personal, academic, and professional contexts. Anxiety related to speaking skills can significantly impact individuals' ability to communicate effectively in English. This was strengthened by the Iloco lines of Participant 8 stating:

*"Kas maysa nga estujante, ti communication ket maysa iti important nga parte ti panagsao, daytoy ket makatulong tapno maiwar/express ti karirikna ken makaited ti impormasyon. skills- masapul nga addaan ka ti effective nga panagpatang iti sango ti audience mo that you will be able to motivate and convince others. Building relationships- baben iti daytoy, mapatibker iti nasyaat nga connection iti maysa ken maysa"*

Proficiency in speaking English is crucial for clear and persuasive communication (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1996). Effective verbal communication skills enable individuals to express ideas coherently, engage in discussions, convey emotions, and negotiate meanings in diverse social and professional settings (Derwing & Munro, 1997).

Moreover, in the research entitled: "Speaking and Effective Communication Skills: A Longitudinal Study", it was found that there was a positive correlation between speaking proficiency and overall communication effectiveness. Students who consistently demonstrated strong speaking skills were more adept at organizing their thoughts, articulating ideas clearly, and engaging their audience effectively.

## Speaking is used for relationship building.

Effective communication in English plays a crucial role in building and maintaining relationships in personal, social, and professional contexts. Anxiety related to speaking skills can significantly impact individuals' ability to establish connections, collaborate, and foster meaningful relationships.

Speaking English proficiently facilitates interpersonal communication and relationship building (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1996). Clear and empathetic communication skills enable individuals to establish rapport, express empathy, and build trust in personal interactions (Derwing & Munro, 1997). This was exemplified in the lines of Participant 5 who stated:

*"Speaking is important for me as a student because it helps me to share my ideas, join class talks, and gain confidence for the future. As a professional, speaking well will be crucial for presentations and working with others."*

Anxiety related to speaking can hinder individuals' ability to initiate conversations, share thoughts, and engage meaningfully with others (Horwitz, 2001). Language proficiency impacts individuals' social integration and sense of belonging in English-speaking communities (Young, 2008). Speaking anxiety may lead to social withdrawal, isolation, and difficulties in forming friendships or professional networks (Phillips, 1992). Horwitz, Kohnert, and Cope (2004) emphasize that systematic language practice allows learners to develop proficiency and confidence, which are essential for overcoming anxiety. Additionally, MacIntyre and Gardner (2006) found that learners who engage in consistent practice experience a reduction in anxiety as they become more familiar with language structures and usage.



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## 2. WHAT ARE THE COMMON DIFFICULTY OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS WHEN SPEAKING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE?

Can you cite at least five (5) difficulties you are experiencing when speaking in English?

### Challenges in Speaking

This section delves into the diverse responses of participants regarding the challenges they encounter when speaking English with anxiety. The majority of participants expressed difficulty in speaking when their grammar was corrected in front of their classmates. Similarly, they also find it challenging to articulate their thoughts due to the fear of mispronouncing words. From the most frequent coded responses, subthemes for the challenges encountered were identified as; **1) fear of negative evaluation 2) lack of language skills, and 3) teacher factor.**

For many students, the most difficult aspect of public speaking is overcoming language and non-linguistic obstacles. Stuttering can be a major barrier for certain people since it can cause feelings of despair and embarrassment, as seen in the speech example when the speaker was unable to pronounce every word clearly as expected. Additionally, impeding public speaking are nervousness and anxiety, which make people stop speaking or find it difficult to express themselves clearly. Pronouncing words correctly, choosing the right words, and successfully communicating ideas are basic problems that many encounter. It can also be challenging to speak in front of a large crowd if you stutter or experience body tremors. Resolving these problems may take time. The obstacles go beyond language barriers; anxiety and shyness also play a part.

### Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation, often rooted in anxiety and self-consciousness, is a significant psychological barrier that profoundly affects the English speaking ability of learners. It arises from the apprehension of being judged unfavorably by others based on one's English speaking proficiency. This was exemplified in the answers elicited from Participants 3 and 10 who stated:

*"Nervousness and anxiety hinder me when speaking in public settings. Trying to be brave sometimes forces me to stop speaking, which then devastates me because many people saw it."*

*"Fear of being judged for grammar mistakes when speaking English in front of classmates and teachers."*

This fear can stem from past experiences of embarrassment or criticism, cultural expectations, or personal insecurities about language skills. As a result, affected learners may avoid speaking English altogether or restrict their participation in conversations. This avoidance behavior limits practice opportunities and hinders the development of fluency and confidence.

