

## Speaking Anxiety in a Foreign Language Speaking Class: the Perspectives of Students' and a Teacher

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**Abstract: Speaking Anxiety in A Foreign Language Speaking Class: The Perspectives of Students' And A Teacher. Objectives:** This study aimed at investigating students' speaking anxiety in a foreign language speaking class, the source of the anxiety, and the strategies to reduce their anxiety, in the perspectives of the students, themselves, and the teacher. **Methods:** Observation and interviews were applied in this qualitative study. The observation was conducted to choose six students as the interviewees with three categories according to students' levels of speaking ability; high, medium, and low. The chosen students and the teacher of the speaking class were, then, interviewed to answer the research questions. **Findings:** The interview showed that students still experienced anxiety even though they had learned English since elementary school and had joined extra English courses or competitions. Additionally, students felt anxious due to huge gap between learning at school and in university levels. Related to the cause of students' speaking anxiety, it was from the internal factor, like shyness, fear of being laughed, or lack of confidence. Peer pressure from friends who were likely more fluent was another factor influencing students' speaking anxiety. **Conclusion:** The strategies to reduce students' speaking anxiety from their view were by practicing and motivating themselves. From the teacher's perspective, the best strategy to lessen speaking anxiety were providing counselling session and used Flipgrid, a platform, to collect speaking video tasks. In addition, this study could help teachers in dealing with students' speaking anxiety, particularly in the pandemic era.

**Keywords:** speaking anxiety, foreign language speaking class, students' views, teacher's view.

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### ■ INTRODUCTION

In the educational system, English plays a key role (Patel & Jain, 2008). This can be obviously seen in the huge number of the use of English in academic context. Moreover, Tridinanti (2018) argued that students' intellectual, social, and emotional growth are all influenced by their ability to communicate in English. Thus, English is needed everywhere due to the rising number of its users. Besides, English' prominence is not only in education, but also for the demands of industries that needs people who are proficient

in English to become their employees (Pandey and Pandey, 2014). Therefore, good English communication skills play a vital role to get ahead in this modern world. In line with it, Rao (2019) argued that speaking is the most important skill among all the four language skills in order to communicate well in this global world due to more and more occupations that require the ability to communicate fluently in English. However, in a place where English is a foreign language, anxiety plays as one of the causes of people's reluctant in speaking English.

Park and Lee (2005) argue that anxiety is one of the most negative affective variables that hinders students from learning a foreign language successfully. Therefore, learners' performance and achievement in class can be hampered because of their nervousness and fright. Additionally, they state that one of the main factors of anxiety is self-confidence which involves judgments and evaluation of learner's performance. As a result, anxiety becomes one of the most frightening issues experienced by the learners in class (Qureshi, 2007).

Several research about speaking anxiety has been conducted. Initial studies in this field focused more on the relation between the speaking skill and anxiety, the performance result, and some of anxiety scales like Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (FLCAS) (Asysyfa et al., 2019; Horwitz et al., 1986; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999; Suleimenova, 2013; Woodrow, 2006; Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012). This study emphasized more on a speaking class conducted online (due to COVID-19 pandemic). Online speaking class becomes more challenging than the usual face to face or synchronous class due to the various changing in the world of study (Fitriani et al., 2020). They found out that students were unable to improve their speaking skills through online learning. Their study also revealed that students prefer to study in an actual classroom rather than an online classroom as offline class is more interesting. Another study conducted by Ariani and Tawali (2021) discovered the problem students experienced in online learning. They mentioned that students had issues in understanding the teacher's material and had difficulty in accessing the online learning as well as the difficulty in supplying learning equipment and supporting facilities. Those studies show that speaking anxiety in the pandemic era increases dramatically.

In this study, the participants were students of Interactional Speech class from an English

Language Education Department. As the name was interactional speech class, it required a lot of speaking skills, as students interacted with others and performed individually before their classmates. Thus, students' anxiety in speaking can be investigated through that case in the Interactional Speech class. Katz (2000) stated that public speaking anxiety is common among university students and even the overall public. In addition of that, the participants in this study were from first semester students of English Language Education Department that took Interactional Speech class. In general, first-year students tend to be nervous and anxious as higher education is a new environment for them. Not only the environment, but also they were afraid because of the new knowledge they gain in the first semester. This was strengthened by Hasibuan & Irzawati (2020) on their study about speaking anxiety among freshmen revealed that students experienced speaking anxiety. They also found out they even students with high speaking proficiency felt anxious in the class. Moreover, this study investigated the speaking anxiety not just from the students' point of view, but also from the teacher's perspective.

Most of the research studying about students' anxiety in speaking collected the data with quantitative method (Atas, 2015; Batiha et al., 2016; Kusumawat & Fauzia, 2019; Raja, 2017; Tallon, 2009; Woodrow, 2006). The difference between this research and the previous research is this research focused on students' anxiety in a specific class, which is Interactional Speech, that used a lot of speaking skill in the class. In addition, this research used qualitative method to discover about students' anxiety deeper and more detailed. Eshlaghy et al. (2011) mention that qualitative method is a catch-all term for methods and approaches that are not measurable. Compared to quantitative method, Borrego et al (2009) stated that qualitative research concentrate more on particular groups

so that their focus is more meticulous and detail. The data were obtained using interview and observation. The main purpose of qualitative research methods is to observe phenomena from the participants' point of view and on important and particular considerations (Eshlaghy et al., 2011). In addition, this research paid more attention to the phenomena from the view of the participants specifically, which differ this research from other quantitative speaking anxiety studies.

