


An Investigation into the Causes of Students' Anxiety in Learning English Speaking Skills

Tran Thi Trang Loan^{1*}

¹ Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry (HUPI), Vietnam

*Corresponding author's email: trangloantran123@gmail.com

*  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9480-9075>

*  <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.222312>

Received: 25/04/2022

Revision: 13/06/2022

Accepted: 13/06/2022

Online: 16/06/2022

ABSTRACT

Keywords: speaking skills, affective factor, oral performance, inhibition, anxiety

The origins and effects of anxiety in learning English speaking skills are explored in this research report. Because the study's focus was on the affective aspect of young learners experiencing mental and physical changes, 150 students and four speaking teachers at the College of Electro-Mechanics, Construction and Agro-Forestry of Central Vietnam (CECAC) were chosen as participants in this research. This study was conducted using quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches, which were complimentary. The data collected from the two methods reveals that the reasons for posing inhibition among the students come from themselves, their teachers, and other sources as well. Anxiety, an affective factor, was noticed to interfere significantly with the outcome of students' performance in speaking classes. To help the students become less inhibited, suggestions for employing strategies were also put forward for students and local teachers to help reduce speaking anxiety.

Introduction

Research has long noticed foreign language anxiety as one of the important barriers which may cause various difficulties for language learners. As shown in previous studies, language anxiety ranks high among the factors that prevent language learners from speaking the target language fluently and accurately. In recent decades, many studies on language anxiety in a foreign language and second language learning have been undertaken (Scovel, Horwitz, Horwitz, & 163 Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, etc.) and in foreign language speaking skills in particular (Woodrow, 2006; Liu, 2006; Lu & Liu, 2011; Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2014; Salem & Dyiar, 2014). Nevertheless, contrary to what has been happening abroad, less research has been conducted and acknowledged factors causing anxiety in foreign language learning in Vietnam. Only a few empirical studies have touched on the aspects of anxiety (Nguyen, 2014). The reality shows that when learners are in speaking English courses, they

only get support and guidance to develop their English language orally, but very little formal guidance is put forward to reduce their anxiety. Subsequently, learners who experience English speaking anxiety face difficulties as they are asked to present their ideas, even after learning the language for a long time. Therefore, the present research aims at investigating speaking-in-class anxiety with a main focus on the non-English-majored freshmen at CECAC.

Literature review

The importance of learning speaking and problems with its practice

Speaking is often considered the most prominent aspect of the usage of a foreign language. Because people who know a language are frequently referred to as speakers of that language, Ur (2000) claimed that speaking might be considered the most crucial and extremely required for efficient communication of the four language skills (Brown & Yule, 1983; Ur, 1996). Despite that argument, Horwitz et al. (1986) once claimed that when people speak in a second language (L2), they tend to become more apprehensive and tense and thus more unwilling to participate in a conversation.

In the process of learning a second or foreign language, Krashen (1981) described the Affective Filter as a mental block created by affective elements such as excessive anxiety, strong inhibition, low self-esteem, and low motivation. Accordingly, students who have the Affective Filter frequently have difficulty learning to speak the language as they do not want to engage in oral performance willingly. Moreover, they tend to experience language learning disabilities (Banks, 2008). Therefore, it is obvious that to maximize individual language use. We need to minimize the factors that decrease the outcome of speaking skills, Dörnyei (2005).

Foreign language learning anxiety

Generally, research defines language anxiety as "the feeling of apprehension, nervousness, tension, and worry linked with a stimulation of the autonomic nervous system" (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p.125). Different aspects of anxiety were noticed in a definition in MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a). According to the two researchers, anxiety manifests as a basic personality feature, an emotional state, and anxiety about a specific event. Anxiety as a general personality trait means anxiety is a constant feature of someone's personality. People who experience generalized anxiety often feel anxious in various situations. Meanwhile, situational anxiety tends to happen in certain circumstances where people are involved. Hashimoto (2002) argued that L2 anxiety significantly negatively influences perceived competence. Therefore, anxiety has been noticed as a major factor that causes learners to avoid or reduce communication, which in turn hinders their learning outcomes (MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Speaking Anxiety