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as the apprehension or anxiety experienced by individuals about being judged or evaluated negatively by others. It is a key component of social anxiety and has been widely studied in the context of communication and social interactions. Leary (2001) describes FNE as a pervasive concern with how one is perceived by others, particularly in evaluative situations. This fear can lead to avoidance of social interactions or performance situations where individuals anticipate negative judgments.

Fear of negative evaluation exacerbates performance anxiety during English speaking tasks. The pressure to perform well in front of peers, teachers, or native speakers intensifies feelings of nervousness and self-doubt. This heightened anxiety often leads to physiological responses such as sweating, trembling, or stuttering, further impairing the learner's ability to articulate thoughts clearly and coherently.

Furthermore, the fear of negative evaluation creates a cycle of self-defeating beliefs and behaviors. Learners may internalize negative feedback or perceived judgment, leading to diminished self-esteem and motivation. This negative mindset perpetuates avoidance strategies and reluctance to engage in English-speaking activities, reinforcing the belief that they are incapable of achieving proficiency.



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Consequently, the impact of fear of negative evaluation extends beyond language proficiency to affect social integration and academic performance. In educational settings, learners may hesitate to participate in group discussions, presentations, or language assessments, which are crucial for language acquisition and assessment. This reluctance can hinder their overall academic progress and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### Lack of Language Skills

Language proficiency plays a pivotal role in the acquisition and mastery of any language, especially English, which has become a global lingua franca. For learners affected by limited language skills, the journey to speaking English fluently and confidently can be fraught with challenges and setbacks. Inadequate vocabulary poses a significant barrier to effective communication in English. Vocabulary forms the foundation of language proficiency, enabling learners to express themselves accurately and comprehend others. When learners lack essential vocabulary, they struggle to construct coherent sentences and convey their thoughts clearly. This deficiency not only impedes their speaking ability but also undermines their confidence in engaging in conversations. This claim is supported by the response of Participant 5 saying:

*"Finding the right words to express myself clearly is challenging. For instance, during a class discussion, I had a great idea but couldn't find the right words and ended up stumbling over my sentences."*

Grammar and syntax errors also plague learners with limited language skills. English grammar rules, with their nuances and exceptions, can be daunting for non-native speakers. Errors in grammar and syntax can distort the intended meaning of sentences, leading to misunderstandings and miscommunications. For instance, incorrect verb tense usage or subject-verb agreement issues can make speech sound awkward or confusing, hindering the flow of conversation. Supporting this claim was the response of participants 8 and 4 stating:

*"Pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar are challenging for me. Stuttering and forgetting what to say are common issues when speaking in front of the class. I also struggle with expressing thoughts into words and finding the right words."*

*"Difficulty in pronunciation, resulting in the inability to express thoughts clearly."*

Furthermore, pronunciation difficulties present formidable challenges for learners affected by limited language skills. English phonetics differ significantly from those of many other languages, making it challenging for learners to produce sounds accurately. Poor pronunciation can obscure the intended message, making it difficult for listeners to understand and respond appropriately. This frustration often leads to reluctance in speaking English, further stunting the development of fluency. Participants 4 and 6 support the claim stressing:

*"Difficulty in pronunciation, resulting in the inability to express thoughts clearly."*

*"Pronunciation is a major difficulty for me."*

Additionally, cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions pose challenges for learners with limited language skills. English, like any language, is rich in cultural references and idiomatic phrases that may not have direct translations in other languages. Without a deep understanding of these nuances, learners may struggle to grasp the subtleties of English conversation and may inadvertently cause confusion or offense.

Moreover, psychological factors such as anxiety and self-consciousness can exacerbate the impact of limited language skills on speaking ability. Fear of making mistakes or being misunderstood can paralyze learners, preventing them from actively participating in conversations or seeking opportunities to practice speaking English. This lack of practice further impedes their progress and reinforces their sense of inadequacy. This is what Participants 3 and 9 exactly felt and shared:



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*"Nervousness and anxiety hinder me when speaking in public settings. Trying to be brave sometimes forces me to stop speaking, which then devastates me because many people saw it."*

*"Nervousness and shyness hinder my ability to speak effectively."*

### Teacher Factor

The role of teachers is pivotal in shaping the language learning experience, especially when it comes to managing and mitigating English language anxiety among learners. English language anxiety among students is influenced significantly by teacher-related factors. This was exemplified by the lines of participant 10 who stated:

*"Fear of being judged for grammar mistakes when speaking English in front of classmates and teachers."*

Research consistently demonstrates that teacher support plays a crucial role in mitigating English language anxiety (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Supportive teachers who provide encouragement, constructive feedback, and create a positive classroom environment can reduce students' anxiety levels (Phillips, 1992). Conversely, perceived teacher criticism or lack of support exacerbates anxiety, affecting language learning outcomes (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

The teaching approach adopted by educators significantly impacts learners' English language anxiety. Teachers who employ communicative and student-centered methodologies tend to create a supportive and interactive learning environment. In contrast, teachers who predominantly focus on grammar drills, rote learning, or correction-oriented feedback may inadvertently heighten anxiety levels among students. Such approaches can make learners feel scrutinized and pressured to perform perfectly, contributing to fear of making mistakes and reluctance to speak English.