This research has a major concern related to speaking anxiety in the class of Interactional Speech. Therefore, this research aimed to find the extent of students' speaking anxiety, the possible sources of students' anxiety in a foreign language speaking class, and the strategies that can be used to reduce students' anxiety.

### **Foreign Language Anxiety in an English Class**

Anxiety is a tension which is experienced subjectively, uncertainty, restlessness, and concern caused by an activation of an autonomic nervous system (Horwitz et al., 1986). Another definition of anxiety defined by Suleimenova (2013) is an uneasiness or difficulty in mind because of fear or misfortune or even because of danger. Student who experienced anxiety shows several symptoms such as trembling, sweating, dizziness, difficulty in breathing, and can develop into panic attack in some cases (Katz, 2000). Another physiological response to anxiety mentioned by (Woodrow, 2006) are flushing or a beating heart, as well as behavioural reactions like stuttering and fidgeting. Anxiety also affects students' learning process, performance, and even students' achievement. In line with the statement, a study conducted by Horwitz et al. (1986) also emphasized that foreign language anxiety is a major issue that can hinder a learner's ability to grow and acquire fluency in a second language. Thus, there are a lot of findings of research that investigate anxiety in learning, especially in a

foreign language context (e.g., Asyfyfa et al., 2019; Melouah, 2013; Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020; D. Sari, 2017; Sjaifullah, 2019; Suleimenova, 2013; Sulistyorini, 2018; Tóth, 2011). Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most important productive skills, as it allows us to create utterance with purpose and invites us to have relation with other people (Jahan, 2008). A study of MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) found that speaking as a skill that caused anxiety on students the most in a second language class. As students face anxiety in speaking English, it will leave a profound effect on students' learning process. Yalçын and Ýnceçay (2014) in their study about foreign language anxiety in Turkey context stated that speaking is the most frightening language ability in the target language for students with foreign language anxiety. Yalçын and Ýnceçay (2014) also added that when students are asked to perform or speak, they "freeze" because they are terrified of making mistakes and being corrected by the teacher in front of the class while being seen by their peers. Aside from students' fear of making errors, Horwitz et al. (1986) mentioned that communication apprehension is intimately linked to foreign language anxiety, which is defined as a variety of shyness characterized by anxiety or fear of talking to other people. Those who have trouble speaking in groups are more likely to struggle in a foreign language class because students have little control over their communicative ability because the teacher and other students monitor their performance (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Furthermore, students who just entered university would experience difference in learning between in previous high school and in university. A study about freshman in the university by Clark (2005) said that the transition to college is more complex and challenging combination of academic, social, and cultural problems. Appleby (2014) added the differences between learning in high school and college are the work assigned,

where and how long to complete the assignments, responsibilities, and classroom atmosphere. Moreover, expectations for participation, autonomous work, motivation, and intellectual growth increase significantly, and so does the students-teacher interaction (Conley, 2008). The statement is in line with a study from Izumi (2015) that mentioned how students and teacher relationship shifted, where in high school it is very flexible and close. While in college, students are expected to be self-directed in their studies. Thus, the transition from high school to college is one of the most difficult for students and affected their speaking abilities poorly in the class (Clark, 2005). In the Malaysian context, Choy and Troudi (2006) found that English is regarded as a need for survival and they learn it because they have to, not because they enjoy it.

It happened because back in the high school, students had weak educational basics, and it becomes anxiety that kept growing for the freshmen. A qualitative study in Indonesian context by Sulastris and Ratnawati (2018) added, when confronted with new classmates or an unfamiliar surroundings, students exhibited extreme anxiety symptoms such as sweating and freezing hands. It showed that being in a new environment or meeting new people can cause students to be anxious.

### **Factors Affecting Foreign Language Anxiety**

There are two main factors that affected students' foreign language anxiety, internal factor and external factor (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020; Subandowo, 2017). Internal factor or psychological factor of anxiety formed inside of students, while external factor built from the surroundings and language factors. Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) explained internal factors can be divided into shyness, stage fright, and lack of confidence. A quantitative study by Thao and Nguyet (2019) in Vietnamese context showed that the participants from the study were affected

by affective factor the most or internal factor that included fear of making mistake, lack of confidence, and shyness. In line with that, a quantitative study in Indonesian context conducted by Sjaifullah (2019), found that self-esteem from internal factor, has a prominent component that can produce imaginary obstacles to foreign language acquisition. It was shown that students' speaking anxiety arose from a lack of self-esteem. A previous study by Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that there are three identified components in foreign language anxiety namely: a) communication apprehension; b) test anxiety; and c) fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al. (1986) explained that communication apprehension is when a learner is shy or afraid of communicating, which is one of a type of shyness overcome by students. A quantitative study of factors in speaking anxiety by D. Sari (2017) in Indonesian context found that communication apprehension as the most common anxiety issue that caused students to avoid speaking English in front of the class. Communication apprehension happened when students start panicking when asked to speak English without preparation, being shy in front of peers, and feeling anxious when asked to express thoughts in English (D. Sari, 2017).