It has been noticed that, unlike in writing, where each learner can get on by themselves, without disturbing their classmates, at their speed, speaking skills, however, require the learners to engage in conversations in which they become members. Also, a certain amount of research has

acknowledged that compared to other language skills such as listening, writing, and reading, speaking or communicating in the foreign language classroom has been the most crucial source of anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Liu, 2006; Young, 1990; Phillips, 1992; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). Speaking, in its most basic form, can be defined as a productive and engaging ability that involves four distinct cognitive stages: conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring (Levelt, cited in Pawlak, 2015). As this technique is accomplished in such a short amount of time, it appears that controlling all of the phases will be difficult for the speakers. Furthermore, successful completion of the stages is contingent on the learner's automaticity, which may provide some significant challenges, making them feel apprehensive when speaking spontaneously in the classroom. (Huang, 1998). To this argument, Yashima (2002) revealed in his study that a higher level of oral participation results from a combination of a low level of anxiety and a high level of perceived L2 communicative competence. Students who are anxious and consequently self-evaluated as less competent tend to speak less (Islam, Ahmad & Islam, 2022; Vo, 2021, Dörnyei, 2005). Moreover, Pabro-Maquidato (2021) and MacItyre et al. (2002) stated that if students assume their level of linguistic proficiency is low, it makes individuals hesitant to communicate in the L2 and, as a result, discourages them from doing so. Hence, to help students become less inhibited, it is crucial to understand what causes speaking anxiety in foreign language-speaking classrooms and thus overcome those barriers of language anxiety.

Research Questions

This paper seeks to address the following research questions in order to address the issues:

1. What variables contribute to the students' fear of learning to speak in class?
2. What strategies should be used to help students overcome their fear of learning to speak?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The participants of this study are two distinct groups of respondents. The first group involved in this study were 150 non-English major freshmen from College Electro-mechanics, Construction, and Agro-forestry of Central Vietnam (CECAC). These students studied different fields, including engineering, financing and banking, business administration, and accounting. Six of the 150 students taking part in the questionnaire survey were randomly selected to answer the questions in the interview section. The second cohort of participants comprised four teachers who were invited to participate in the interview. At this college, the teachers have a variety of experience teaching English speaking skills. Their ages range from 26 to 50, and they have 3 to 15 years of teaching experience.

Design of the Study

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain relevant and reliable data for the study. These two approaches are believed to bring the greatest value when they are combined (Johnson & Christensen, 2008).

Data collection and analysis

In terms of data collection for the current study, questionnaires and interviews were employed. The data collected from these instruments was cross-validated to improve their quality and validity. (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). For the quantitative method, the author used questionnaire systems, which were adapted from Abedini and Chalak (2017). This helps the researcher gain a high level of reliability through the data collected from the questionnaire (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). To maximize students' beliefs about the causes of anxiety in learning English speaking skills at the college, the questionnaire includes both closed and open-ended questions. Besides, the use of the qualitative method allows the researcher to collect data flexibly through semi-structured interviews. This helps understand the students' and teachers' concepts of the major causes of speaking anxiety among the students deeply.

To serve the data analysis, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 22 was used to examine data from the survey through the calculation of mean scores (M)" and standard deviation (St. D). In the interview section, the most crucial questions listed in the questionnaires were picked out, modified, and transformed into open-ended questions to make the research data more cross-validated. Based on the results of the questionnaires and analyzed data acquired during the interviews, major causes of speaking anxiety were identified. Then, ultimately, solutions would be put forward to help students overcome anxiety.

Findings and discussion

Factors Causing Students' Speaking Anxiety in the Classroom

Research Question 1 is aimed at exploring possible causes of anxiety for freshmen when they learn speaking skills in classrooms. The research results gained through combining the two approaches are believed to bring about the greatest research value, which is presented below.