Effective teaching strategies contribute to anxiety reduction among English language learners. Communicative language teaching methods, where students engage in meaningful interactions and authentic language use, have been shown to lower anxiety levels (Derwing & Munro, 1997). Teachers who adopt learner-centered approaches and scaffold language tasks appropriately help students build confidence and competence in English (Horwitz et al., 2010).

### 3. COPING MECHANISMS OF STUDENTS HAVING ANXIETIES WHEN SPEAKING IN ENGLISH

**What do you usually do in order to express your ideas/thoughts through speaking in English?**

#### Ways of Coping with Speaking Anxiety

When speaking in English, students deal with their anxiety in a variety of ways. These include calming down using relaxation techniques, planning and organizing to communicate clearly and effectively, choosing terminology and language structure carefully, practicing consistently to build confidence and fluency, and clear and effective communication. Students hope to lessen their nervousness and improve their English-speaking skills by combining these techniques. Thus, the respondents still do their best to overcome their anxieties and be participative in classroom discussion and activities by applying various language strategies.

From the most coded responses, two themes on ways of coping were identified as: 1) **Preparation and Organization**, 2) **Mindfulness and Stress Management**.

#### Preparation and Organization

Language anxiety, the apprehension or fear experienced when learning or using a new language, can be a significant hurdle for many language learners. However, through effective preparation and organization, individuals can transform this anxiety into a manageable challenge and ultimately enhance their language learning experience.



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Preparation is fundamental in language learning as it involves organizing resources, understanding requirements, and setting realistic expectations. According to Gollwitzer and Sheeran (2006), effective preparation includes forming implementation intentions, which are specific plans about when, where, and how to perform the intended actions. This approach helps learners overcome obstacles and stay focused on their goals.

Goal setting plays a crucial role in language acquisition by directing attention and effort toward specific objectives. Locke and Latham (2002) argue that specific and challenging goals lead to higher performance compared to vague or easy goals. They suggest that setting clear, measurable goals helps learners maintain motivation and track their progress.

In the context of language learning, preparation and goal setting intersect to influence learners' self-efficacy and anxiety levels. For instance, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) discuss how setting achievable goals can reduce language anxiety by providing a structured path and enhancing learners' confidence. They emphasize the importance of aligning goals with learners' abilities and providing supportive feedback.

Moreover, Bandura's (2006) work on self-efficacy underscores the role of preparation and goal-setting in building learners' confidence. Bandura suggests that learners who engage in systematic preparation and set realistic goals are more likely to persevere and succeed in their language learning endeavors. To justify the claims, below are the sample verbalizations of the participants.

*"I select appropriate vocabulary and phrases to convey my message accurately and effectively." (Participant 2)*

*"I carefully select my words, structure sentences logically, and use appropriate tone and gestures to convey meaning appropriately." (Participant 4)*

Organizational strategies play a crucial role in reducing language anxiety by providing learners with a systematic framework for language learning activities. Tseng (2000) suggests that organizing study materials, scheduling regular practice sessions, and creating a conducive learning environment contribute to a sense of preparedness and confidence among language learners. Organizational strategies involve methods for managing and structuring information to enhance learning outcomes. According to O'Malley and Chamot (2004), these strategies help learners organize their thoughts, plan their tasks, and monitor their progress, leading to more efficient and effective learning. The verbalization of Participant 3 below justifies this.

*"For me, personally, I write down my thoughts first, then organize my ideas to effectively convey what I want to say."*

Cognitive and behavioral approaches highlight the importance of adopting positive thinking patterns and proactive learning behaviors to cope with language anxiety. In educational settings, self-efficacy beliefs affect students' academic motivation and performance. Schunk (2008) argues that self-efficacy influences students' choice of tasks, effort, persistence, and emotional reactions to challenges. Students who believe in their capabilities are more likely to engage in tasks with a positive attitude and employ effective learning strategies, thereby enhancing their overall academic performance. By fostering a growth mindset and encouraging persistence in the face of challenges, cognitive-behavioral approaches empower learners to view language learning as a progressive and rewarding experience (Dörnyei, 2005). The following statement of Participant 7 supports this finding:

*"To express my ideas in English, I prepare by thinking about what I want to say, listen to others, and speak slowly to be clear."*



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Mindfulness-based interventions typically involve practices such as meditation, mindful breathing, and focused attention to promote awareness and reduce stress. According to Kabat-Zinn (2003), MBIs help individuals develop a non-judgmental awareness of their thoughts and feelings, which can enhance emotional regulation and cognitive functioning. Recent studies have demonstrated that MBIs can positively affect learning by improving attention, reducing stress, and increasing emotional resilience (Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Zeidan et al., 2010). For example, a study by Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, and Freedman (2006) found that participants who engaged in mindfulness practices reported lower levels of anxiety and improved performance in language-related tasks. The verbalizations of Participants 9 and 10 below justify this.

*"For me, I will relax myself so that I will not be nervous."*

*"For me, I will relax myself and be confident."*

#### 4. What possible intervention plans can be proposed to address the English speaking anxiety of the students?

##### Intervention Plans

This part summarizes the intervention plans students employ to overcome anxiety and fears when speaking in English. These include practicing and preparing before speaking, maintaining confidence and perseverance, accepting mistakes, and embracing progress. By combining these strategies, individuals aim to build confidence and reduce anxiety, thereby improving their ability to speak English effectively. From the most coded responses, three themes emerged: 1) **Practice and Preparation** 2) **Confidence and Perseverance** and 3) **Mindfulness and Stress Management**.

##### Practice and Preparation

Practice is a fundamental component of language learning and can significantly impact learners' confidence and competence in using English. According to O'Malley and Chamot (2005), regular practice helps learners build confidence and competence in language use, which can reduce anxiety associated with speaking and writing in English. A study by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) found that learners who engaged in both regular practice and careful preparation reported lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of confidence. The study suggests that integrating practice with preparatory activities creates a supportive learning environment that addresses both skill development and emotional readiness. To justify the claims, below are the sample verbalizations of the participants.

*"I usually practice my speech or the things that I will say in front of everyone to avoid stuttering or incorrect pronunciation to overcome things that will lessen my anxiety." (Participant 1)*

*"I usually practice my speaking first or try to speak in front of my friends so that in the actual speaking, I may be able to ease or reassure myself that it's alright to avoid wrong pronunciation or other mistakes." (Participant 3)*

*"I will practice to be confident in public speaking so that I will overcome my fear." (Participant 9)*

##### Confidence and Perseverance

Confidence significantly affects language learning outcomes by influencing learners' willingness to engage in language practice and their perception of their abilities. According to Bandura (2006), self-efficacy, or the belief in one's capability to



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succeed in specific tasks, plays a central role in determining motivation and learning outcomes. High levels of self-efficacy can lead to increased effort and persistence, while low self-efficacy may result in avoidance and reduced performance. The following statements echo the claims of Participants 2 and 10:

*"I maintain confidence in my ability to express myself in English, knowing that practice and perseverance lead to improvement."*

*"The strategies I usually employ to at least overcome the anxiety of speaking in English are to be confident and believe in myself."*

Dörnyei (2005) emphasizes the role of perseverance in language acquisition, highlighting the importance of setting long-term goals and maintaining motivation throughout the learning process. By encouraging learners to view mistakes as opportunities for growth and embracing challenges as part of the learning journey, educators can foster resilience and mitigate anxiety associated with language performance (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). The following statements of Participant 8 support this finding:

*"Whenever I am going to present in front of the class, I prepare myself, take deep breaths (inhale and exhale) to lessen the nervousness, avoid negative thoughts, and practice my lines. Once the presentation is done, I embrace my mistakes and celebrate progress. It takes time to overcome fears, so be patient with yourself. Masasanay ka rin."*

### **Mindfulness and Stress Management**

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) are increasingly recognized for their effectiveness in reducing anxiety and enhancing well-being in various contexts, including language learning. Mindfulness, a concept derived from Eastern meditation practices, has been increasingly recognized in Western psychology and education. According to Kabat-Zinn (2003), mindfulness is defined as the practice of maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment. It involves a non-judgmental and accepting attitude toward one's experiences. This definition underscores mindfulness as an active engagement with the present moment, fostering a deeper understanding of oneself and one's experiences. Mindfulness has been shown to have significant benefits for learning and educational outcomes. According to Zeidan et al. (2010), mindfulness practices can improve cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and executive functioning. Their research indicates that mindfulness training enhances concentration and working memory, which are crucial for effective learning and academic performance. By fostering a heightened state of awareness, mindfulness helps learners remain focused and reduces cognitive distractions. Furthermore, a meta-analysis by Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, and Walach (2014) provides evidence of mindfulness interventions leading to improvements in academic achievement, stress reduction, and emotional regulation among students. Their findings suggest that mindfulness helps students manage stress and anxiety, which in turn supports better learning outcomes and overall well-being.