The second factor is external factor, which happen because of the pressure outside the students. Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) stated that external factor of speaking anxiety consists of peer, language, grammar, and pronunciation factors. One of the vital factors that causes students' to be anxious is their classmates. Students are often anxious about their inner feelings and the thought of their friends or classmates evaluating them (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020). A study by Aydin (2008) among Turkish EFL learners showed that they were anxious because of negative evaluation from their peers and even the teachers. In accordance with the statement, a quantitative study in Indonesia

context by Sjaifullah (2019) showed that peer pressure has a negative relation with students' academic achievement. Students can learn and communicate more effectively with their close friends; however, it also can affect students' anxiety by fear of negative evaluation. A study from Hungarian context conducted by Tóth (2011) mentioned several external factors that affected the students in the study, which was afraid of negative evaluation by their peers and the teacher. Those studies show that external factor, particularly pressure from their friends and teacher become afraid to speak in the class because of fear of negative evaluation from them. Moreover, class atmosphere is one of the keys to reduce anxiety. Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) found on their study that, the more welcoming and casual the language class environment, the less likely it is to cause anxiety. A study about speaking anxiety in online class in Indonesian context by Fitriani et al. (2020) mentioned that class atmosphere and peer-work affected students' speaking anxiety more. Online learning in the pandemic era caused delays, uncertainty, and changed the way students communicate (Wildman et al., 2021). It is considered as one of the factors influencing foreign language anxiety since students feel more at ease in an offline learning setting than in an online class (Fitriani et al., 2020).

### **Strategies to Reduce Foreign Language Anxiety**

There are various studies that investigate on how to reduce students' foreign language anxiety. A study conducted by Suleimenova (2013) in Kazakhstan, give some suggestions on how to reduce foreign language anxiety as follows: teacher has to make a comfortable, low-stress and friendly learning atmosphere, knows student's fear and insecurity in class, speak slowly and clearly to make sure the students understand the instructions, be the ear for students' opinions,

ideas, suggestions, and insights and so on. Another study from Keramida (2009), in Greek context mentioned that because students were afraid of making mistakes and receiving negative evaluation, there are some interventions that can help reducing foreign language anxiety in speaking. Firstly, the teacher can assign students to do project work, which will make the students feel less anxious and not intimidated. Secondly, a friendly atmosphere in class holds a key-role to make the students feel supported and make the foreign language acquisition natural. This factor is also mentioned by several studies (Atas, 2015; Kayaođlu & Sađlamel, 2013; Keramida, 2009; Widhayanti, 2018), where friendly and supportive atmosphere in class will decrease students' level of anxiety in speaking a foreign language. Lastly, the teachers should know their students well, about their competence and ability in foreign language, so teachers know what works the best for the students and make the learning suitable for the students. In this case, teachers should be a "researcher" in their own classrooms. This factor is also mentioned by several studies conducted by Atas (2015) and Suleimenova (2013) where teacher plays an important role in reducing students' speaking anxiety in foreign language. Atas (2015) added that teachers have to be communicative and motivating to their students, encouraging them to talk and enabling them to make mistakes without punishing. Additionally, Suleimenova (2013) explained that teachers should encourage students to speak up and express confidence in their ability to converse in a foreign language without fear of making a mistake or being punished. From the finding it was also found that motivation from the teacher make students feel accepted and can feel less anxious in speaking a foreign language.

Additionally, as the technology is developing each day, the use of technology can be one of the strategies to decrease students' fear in speaking. Furthermore, in the middle of the COVID-19

pandemic, online learning is regarded as the finest choice for teaching and learning activities (Fitriani et al., 2020). A study about the relation of the use of technology and speaking anxiety by Dupagne et al. (2007), showed that by using technology like video streaming might give a cognitive motivation to simultaneously raise students' proficiency at speaking and lessen their anxiety levels along with the speaking experience. Moreover, the utilization of technology is very helpful in enhancing students' speaking abilities as well as being really simple to utilize (Rusgandi et al., 2021). Using technology such as Skype and Facebook, would be beneficial for students and could reduce speaking anxiety as the students don't have to speak in front of the class (Aydin, 2018). Those kind of applications assisted in increasing the concept of interaction, particularly peer and teacher-student interaction, by monitoring themselves and classmates' speaking videos and sharing videos, as well as obtaining comments from teachers (Lai et al., 2021). A study about speaking anxiety and YouTube project in EFL learning in Indonesia by A. B. Sari and Iswahyuni (2019), showed that using YouTube for assignments creates a less anxious learning environment. Beside YouTube, Flipgrid can be one of alternative tool to help students reduce their anxiety in speaking. Flipgrid is an excellent tool for facilitating social learning and assisting students in developing video content creation abilities for the digital age (Stoszkowski, 2018). Stoszkowski (2018) added that students can pause while recording and retake their video as many times as they wish until they are ready to submit it. He also mentioned that Flipgrid has a basic user interface that operates similarly to many other video-based social networking networks. A study in Japanese context about utilizing Flipgrid in EFL class by Hammett (2020) showed that Flipgrid brought positive experience not only for students, but also the teacher. Using Flipgrid made them motivated and they had freedom while

learning, it reduced students' speaking anxiety (Hammett, 2020). In Indonesian context, Budiarta and Santosa (2020) proved students' speaking abilities improved significantly because of Flipgrid, specifically their understanding and fluency. Several studies have investigated use of Flipgrid for reducing students' speaking anxiety and showed the effectiveness of Flipgrid in the speaking class (Budiarta & Santosa, 2020; Lai et al., 2021; A. B. Sari & Iswahyuni, 2019; Shin & Yunus, 2022)

