

Examining the Relationship Between Speaking Anxiety in English and Overall English Proficiency Among ELS Undergraduates In UKM

Mengkaji Hubungan Antara Kebimbangan Bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan Kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris Secara Keseluruhan dalam Kalangan Siswazah ELS di UKM

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian undergraduates generally have a significant deficiency in English proficiency, which is concerning for the next generation. This is despite the fact that they are exposed to English since kindergarten or primary school. Many Malaysian undergraduates struggle with English, which is their second language. Feeling worried about perceptions of others could be the contributing factor to students being anxious to speak in English, resulting in second language anxiety. Thus, it is the objective of this study to examine the relationship between English speaking anxiety and overall English proficiency level among English Language Studies' undergraduates. Besides, the study also investigated the factors that contributed to their speaking anxiety in English. 80 undergraduates from a public university have been selected to participate in the study. The data collection was executed using a questionnaire, and the data was analyzed by utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which allows a detailed statistical data analysis. In relation to this, this study will report on findings obtained from the analysis to discuss the levels of speaking anxiety and how second language speaking anxiety correlate with English proficiency level.

Keywords: *speaking anxiety, English proficiency, English language, language anxiety, secondlanguage*

ABSTRAK

Pelajar Malaysia umumnya mempunyai kekurangan yang ketara dalam penguasaan bahasa Inggeris, yang membimbangkan generasi akan datang. Ini walaupun hakikatnya mereka didedahkan dengan bahasa Inggeris sejak dari tadika atau sekolah rendah. Ramai pelajar Malaysia bergelut dengan bahasa Inggeris, yang merupakan bahasa kedua mereka. Perasaan bimbang tentang persepsi orang lain boleh menjadi faktor penyumbang kepada pelajar bimbang untuk bercakap dalam bahasa Inggeris, mengakibatkan kebimbangan bahasa kedua. Oleh itu, adalah menjadi objektif kajian ini untuk mengkaji hubungan antara kebimbangan berbahasa Inggeris dan tahap penguasaan bahasa Inggeris secara keseluruhan dalam kalangan pelajar Sarjana Muda Pengajian Bahasa Inggeris. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menyiasat faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kebimbangan mereka bertutur dalam bahasa Inggeris. 80 pelajar dari universiti awam telah dipilih untuk menyertai kajian ini. Pengumpulan data telah dilaksanakan menggunakan soal selidik, dan data dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), yang membolehkan analisis data statistik terperinci. Sehubungan dengan ini, kajian ini akan melaporkan dapatan yang diperolehi daripada analisis untuk membincangkan tahap kebimbangan bertutur dan bagaimana keresahan bertutur bahasa kedua berkorelasi dengan tahap penguasaan bahasa Inggeris.

Kata kunci: *keimbangan bercakap, penguasaan bahasa Inggeris, bahasa Inggeris, keseimbangan bahasa, bahasa kedua*

1. Introduction

Speaking can be defined as an oral skill of communication to convey ideas and messages. It can be interpreted as the process of giving or producing a specific meaning and context through verbal and non-verbal ways. In other words, speaking is an interactive way of providing context that grants receiving and processing information (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Though speaking comes naturally, some do experience anxiety, particularly university students. The role of anxiety as one of the most aggravating factors that could affect one's speaking performance has been investigated by many researchers. Anxiety can be described as the subjective experience of tension, uncertainty, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. The condition can develop itself in a variety of situations (Heng, Abdullah & Yosaf, 2012). However, anxiety that emerges and occurs during language learning is different from anxiety in general. The more anxious language learners are, the less likely they are able to speak effectively in the target language. Anxiety is a pressing issue when it comes to learning English.

As language plays a very vital role in life, it is essential and imperative for one to learn and have adequate competency in the language. Nevertheless, according to Misqam & Sadalvi (2019), most Malaysian graduates still face challenges in generating sentences or speaking in English, despite being exposed to English since kindergarten or primary school. The fact is, the practical competency in English is substantially lower, according to the Malaysian Education Blueprint. In the 2011 SPM English paper, just 28% of pupils received a minimum credit based on Cambridge 1119 norms (Rusli, 2018). Given that, Malaysia has still long recognized the importance of English and has implemented a number of measures in its educational system to help its citizens enhance their English language skills. However, the lack of English mastery is still common among students, and this is due to multiple factors. Based on research conducted by Shafie & Nayan (2010), among some of the contributors of low proficiency are the diversity of students' educational backgrounds, lack of exposure to the language and lack of learning capacity. Speaking anxiety is a prevalent and persistent issue among Malaysian undergraduates.

Similarly, low language proficiency level is also an issue that has emerged among Malaysian undergraduates (Alias & Rashid, 2018). Accordingly, Malaysian undergraduates must competently equip themselves with an exceptional level of proficiency in English; however, that is not usually the case. The rise of these problems has been investigated thoroughly by many researchers. Research indicates that the increasing pattern in English language anxiety are caused by factors that consist of feeling fearful of negative evaluations and feeling scared to make mistakes, and the focused emphasis on the culture that particularly emphasizes on the importance of maintaining a positive outlook and saving face (Chin, Hie Ling, Jiin Yih, 2016). Feeling worried about perceptions also tend to influence students to feel anxious to speak in English, and equivalently this also causes students to feel uneasy and worried about their own proficiency levels in English. Based on a study by Shamala & Bikash, 2020 (in Taly & Paramasivam, 2020), it was stated that students go through a situation called 'mental block' where the students could not produce anything by thinking or coming up with ideas, when learning English, and this problem occurs among second language learners despite their proficiency levels. This goes to show that regardless of one's proficiency in the language, students can face a halt in receiving information and this closely relates to students' speaking anxiety in English.