Stress reduction techniques, such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery, are integral components of MBIs aimed at managing language anxiety. These techniques help learners alleviate physiological symptoms of anxiety, such as increased heart rate and shallow breathing, thereby promoting relaxation and emotional regulation (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). The verbalizations below justify.

*"To overcome anxiety and fears when I am speaking English, agraktis nak, aganges nak ti nauneg ken agrelox."*

*"I practice with friends or in the mirror, reminding myself that mistakes are normal. I focus on my message rather than perfect grammar, taking deep breaths and speaking slowly for confidence."*



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Mindfulness and stress management interventions offer valuable strategies for addressing English anxiety by promoting self-awareness, stress reduction, emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and attentional control among language learners. By incorporating mindfulness practices into language learning curricula and providing opportunities for learners to cultivate mindfulness skills, educators can create supportive environments that empower learners to manage anxiety effectively and achieve successful language learning outcomes.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings and interpretation of the data, the following conclusions were drawn:

There is an anxiety in the speaking the English language among the Grades 11 and 12 students from the different strands in Abas National High School and Fr. Arnoldus High School of Sallapadan, Abra Incorporated. The examination of students' viewpoints of anxiety related to speaking English demonstrated a range of feelings, from pride and assurance to serious nervousness and trepidation. While some students are eager to talk in English, others have difficulty with non-linguistic barriers like shyness, anxiety, and fear of being judged, as well as language difficulties like pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Students use a variety of coping mechanisms to get through these difficulties, including deep breathing exercises, planning and organizing, deliberate vocabulary and linguistic structure selection, and constant practice. These coping strategies are meant to lower anxiety and boost self-assurance when speaking English. Furthermore, suggested intervention techniques emphasize rehearsing and getting ready before speaking, remaining persistent and confident, accepting mistakes, and appreciating improvement over time.

## Recommendations

In view of the drawn findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends the following:

### 1. Education and Awareness

Educators should raise awareness about speaking anxiety and provide resources and support to help students effectively manage their anxiety. English learners and English teachers should be aware of their obstacles, sources of anxiety, and feelings towards English, such as being nervous, being intimidated by the teacher, being shy, and in losing self-confidence.

### 2. Skill Development

Skill development plays a pivotal role in addressing English anxiety by empowering learners with the tools and capabilities needed to navigate language challenges effectively. By focusing on enhancing speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills, educators can create structured learning environments that promote confidence,

competence, and resilience among learners. These efforts not only foster language proficiency but also contribute to a positive learning experience where anxiety diminishes as learners gain mastery and proficiency in English. As educators and learners continue to prioritize skill development, they pave the way for overcoming language anxiety and achieving success in English language acquisition.

### 3. Peer Support

Peer support plays a pivotal role in addressing English anxiety by fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment where learners can practice, learn, and grow together. Through peer interactions, learners enhance their confidence, language proficiency, and resilience in managing anxiety-related challenges. Educators and language practitioners can leverage peer support mechanisms to create inclusive learning communities that empower learners to overcome language barriers, build meaningful connections, and achieve successful outcomes in English language acquisition.



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By integrating peer support strategies into language learning programs, educators contribute to a holistic approach that promotes social-emotional learning, cultural competence, and academic achievement among language learners. Ultimately, peer support not only enhances language learning experiences but also cultivates lifelong skills and attitudes essential for navigating diverse linguistic and cultural contexts in today's globalized world.

#### 4. Professional Development

Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in addressing speaking anxiety and facilitating effective speaking practice. Professional development plays a pivotal role in addressing English anxiety by equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to create supportive learning environments and promote language confidence among learners. By investing in ongoing professional development, educational institutions empower educators to effectively mitigate anxiety-related challenges, foster inclusive learning communities, and enhance language learning outcomes for all learners. Ultimately, professional development serves as a catalyst for transforming educational practices, nurturing educator expertise, and ensuring equitable access to quality language education that empowers learners to thrive in today's globalized world.

#### 5. Individualized Support

Offer individualized support and guidance to students experiencing significant speaking anxiety, including counseling services and targeted interventions to build confidence and reduce anxiety.

#### 6. Celebrating Progress

Emphasize the importance of celebrating progress and embracing mistakes as part of the learning process, fostering a positive and encouraging atmosphere for students to develop their English-speaking skills.

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