## ■ METHODS

### Participants

This study was conducted in one of the private universities in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The target of this study was one speaking class in the first semester of English Education Department that learns and focuses on speaking activities, which was Interactional Speech class. Their experience in online learning were investigated too, as learning speaking in the class and in online meeting platform would be very different. There were 26 students in the class that became the target of observation. Among them 6 (six) students were chosen as the samples using non-random sampling.

### Research Design and Procedures

This is a case study to gather the data. Previous studies that have been conducted related to speaking foreign language anxiety are quite a lot. However, most of the study used quantitative method to gain the data in order to see the objectives or phenomena of a problem or issue they conducted (Tridinanti, 2018; Woodrow, 2006; Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012; Yalçын & Ynceçay, 2014). As seen from the previous studies, the use of quantitative method seems popular, thus, this study used different method which is qualitative to search and investigate students' anxiety in speaking foreign language through some observations and interviews.

Therefore, interview and observation were applied to analyze the phenomena of the research in order to get data using the qualitative method. Some of the research, used anxiety scales like Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (FLCAS) for measuring students' anxiety levels. This study investigated more about students' anxiety that would have happened since the study was done in a pandemic era, where teaching and learning processes in academic settings were held online. The tools used to explore the topic were observation and interviews, since in-depth interviews, are extensively used by researchers to recreate participants' experiences and perceptions that would guide to answer the research questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Not only relying on interviews data, but this study also used observations as one of the data. Observation was conducted to choose students as the interviewees with various levels of speaking ability. This called multiple sources of data as one of qualitative characteristics explained by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

### **Instrument**

To begin with, observation was conducted to choose six students among 26 students, as the interviewees using three criteria: two students with high speaking level, two students with medium level, and two students with low speaking level. The participants were picked based on their performance and how students used English in the class. The high speaking level students were very active and keen to answering teacher's questions. They sometimes answered teacher's question without being asked. The medium speaking level students showed they were performing well even though they were not as active as the high speaking level students. In contrast the low speaking level students were not saying any words. Furthermore, when they were divided into group, the less they communicated and even conversed with Indonesian language.

For the interview, the participants were one teacher from a class (Interactional Speech) and six students that were chosen from the observation. There were 2 interview checklists that were used for students and the teacher interviews. The example of the interview checklist was "*Have you studied English before?*" (for students) and "*Do students often show their anxiety in class?*" (for teacher).

Before collecting the participants' data, each participant was asked for permission by given consent forms. The consent form was filled by the participants without any coercion whether they agreed to participate in the study as the participants or not. The teacher of the class was also asked for permission, as observation was conducted too for collecting the data. After getting consents from the participants, observation and interviews were scheduled. The observation was conducted in the whole teaching process that requires the presence of all students and the teacher. While for the interview, the data were generated following the same stages as DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), in which the interviews were recorded, then the data were transcribed and finally the data is organized and analysed.

### **Data Analysis**

The results of the interview were transcribed into Indonesian, and then translated into English afterwards. Furthermore, the transcribed data, were coded and analyzed to answer the research questions with the thematic analysis. The analyzed data was compared to the result of interview and with some studies or research that have been conducted before. However, narrative inquiry approach was used for analyzing teacher's strategy to reduce students' speaking anxiety. Narrative analysis is an approach to interview data that seeks to understand how and why participants tell their stories or series of stories about their experiences (Earthy & Cronin, 2008).

Because there was only one teacher in the Interactional Speech class, thematic analysis could not be used to study the teacher's data for answering strategy. Thus, a narrative inquiry approach was used to try and understand how a person perceives and experiences events, as well as what they value (Abrar, 2019)

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In regard of the first research objective, through interview and resulted coding, there were two themes on the degree of students' anxiety in the foreign language speaking class. The themes are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The themes emerging on students' anxiety experienced in a foreign language speaking class

Theme 1	Even though students had learned English before entering university, they still felt anxious when they were speaking English.
Theme 2	Students felt anxious because they found differences in learning English between school and university.

Six students in this study said that they have been learning English since elementary school. Some students even had various experiences in learning English by joining English competition and had extra English course outside the school. One of them commented "Actually, I can say that I started learning English, **about 12 years ago [...] started when I was in the elementary school.** [...] In junior high school, there was an English club, where I could create my own story, do the storytelling, speech, and public speaking." [Tony/ Male/High Level]. Another high level student, Jessi (Female) stated that "I started learning English when **I was in the elementary school.** [...] I had extra English course, from elementary school 1<sup>st</sup> grade, until I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the high school". While one student from a middle level also acknowledged that "Actually, **I learned English since elementary school.** [...] I contributed to a speech contest when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade."