*Linguistic Factors***Table 1.** Linguistic Factors causing anxiety in learning English speaking skills

No	Language knowledge-related factors	N	M	St. D
1	I don't have good knowledge of vocabulary to express myself.	150	3.90	1.239
2	I am not knowledgeable enough so I could talk freely.	150	3.57	1.297
3	English grammar rules make me overwhelmed.	150	3.52	1.274
4	I am so embarrassed about my pronunciation and accent.	150	3.50	1.284
5	I don't believe I have the ability or the desire to learn a new language.	150	3.43	1.253
6	I get more anxious when teachers are saying in English but I cannot understand.	150	3.35	1.200
7	When I am required to speak in English class without prior preparation, I become anxious.	150	3.47	1.256
8	The complexity of the assignment provided determines whether or not I will be worried in English class.	150	3.25	1.221

As displayed in table 1, the result demonstrates numerous factors associated with the assumption of a low level of language capability among the students. The research results show that linguistic factors are linked to the occurrence of speaking anxiety.

Initially, a low self-perception of English competence causes anxiety when speaking in class. Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 show students' assumptions about their English ability. "I don't have a broad vocabulary with which to express myself." and "English grammar rules make me overwhelmed" or "I am so embarrassed about my pronunciation and accent" received $M = 3.90$, 3.57 , 3.32 , and 3.50 , respectively. Furthermore, the belief of not having the ability or gift of being able to learn a new language, $M = 3.43$ and feeling anxious when they cannot catch up with what their teacher is saying also resulted in passiveness among students, $M = 3.35$. Similarly, there was a great agreement among students saying that the assignments' degree of difficulty and not having preparation before lessons somehow made them inhibited in engaging in oral performance with $M = 3.47$ and $M = 3.325$, respectively.

Along with these statistics, the responses gained in the interviews with the students and teachers also reflect their similar attitudes toward causes of speaking anxiety. It is indicated that 4 out of the six respondents made the same answer when saying that in most cases, they felt anxious to speak in the classroom because their language knowledge was not good enough to communicate. For instance, (S3) assumed that her level of language competence was low by saying:

[...] "I think that my English ability is still weak; I need more vocabulary to speak or respond to the teacher's queries... so I am fairly quiet in the classroom, particularly during speaking periods."

Or another student reasoned:

[...] "I assume I am not gifted at studying English because I spent so much time acquiring it, but it turned out that the learning outcome is not as good as what I have expected in this subject." This interview response is the same as the results of the questionnaire (item 5, table 1).

Teacher and classroom environment-related factors

Table 2: Teacher and classroom environment-related factors causing anxiety in English speaking skills

No	Teacher and classroom environment-related factors	M	N	St. D
1	I don't like to be negatively evaluated by the teacher and that is why I try to avoid speaking.	150	3.32	1.105
2	When I hear others talking English well, I lose my confidence.	150	3.27	1.189
3	When I talk incorrectly in English, I'm concerned that other classmates will laugh at me.	150	3.00	1.143
4	I feel demotivated when my classmates are far better than me while learning English in class.	150	2.91	1.161
5	My teachers normally strictly correct my mistakes, so I do not feel safe talking.	150	2.69	0.789
6	I do not like to work in pairs and groups assigned by teachers.	150	2.48	0.932
7	Teachers usually assign unfamiliar topics in class.	150	2.44	0.951
8	Teachers usually organize difficult speaking tasks	150	2.36	0.887

Regarding the results shown in table 2, teacher and classroom environment-related factors are closely associated with the occurrence of students' anxiety and speaking inhibition. Interestingly, the items displayed in this section fell into two separate groups. The first group included items from 1 to 5, which were considered to have a strong impact on a large number of the students' speaking anxiety. These factors can be named as being afraid of the teacher correcting mistakes, being negatively evaluated, afraid of being laughed at, feeling concerned that the other classmates will laugh when speaking incorrectly in English, feeling demotivated when seeing other classmates performing better. The "mean" of these items range from 3.32 to 2.69. The second group of items consists of the remaining statements in the table, from items 6 to 8. Notably, these items were not regarded as indicators of causing students in a classroom to become passive. In other words, students did not assume the teaching method, speaking topics as well as speaking activities arranged by the teacher... as inhibitors preventing them from speaking effectively in the English classroom. These items received a mean of 2.48, 2.44, and 2.36, respectively.