Students have experienced learning English before entering the university. Nevertheless, they still felt anxious in the class when they are learning English, especially speaking. Some of the students were Jessi, a high speaking level student, and Luna, a low speaking level student. As mentioned in the excerpt above, Jessi had extra English course since elementary school to high school;

whereas Luna joined an IELTS course as a preparation for scholarship to Australia. It means, students' English abilities had been honed in such a way. However, they shared their anxiety when learning English in university, as Jessi mentioned "For me, it is very common. **But what frightens me is there are many people.**" This is supported by Luna (Female/ Low Level) who said that "[...] But about speaking, it starts with ourselves first. **I sometimes get nervous when speaking, I am afraid I say wrong things. I am afraid.**"

Regarding the excerpts, it could be said that students can still feel anxious even though they had been learning English in school before or have extra English course. A qualitative study from Tóth (2011), that also investigated about foreign language anxiety using first year students major in English in Hungary university as the research sample, found that they were identified as the most anxious participants in the analysed sample of first-year EFL majors. Before starting university, all five interviewees had studied English for an average of 8.6 years, with a minimum of seven and a maximum of ten years. However, the study revealed that the five English major students were the most apprehensive among 117 first-year EFL majors surveyed by the Hungarian Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale did



indeed experience significant levels of FLA in their university English classes (Tóth, 2011). Moreover, in Malaysia context, a study by Choy and Troudi (2006) showed that almost half of the participants in the investigation said that it was still difficult for them to learn and use English in college compared to high school, especially in vocabulary and grammar. These findings are in accordance with student statements that they still had speaking anxiety despite their experience in learning English. In addition to this, teacher can anticipate this situation by giving understanding and information of the lessons they take in university. Thus, students can get prepared and not taken aback by the materials and environment in university.

As mentioned earlier, all of the students in this study said that they had been learning English since they were at school. Furthermore, five students had experienced learning English deeper by contributing to English competitions and joining extra English course outside school. Nevertheless, students felt and faced the gap between learning English in school and in university. “There is a huge different. In the university, we learned and dig deeper.” (Luna). Rina (Female/ Middle Level) also shared “The contrast that I felt this far is in the university we are asked to speak up more. While in high school, I tend to write more.”, supported by Dave (Male/ Low Level) “It is much deeper learning in university. In school we were taught only the basic. But this time is deeper”.

From the excerpts shown above, although students had learned English since school, they experienced huge differences in learning English in university. They were asked to be more critical and to speak up more. University freshmen’s success is frequently measured in terms of their ability to make the transition from high school student to university student (Clark, 2005). Therefore, it is very essential for students to perform well despite the change they experienced in the first year of university. Another study from

Appleby (2014) that investigated about students’ view on the differences between high school and university, showed that there were several contrasts that university students experienced. One of the reasons is in university, the assignments and works they had to accomplish had greatly increased than what they did in the high school previously. Appleby (2014) also mentioned that university students are given more responsibilities to learn by themselves than before. Moreover, university students are expected to be self-directed in their study (Izumi, 2015). Those studies are in line with what Luna, a low speaking level student, said in the excerpts, being a university student made her learn and dig more about the lesson given, unlike when she was in the school. It shows how students experiencing major and significant contrast that can cause students’ anxiety and stress. It is no surprise that the transition from high school to college is one of the most challenging phases of many people’s lives (Clark, 2005; Conley, 2008; Izumi, 2015), as revealed by Jessi “In high school, I only speak more outside the school which is in the extra course. But in university, I have to speak it like every day and directly. And all the assignments have to use English”.

In the excerpt, Jessi mentioned that students had to speak and do the assignments in English. It was fully different from when they were students in school, which only learned in English in one or two subjects or in extra courses. English major students take language classes in the target language, with a focus on engagement and active target language use. Furthermore, English majors study not only the language but also other fields (literature, linguistics, culture, and so on) through it. This English-only setting places new and greater linguistic expectations on students, which can elicit anxiety (Tóth, 2011).

In correspondence with the students’ statements, the teacher in the Interactional Speech, Lia, mentioned the differences students

felt in learning between high school and university that students shared through reflection “In the last meeting, I asked them to make a portfolio and reflection. They said that they were happy because they shouldn’t upload their videos to YouTube. It turns out when they were in high school, they were asked to upload videos on YouTube, and it made them ashamed. Shame is also making students anxious”.

With regards from the excerpts from the teacher, one of the difference students felt was uploading video assignment to different platforms. In high school, they were asked to upload their videos to YouTube. While in Interactional Speech class they were asked to collect their assignments to a Flipgrid, a platform where students can see and discuss their own videos. Lia reported that Flipgrid can reduce students’ anxiety, but in other hand using Flipgrid is one of the sources of students’ anxiety according to Lia. The students were often divided into groups to practice their speaking through recording video. Anxiety often arises through group work owing to the fact that students afraid of being negatively evaluated by their peers (Cooper et al., 2018). Additionally, Lia revealed that students were worried about the peer assignment because they had to adjust each other’s schedule and time to make the task.

Some students were hardly contacted when they had to do the teamwork and it made their project delayed. In line with the statement, a study by Wildman et al. (2021) that investigated about team work in pandemic confirmed the challenge students experienced when working in team is team member performance issue. Peer performance issue like forgetting about the task, elevated procrastination and triggered group conflict caused by lack of interaction and responsibility (Wildman et al., 2021). Therefore, there was a huge gap between learning in high school and university that made students anxious when learning in class. Considering this situation, teacher can be prepared to this kind of situation, where students show their anxiety because of the contrast between high school and university. Teacher should explain and introduce about rules in the class and remind the students that university is different with high school. Therefore, students can be prepared to the new learning environment.

### **Some possible sources of students’ anxiety in a foreign language speaking class**

Table 2 showcases the themes on students’ possible sources for anxiety in a foreign language class. In regards to this sources, we found two themes.

**Table 2.** The themes on students’ possible sources for anxiety in a foreign language speaking class

Theme 3	Students’ speaking anxiety in foreign language was caused by internal factors.
Theme 4	Peer pressure affected students’ speaking anxiety.

Theme 3 reveals that students’ speaking anxiety in foreign language was mainly caused by internal factors. Their speaking anxiety started within themselves, for instance students are afraid to speak English because of the pronunciation or vocabulary or because students’ shyness. Some students reported the cause of their speaking anxiety “I am an introverted person. So, it is hard for me to socialize with other people” (Tony). This

reason is also acknowledged by Rina as she said, “I am afraid when I speak, my grammar is wrong. When others speak, I understand them, but I sometimes don’t know how to say the words. So, the first is I am afraid of grammar and the second I am afraid of speaking the wrong words, because in English there are some words with the same intonations”. Jessi was also revealing this internal factor of speaking anxiety “I am an

overthinking person. So, whenever I have to talk, I always think first, what if someone judges me, or what if my tongue slipped when I talk. I would rather not speak, maybe it's better to just talk to myself. If it is right then it's okay, if it is wrong then it's okay too. So, I better not speak".

With regard of the excerpts, the students' speaking anxiety was caused from themselves. This finding is in line with what other researchers found about factors that influence a student's fear of speaking, which are internal and external factors (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020; Subandowo, 2017). Findings by Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) explained that students' stage fright, lack of confidence, and shyness are internal factors that affected speaking anxiety. While findings from Subandowo (2017) mentioned internal factors are a low vocabulary and poor command of the English language, a lack of practice and preparation, a fear of losing image, and an inability to articulate a concept. These factors are in accordance with students' reasons in this study. They are already afraid and anxious when they have not spoken, as their mind think of possible unfortunate things that would happen. Another factor that affected student's anxiety stated from Horwitz et al. (1986) is communication apprehension, which is a type of shyness that defined by fear of communicating with people. This in accordance with Tony that mentioned he has difficulty to communicate with other people. Other students also experienced the same situation as Tony felt. Two students said that "(...) and also in group work the hardest part is the communication" (Dave/ male/ low level); "In the class we were sometimes divided into 3-4 people in a breakout room for a discussion. It is hard to start a conversation" (Luna/ male/ low level).

Students had difficulty to start conversation especially in a group work, while in Interactional Speech class they were often divided into group works. Students struggled to talk clearly and appropriately due to their apprehension of

communication (D. Sari, 2017). Communication apprehension also made student have problems in understanding others and making others understood, and it can lead students tend to be silent in the class because of the fear (Horwitz et al., 1986). From the observation in Interactional Speech class, all the students were assigned into breakout room in Zoom to discuss the material. Dave and Luna were in a group, and when they were in the breakout room, they were just stayed silent and not saying a word for some minutes. Dave said that he was confused and didn't know what to say. At the end, they were just speaking in Indonesian instead of using English. Students became uncomfortable while speaking English, which resulted them forgetting what they already knew and a reluctance to talk in English even when they were confident that what they were going to say was right (D. Sari, 2017). Moreover, anxiety has been reported to produce issues with self-confidence, self-esteem, risk-taking abilities, and, as a result, foreign language proficiency (Suleimenova, 2013). Thus, internal factor is one of dominating factor that affected students' speaking anxiety. Regarding the implication, the teacher can motivate the students and not judging the result of their speaking practice. Teacher can give feedback and look after the group works.

The fourth theme (Table 2) exposes that students feel anxious because of the people surrounded them, their classmates. The pressure from group works and activity that use a lot of communication with others, make students feel nervous and afraid being laughed at. Some students reported their anxiety from peer pressure. "Because I am afraid to speak, there are some friends that have bad responses, like laughing at me" (Luna). Concerning laughing at peers is also experienced by Jessi, as she said "First of all, I am afraid if I answer incorrectly, because if we answer it without being asked, it somehow shows that we master and know the answer, but ended up answering incorrectly, and laughed at by

friends". The peer pressure is not only because of feeling anxious of being laughed, but also because students see their friends are (very) fluent when they speak (Rina).