Regarding qualitative data gained in the interviews, when it comes to speaking practice, although some of the students claimed that correcting mistakes helps them improve their English, many of them stated that they felt anxious about it. For instance, one student expressed his thoughts as follows:

[...] "When I respond to the teacher's question, I often feel worried about making mistakes, especially being corrected and evaluated negatively. Sometimes corrections make me lose face and feel embarrassed. "

Besides, in the follow-up personal interview, one student described his situation:

[...] " I'm not nervous, hesitant, or anything like that when it comes to other lessons. When it comes to speaking sections, on the other hand, I'm usually nervous and inhibited. It gradually becomes a habit for me, and I find myself reluctant to speak in front of a large group. "

Speaking about this issue, the teacher in the interviews also reflected on the situation of students' passiveness. Below are noteworthy ideas from teachers' reasoning about the problem:

"I think they need to be more relaxed and build up the confidence to talk...T3" or "they should be more active to present their ideas...T1"

Strategies to reduce students' anxiety in English speaking performance

By applying interview methodologies, research question 2 attempted to determine the roles of students and teachers, which can assist in reducing students' nervousness and improving their oral communication abilities in English-speaking classes. The interviews were performed to thoroughly understand the teachers' and students' perspectives on the matter.

Teachers' strategies for reducing students' speaking inhibition

According to the interview, teachers appeared to have developed essential skills for getting students to speak up. Teachers' teaching strategies and methods of inspiring students, making error corrections, and creating a friendly environment, as evidenced in the responses, become markers that can assist in lessening students' speaking anxiety. Firstly, to the students' expectations, four out of six students agreed that teachers could use a range of teaching approaches to remove barriers that restrict students from participating in classroom activities. For example, the expressions listed below depict the students' mindset when asked how teachers can help them reduce their inhibitions in the classroom. "As I have seen, there are moments when we cannot understand the teacher's concepts or directions, and I get nervous if the teacher calls my name to speak. Therefore, I believe that teachers can manage these situations by describing and conveying their thoughts to students through synonyms and gestures." Besides, in a different response, S3 stated: "As I am a college student now, I wish I could communicate in English confidently when the time of graduation comes. To get that, I think I need to change my way of learning. I hope my English teachers can renew my learning methods and give me more energy. Together with the students' comment, here is a worthy response coming from teachers: "I believe that the types of tasks that a teacher organizes in the classroom can do a lot to eliminate students' inhibitions and boost their motivation... T2" and "...students are eager to talk when they recognize that the issue is fascinating and that they have something to say, or when there is a clear goal to achieve. Once again, great care should be taken to ensure that the task is appropriate for the student's abilities... T4."

Second, 100% of the teachers polled said that correction is a crucial factor in encouraging

students to speak up. One teacher said that "one of the key challenges for us as English teachers is error correction." I admit that I get irritated with them from time to time because of their "fossilized" errors. In most circumstances, though, I strive to remain calm and address my students' mistakes in a pleasant and encouraging manner. " Also, when it came to error fixing, one teacher provided the following method: "I don't correct every mistake because I want students to feel comfortable speaking and should always try." When they complete or pause for assistance, I address typical errors. "

Another point being noticed in the interview findings is that the majority of respondents said their favorite trait in a teacher is "friendly and loving." A teacher must exhibit motherly affection for their students, according to them. In the interview, students expressed their thoughts on the subject as follows: [...] "I hope that my teacher will be friendly and have a sense of humor. Also, I believe that a teacher should love their students as a mother would, so that she cares about our studies unconditionally... S3." Also, according to S6, "Because of being inhibited and anxious, we hope a teacher should be concerned about the feelings of a student."

Students' strategies for eliminating anxiety in speaking performance

As shown in the interview response, both teachers and students agreed that to eliminate speaking anxiety, and the students should apply some vital techniques. Two of the most suggestible ones are named as keeping practice and improving listening ability.

According to interviewees, both teachers and students, having more oral practice and spending more time preparing for the speaking tasks will make students more confident when speaking English in the classroom. Talking about this technique, T3 claimed: "As an experienced English-speaking teacher, it comes to my mind that students who spend more time practicing and engaging more with speaking tasks have far more confidence to talk compared to those who feel shy to do so." In the same line, most of the interviewed students also expressed the same comments. For instance, S6 said: "My experience in learning to speak is that if I practice talking more, I feel as if it becomes easier..." and "When I have time to prepare for a speaking lesson, I can communicate more confidently, S5". These interview responses align with the questionnaire survey result when most students agree that they feel anxious when being asked to talk without preparation for an English-speaking class (item 7, table 1).