Based on the excerpts, students felt that they were pressured by their classmate. It affected how students did the speaking activity in the class. In general, peer pressure has a negative impact on students' academic performance, in other words, peer pressure has a significant effect in decreasing students' classroom performance (Sjaifullah, 2019). In this context, students in the Interactional Speech class were in the first semester students and they were in online learning which they never met and knew each other. Students had to adapt with new environment and various people, which were obstacles they had to face (Clark, 2005). These finding is in line with a study by Tóth (2011), that mentioned one of the source of students' anxiety is their classmates. English majors with high levels of foreign language anxiety indicated increased anxiety about their classmates' opinions and fear about any negative judgment on their part (Tóth, 2011). Another study in Kazakhstan context conducted by Suleimenova (2013) found that students reacted anxiously to speaking because they were afraid of being laughed at by their classmates or making a fool of themselves in front of others. A qualitative study by Widhayanti (2018) in Indonesian context found that fear of being labelled as "stupid" students and receiving a poor grade also contributed to their fear of speaking. These findings between previous studies and the present study indicate how fellow classmate can increase students' speaking anxiety.

In relation with students' statements about peer pressure as one of the effects to their speaking anxiety, the teacher also mentioned that group work with their classmates made them anxious. Lia, the teacher reported What made them anxious was the group work because it depends on all the group mates. If one student can't do it, it will ruin the other's work. They were afraid it would affect their scores, because they believed that score is the most important thing". group assignment made students anxious not because of the task, however because of the people in the group. The success of group work was determined by the contributions of all the teammates. Thus, the absence of one student in a group work, will provoke all students' anxiety. According to Wildman et al. (2021), obstacles of group work, especially in the pandemic era and online learning, are external impact, geographical differences, and group member performance problems. The students were in different region and had different condition that made them hard to adjust when and how to do the assignment. The variance condition and opinion of students in group work can lead into friction and eventually influenced negatively to students' achievement (Sjaifullah, 2019). This shows that peer pressure not only poorly influence speaking anxiety but also student's achievement.

### **Strategies used to reduce the students' anxiety**

Table 2 reveals the emerging theme on strategies used by the students to reduce their anxiety in a foreign language speaking class.

**Table 3.** The emerging theme on strategies to reduce students' anxiety in foreign language speaking class

Theme 5	Students' ways to reduce speaking anxiety are through practice and self-motivation.
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Students felt anxious because of several factors explained such as internal factors and peer pressure. Thus, students also have some ways to cope with their speaking anxiety, as explained in Theme 5. They tend to practice more and have more self-motivation to reduce their anxiety. Four students from high and low speaking level explained that by practicing their speaking skill they can reduce the fear of speaking in the class; one of them said, “The solution is practice. Try to speak more to others. Maybe it is hard and unsuccessful at first, but the more you speak, the more you get used to it” (Tony). While the other 2 students with medium speaking level mentioned they felt less anxious by motivating themselves. Rina and John explained “...and that is how I cope with my anxiety. I try to enjoy my university life and say everything is fine, it is fine”.

With the regard of the excerpts, self-practice and self-motivation are students’ ways to cope with speaking anxiety. They were aware that what they are afraid of is just from their mind, thus, they have to fight the feeling of fear to speak in the class. Sulastri and Ratnawati (2018) in their research revealed that students who are anxious can lower their anxiety by channelling their fear into something positive, motivating themselves, and also maintain their attention and concentration on the lesson. In relation with this findings, another qualitative study by Asysyfa et al. (2019) explained 4 ways to reduce speaking anxiety which in general it is formed within the students themselves. The strategies are practice pronouncing words in English, practice speaking in front of mirror or people to gain confidence, increase their vocabulary knowledge, and build positive mindset to boost their motivation. It may be argued, speaking difficulties do not prevent English-majored students from speaking English if they have studied the language for a long time. Hence more English they learnt, the fewer difficulties they had speaking the language (Thao & Nguyet, 2019). The implication is that students

can be given more time to practice themselves. Furthermore, the teacher can assign several assignments that can help them to practice their speaking ability. For example, a speaking task about their experience or hobbies, or any other topics that they like or related or to them. The teacher should give enough time for the students to prepare the presentation.

### **Teacher’s strategies to reduce students’ speaking anxiety are by giving consultation and using Flipgrid**

The teacher shared her point of views and experience on how to reduce students’ anxiety in the speaking class. To conclude, there are 2 strategies that the teacher used for lessening the speaking anxiety. Lia reported the first strategy “I usually shared some stories or offered help or consultation with me if they had difficulty. They can share their questions in the group chat. For those who were uncomfortable or shy to ask in group chat, they could chat with me privately”. The teacher tried to be open with the students by offering consultation for students who have difficulty or anxiety in class. The teacher should be aware that anxiety is one of the causes why students struggle with language learning, particularly speaking (Sulistiyorini, 2018). Therefore, creating a consultation session will make the tense in the class more loosen up. A research in Arab context by Melouah (2013), stated that by creating a pleasant environment in the classroom, students will feel more at ease in the classroom and with speaking English. In line with the finding, Hashemi and Abbasi (2013) also stated that teachers’ warm, helpful, and cooperative attitude creates a friendly, relaxed, and learning-supportive environment for language learning, making learners feel at ease when speaking in class. These findings indicate that teachers have to be more creative in communicating and encouraging students, in order students can channel their anxiety and discomfort in class.

Additionally, Lia applied another strategy to reduce her students' speaking anxiety through using an application Flipgrid. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning is believed to be the finest option for teaching and learning activities (Fitriani et al., 2020). Despite the fact that it was agreed upon, this study has sparked controversy, especially in a speaking class. Thus, information and communication technology (ICT) technologies are rapidly being implemented in education, and they have had a significant impact on teaching and learning processes (Shin & Yunus, 2021). One of the examples of ICT is Flipgrid, which was used in Lia's class, Interactional Speech class in the online learning. Lia reported how Flipgrid helped her in reducing students' speaking anxiety "So, before they record the video, they will practice first. Then they record it and upload it to Flipgrid. This is one of the ways to help them reduce their anxiety".

Based on the excerpts, using Flipgrid as a platform to collect students' speaking assignments helped them reduce their anxiety. Flipgrid itself is an online video discussion platform that aims to empower students by facilitating collaboration and social learning (Stoszkowski, 2018). In comparison to other speaking exercises in the normal speaking class that required students to directly answer the teacher's question, Lia noted that students could prepare themselves before filming their assignment videos. Direct speaking activities in the class triggered students' fear of negative evaluation that make students worry about other people's opinions, avoidance of evaluative circumstances, and even have assumption that others would judge themselves negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986). Flipgrid is an excellent tool for facilitating social learning and assisting students in the development of video content creation abilities as it is convenience and has familiar user interface like social media sites that are video-based (Stoszkowski, 2018). One of the features in Flipgrid is students can pause

and retake their videos as many times they want, which in line with Lia's statement above. Moreover, students' video that uploaded in Flipgrid, only can be seen by the teacher and students that given the link to their class page. Lia explained more "So, to help students become more confident, they can upload their videos in Flipgrid. You already saw in our Flipgrid, only those who are given the link and joined the class, can access our Flipgrid [...] showing their own work to only internal groups or only to them not to public it reduces students' anxiety".

Regarding to the statements, the teacher used Flipgrid because students felt embarrassed when they upload their videos to YouTube because they were afraid other people outside their classmate would see their videos. It was in line with a finding by Sari and Iswahyuni (2019) that showed more than half of the students in their research were anxious about completing the YouTube video project because they were concerned about what other people thought of their English abilities. This showed how Flipgrid is effective to reduce students' anxiety towards speaking. In correspondence with this finding, a mixed-methods study in Malaysia context by Shin and Yunus (2021) found that students have high positive attitude regarding using Flipgrid, as it facilitated students to have a pleasant student-centred learning environment. In Vietnam context, Lai et al. (2021) revealed that Flipgrid was effective to improve student's speaking skill and reduce their anxiety by interact and receive feedback from the teacher and their friends. These findings were also related to a finding in Indonesia context by Budiarta and Santosa (2020) that resulted using Flipgrid in the speaking class has significantly improved students' speaking performances along with their speaking abilities, particularly in the areas of fluency and understanding. These strategies applied by the teacher in Interactional Speech showed that it could be used to overcome students' speaking

anxiety. Creating a comfortable atmosphere in class and using Flipgrid for speaking activity can reduce the tension and fear of speaking.

## ■ CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed at investigating how students and teacher regarded speaking anxiety, what triggered it, and how to minimize it. Observation and interview were used to choose the participants to be interviewed further and searched for the themes. This study revealed two themes showing that students experienced anxiety although they have learned English since elementary school, and they found differences between learning in high school and in higher education that triggered their speaking anxiety. The research also revealed that the reasons of speaking anxiety were mainly internal factors like shyness, lack of confidence, and communication apprehension. Peer pressure was also found out as one of the leading factors of students' anxiety. The research also investigated on how to reduce speaking anxiety. From the students' perspective, practice and self-motivation were useful to decrease their anxiety. Whereas the teacher's ways to decrease anxiety were by giving consultation and using Flipgrid application for uploading the students' speaking videos since by using Flipgrid, students' videos can only be accessed by the teacher and other students in the class.

In regards of the findings, there are several implications that can impact and benefit educational field. From the result of the study, it is found that the students were experiencing speaking anxiety even though they have learned English in school. Furthermore, students experienced differences when learning between in school and university, as it was their first semester in the university. Thus, teachers can explain rules and general descriptions of instructional learning process in a university, and

describe the learning strategies in speaking; therefore, the students are well-prepared. By raising the awareness, students can get used to the university environment and not startled by the difference between school and university. The findings showed that the internal factor of the students and the pressure of the peers were two of the main sources of the anxiety. Teachers hold a vital role in students' fear of speaking. Teachers can be a mentor that accompany and motivate students to overcome their anxiety, so they are more confident and can work in a group bravely. Moreover, teachers can open consultation and use Flipgrid as a platform to collect students' videos instead of public video sharing like YouTube.

Despite the implications and contributions, there are some limitations in this study that can be used as a consideration for future studies. Because of the pandemic and distance learning, the observation for this research was done by teleconference. Therefore, the researcher could not observe the atmosphere of the class and students' facial expressions. It was because students did not open their camera during the class. Moreover, the findings of this qualitative study cannot be generalized since it might be not relevant to other contexts. Lastly, this study was completed in a short amount of time; therefore, it may lack additional in-depth information, such as an examination of the students' body language and expressions.

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