Another noticeable learning strategy that both teachers and students proposed was practicing listening. The two groups believed research participants that listening is a vital tool that can help them improve their speaking capability. Following that, the students should maximize their time listening to English when and where they can. Besides the content of lessons in the textbooks, they should also listen to other sources of English via media channels and real-life conversations. S5 talked about this issue: "I have been trying to listen to my favorite programs, and it works as I find it is easier for me to cope with my speaking lessons in the classroom." And here is another claim shared by another interviewee: "Watching videos and movies that I like is the best way for me because I can entertain myself and improve my English at the same time." Following that, I can get more confidence in expressing myself in English better. S2".

Discussion

The results of two research questions were revealed through the questionnaire and interview as two research instruments. The findings of the first question indicated that the reasons posing speaking anxiety among the students come from themselves, their teachers, and other sources as well. Among those factors, the students' self-perceived language competence is considered the first barrier that strongly impacts the students and makes them anxious to perform willingly in a speaking classroom. More specifically, the students in the study believe that their sources of vocabulary are not broad enough ($M = 3.90$), their grammar knowledge is poor ($M = 3.52$), and their pronunciation sounds embarrassing ($M = 3.50$). As the participants assumed their level of linguistic proficiency was low, it led to the state of being reluctant as well as reduced their confidence in the language. Consequently, this makes them avoid communicating in the second language.

The findings above are consistent with the discussion in the literature review (see section 2.3). For example, MacIntyre et al. (2002) believe that a person's level of L2 proficiency has a profound influence on his/her willingness to talk. The result is also in the same line of research conducted previously by Pabro-Maquidato (2021) and Liu & Jackson (2008), concluding that students with low self-perceived verbal skills may be hesitant to try new experiences to speak the L2 in class as they are afraid of losing face when saying something wrong. In reality, if students have negative self-evaluation about their ability or the assumption of not being gifted at speaking English, they might become reluctant and inhibited to speak. To argue that no one is gifted at learning a foreign language, Lockley (2013) stated that learning is a matter of attitude rather than ability. His point was that in order to have successful learning, especially while learning a language, each student must approach all activities with determination, tenacity, and, above all, enthusiasm. They should not have the notion that they are incapable of doing anything. They should, however, maintain an "I can do it" attitude at all times, as this will boost their study's outcome.

Besides, the finding also reveals some negative variables coming from the teacher and the classroom-related environment. It is noticeable that a large number of the students admitted that their anxiety about speaking in speaking sections was because they would not like to be corrected or evaluated by their English teachers. Some arising variables could be a negative manner and or a negative technique when giving error correction, providing feedback, and so forth. They all had a great impact on creating students' anxiety in the classroom. However, when compared to the individual set of factors, this one seems to have less impact on the students' oral performance. The result goes in line with previous studies (Islam, Ahmad & Islam, 2022; Le & Le, 2022 & Zarrinabadi, 2014), which also found that teachers could help eliminate students' anxiety and encourage them to start a conversation by creating an encouraging and supportive atmosphere.

From what has been discussed, to help students get rid of being anxious and inhibited, the study demonstrates the role of both teachers and students themselves in the campaign to upgrade their communication abilities and manners. Firstly, talking about teachers' valuable mission, it was

revealed that teachers should have and show their ability to apply a variety of teaching techniques to motivate their students. The interview with students demonstrates that many admitted to failing to achieve the expected oral performance. For instance, a student claimed in the interview: "I long for English teachers who can renew my learning methods and give me more energy." It is clear from the findings that students are stuck in their "traditional ways" of learning, making it impossible for them to improve their communication skills and that they must change. Therefore, some of the activities of interest to boost students' speaking competence are expected to be carried out. This finding is similar to previous research by Liao (2000), who said that various classroom activities assist language learners in developing their ability to communicate in the target language.

More importantly, to reduce anxiety in learning to speak, students need to try their best to overcome it. Firstly, keeping reinforced practice is considered vital in the journey of mastering oral performance. In another way, to be able to speak English confidently, students must spend more time working on it. Most students in the study agreed as they stated that they should practice more and be more prepared for the speaking tasks to become confident when speaking English. In this way, students should be aware of their roles in learning English speaking, so they can consciously become more engaged and less apprehensive about using the target language to achieve the learning objective, as suggested by Cheng (2000). Another suggestible technique is practicing listening, as this is widely believed to help foster oral performance. Undoubtedly, listening skills have an enormous impact on the ability to speak a language. Poor listening skills were viewed as a major impediment to effective speaking abilities. According to the current study's findings, many students did not get their teachers' ideas or instruction because of poor listening skills. Thus, they were unsure about the answer and opted to keep silent. To tackle this problem, students should adopt techniques shared by many students in the interview, that is, to try to improve their listening skills through various interesting programs they chose, and it helped. This supports the language research field when (Doff, 1988) claims listening skills must be acquired before speaking abilities can be improved. Accordingly, if students want to increase their English communication skills, they have to improve their listening skills first.

Conclusion

Examining factors that cause anxiety when speaking in the classroom and suggesting some vital strategies to overcome them are the primary purposes of the present study. Overall, it reveals that more personal factors cause students' anxiety than teacher and classroom factors (CECAC). Regarding strategic methods, most of the students and teachers giving opinions in the interview strongly agree that both teachers and students can play their part to help motivate students' oral performance in the classroom. On the teacher side, they are expected to apply a variety of teaching techniques, create a friendly environment, and pay more attention to the ways of giving corrective feedback and language correction. Those techniques should be done with care and understanding for students. Meanwhile, both teachers and students propose vital strategies for

language practice learning for students to help them promote their ability to talk. As previous research claimed, a high level of anxiety can eventually lead individuals to have poor oral proficiency (see 2.3). Within a class context, anxiety has been believed to hurt the frequency of L2 use (Hashimoto, 2002). The more students engage in class discussions, the more chance they have to improve their speaking ability.

This study is believed to shed more light on the characteristics of anxiety in oral performance by employing a combination of mixed methods (questionnaire survey and interviews) to identify the causes of anxiety within the classroom setting. Captured by the two data sources, this study is expected to be significant and applicable for both EFL teachers and students at (CECAC) and contribute significant empirical evidence to language theory. That is, eliminating speaking anxiety is an important component of SLA in the process of mastering English performance.

Acknowledgments

I would like to send my deep appreciation to the Dean and my colleagues at the Foreign Language Department of Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry (HUFU), who have encouraged me to finish this paper. I am greatly indebted to the Principal of the College of Electro-Mechanics, Construction, and Agro-Forestry of Central Vietnam (CECAC) for creating the most favorable conditions for me to conduct the study. Another round of thanks goes to the English teachers and students for carefully completing my questionnaire and sincerely answering the interviews. Without their help and encouragement, I could not have completed this study.

References

- Abedini, F. & Chalak, A. (2017) Investigating the inhibitive factors in the speaking of Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4 (6), 82-97.
- Banks, T. (2008). *Foreign language learning difficulties and teaching strategies* (Doctoral dissertation, Dominican University of California San Rafael, CA).
- Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983). Teaching the spoken language (Vol. 2). Cambridge University Press. *Sciences Journal* 17 (10): 1287-1297, ISSN 1818-4952
- Cheng, Y., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D. L. (1999). Language Anxiety: Differentiating Writing and Speaking Components. *Language Learning*, 49(3), 417-446.
- Cheng, X. (2000). Asian students' reticence revisited. *System*, 28(3), 435-446. DOI:10.1016/S0346-251X(00)00015-4
- Doff, A. (1988). *Teach English trainer's handbook: A training course for teachers*. Cambridge university press.

- Dornyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of language learner: individual differences in second language acquisition*. London: Routledge.
- Hashimoto, Y. (2002). Motivation and willingness to communicate as predictors of reported L2 use: the Japanese ESL context. *Second Language Studies*, 20(2), 29-70.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>
- Huang, J. (1998) *Students' Learning Difficulties in a Second Language Speaking Classroom*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Islam, W., Ahmad, S., & Islam, M. D. (2022). Investigating the Problems Faced by the University EFL Learners in Speaking English Language. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 2(2), 47-65. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.22223>
- Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2008). *Educational research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches* (2nded.). New York: Pearson.
- Krashen, S. (1981). Second language acquisition. *Second Language Learning*, 3(7), 19-39.
- Le, X. M., & Le, T. T. (2022). Factors Affecting Students' Attitudes towards Learning English as a Foreign Language in a Tertiary Institution of Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 2(2), 168-185. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.22229>.
- Liao, X. Q. (2000). *Communicative language teaching innovation in China: Difficulties and solution*. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED443294.pdf>.
- Liu, M.H. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL Students at Different Proficiency Levels. *System*, 34, 301-316.
- Liu, M. H., & Jackson, J. (2008). An Exploration of Chinese EFL Learners' Unwillingness to Communication and Foreign Language Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal* 92(1), 71-86.
- Lockley, T. (2013). Exploring self-perceived communication competence in foreign language learning. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* 3(2): 187-212.
- Lu, Z., & Liu, M. (2011). Foreign Language Anxiety and Strategy Use: A Study with Chinese Undergraduate EFL Learners. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 2(6), 1298-1305.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991a). Investigating Language Class Anxiety Using the Focused Essay Technique. *The Modern Language Journal*, 75(3), 296-313.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991b). Language Anxiety: Its Relationship to Other Anxieties and to Processing in Native and Second Languages. *Language Learning*, 41(4), 513-534.

- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991c). Methods and Results in the Study of Anxiety and Language Learning: A Review of the Literature. *Language Learning*, 41(1), 85-117.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002, October). Willingness to communicate in the L2 among French immersion students. In *second language research Forum, Toronto*.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002). Willingness to communicate in the L2 among French immersion students. *Second Language Research*. Toronto.
- Nguyen, T. T. H. (2014). *An Investigation into Factors Causing the Non-English-Major Freshmen's Anxiety in Speaking at Broadcasting College I. Phu Ly City. Ha Nam Province*. Unpublished master's thesis. Vietnam National University, Hanoi.
- Ozturk, G. & Gurbuz, N. (2014). Speaking Anxiety among Turkish EFL Learners: The Case at a State University. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 10(1), 1-17.
- Pawlak, M. et al. (2015). *Issues in Teaching, Learning and Testing Speaking in a Second Language*. Switzerland: Springer Science & Business Media. DOI 10.1007/978-3-642-38339-7
- Pabro-Maquidato, I. M. (2021). The Experience of English Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategies: A Transcendental Phenomenological Study. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1(2), 45–64. Retrieved from <https://i-jte.org/index.php/journal/article/view/32>
- Phillips, E. M. (1992). The Effects of Language Anxiety on Students' Oral test Performance and Attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76(1), 14-26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/329894>
- Salem, A. A. M. S. & Dyyar, M. A. A. (2014). The Relationship between Speaking Anxiety and Oral Fluency of Special Education Arab Learners of English. *Asian Social Science*, 10(12), 170-176. DOI: [10.5539/ass.v10n12p170](https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v10n12p170)
- Scovel, T. (1978). The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the Anxiety Research. *Language Learning*, 28(1), 129-142.
- Vo, N. D. T. (2021). The impacts of motivation and task types on L2 oral fluency development in higher education in Vietnam. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 1(3), 88–104. Retrieved from <https://i-jte.org/index.php/journal/article/view/85>
- Ur, P. (2000). *A course in language teaching: Practice and theory: Trainer's Handbook*.
- Woodrow, L. (2006). Anxiety and Speaking English as a Second Language. *Regional Language Centre Journal*, 37(3), 308-328. DOI:10.1177/0033688206071315
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: The Japanese EFL context. *The Modern language Journal*, 86 (1), pp. 54-66. DOI: [10.1111/1540-4781.00136](https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-4781.00136)

Young, D. J. (1990). An investigation of students' perspectives on anxiety and speaking. *Foreign Language Annals*, 23(6), 539-553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1990.tb00424.x>

Zarrinabadi, N. (2014). Communicating in a second language: Investigating the effect of teacher on learners' willingness to communicate. *System*, 42, 288-295.

Biodata

Loan Thi Trang Tran is an English lecturer of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Ho Chi Minh City University of Food Industry (HUPI). She has contributed several researched articles to the area of Teaching and Learning English, both on local and international forums. She can be contacted at trangloantran123@gmail.com.