Thus, it is the aim of this research to gain a better understanding of the relationship between speaking anxiety in English and overall English proficiency among university students. The specific objectives are to determine the levels of speaking anxiety among UKM undergraduates, then to identify factors that contribute to the undergraduates' anxiety towards speaking in English and finally to examine the relationship between English speaking anxiety and overall English proficiency.

2. Literature Review

English is one of the world's most spoken languages, and the language is also recognized as one of the world's major lingua franca. In Malaysia, English is taught as a second language (L2) in schools. Several higher institutions in Malaysia have also adopted English as a part of their syllabus and use the language as a medium of instruction and communication. Misiran et al. (2018) described this move as beneficial, but it could contribute to a variety of problems, such as the inability to fully comprehend the vocabulary concepts of English.

The four types of communication skills that are taught in an English language classroom are speaking, writing, reading and listening. Speaking and writing are known as the productive skills as they both require some form of language output, while reading and listening are known as the receptive skills. A proficient L2 speaker should be able to master all these four skills. However, the language skill focused in this study is the speaking skill. Speaking skill is defined as the construction of auditory signals to produce verbal responses by linking the sounds to form sentences with a meaning. It can also be defined as a two-way process between two parties that consists of information, emotions, and opinions. Furthermore, it is viewed as a collaboration of spoken texts between two people to convey meaning (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Speaking almost never involves just one interlocutor, but always two of them. The act of speaking aims to convey messages to audiences so they can listen and make something out of it. According to Nasari & Pourhossein (2016), the speaking skill is applied in situations whereby the speakers need to inform others about an information, and this is where they apply the second language learned according to what they aim for. L2 speaking skill is deemed as the most crucial L2 skill that should be mastered. Students, especially, should master the skill so that they can use and communicate effectively for academic and professional settings. Despite the importance of mastering this skill, the reality is that the L2 learners in Malaysia struggle to use and apply the skill proficiently. As described by Mohammad and Mohd (2016), speaking anxiety can be provoked due to the involvement of two or more interlocutors. Failure to appropriately relay messages causes the interlocutors to feel awkward and uneasy.

Speaking in public can be defined as the act of having a speaker standing in front of an audience and deliver an organized speech with the intent of persuading, informing, or entertaining the audience. Public speaking is similar to presentation, with the exception that the latter is usually intended for a commercial or academic setting. With every occasion of public speaking, the audience should be able to take away a message from the speech at the conclusion of it (Yee et al., 2014). As this study is focused on students, public speaking is emphasized on speaking in class or during academic presentations.

Public speaking anxiety is defined as feeling worrisome, uncomfortable, and nervous to talk or speak in front of an audience. Feeling anxious usually revolves around one's perceptions and thoughts about speaking in public. For students, speaking English in public can be a challenging task because anxiety prevents them from giving a good oral presentation (Anandari 2016). Furthermore, Berlinger (2000) also discovered that a number of adults aged 20 and above found it difficult to learn English as it is uncommon and unusual for them to speak in English classes. This

was also related to their concern that they would make a mistake, and they also assumed that speaking without preparation induced uneasiness and nervousness. As a result, the participants avoided speaking in English. From the above-mentioned studies, it can be inferred that students with speaking anxiety would avoid speaking because they are afraid of making mistakes and would avoid speaking without preparation. Other than that, the students would avoid making eye contact with the audience, they would feel uncomfortable speaking in front of other people, and feel distracted and confused when doing so.

Speaking anxiety can be caused by a variety of factors that relate to comprehension, proficiency, exposure, and negative experiences in the classroom. Speaking in front of other people or an audience could seem like the hardest task to do for students who struggle with L2 speaking anxiety. According to a study by Abd-Elbagi and Ahmed (2020), fear and worry of negative evaluation is one of the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety. It was described that the act of experiencing such fear and worry is, to some extent, normal and likely to occur in classrooms, and it is a phenomenon that is commonly acknowledged. Students who are afraid of receiving negative feedback are often self-conscious about what others would think of them (Yee et al., 2014), thus resulting in a rise of feeling anxious and unable to utter appropriate words and sentences. Based on a study conducted by Chan, Abdullah and Yusof (2012), students from certain tertiary-level institutions in Malaysia faced fear and anxiety to communicate and speak due to the lecturers' excessive guidance and instructions in classes. Automatically, this causes the classroom to be fully controlled, increasing the pressure on students. Evidently, this leads to negative classroom experience and surroundings, due to the heightened speaking anxiety level of students, as well as negatively affecting the speech production and spontaneous responses by the students. Moreover, the lack of exposure to speaking English in everyday discussions can be the cause of the issue. Lacking in skills and vocabulary is heavily related with proficiency levels in L2. Vocabulary knowledge plays a significant role in explaining speaking proficiency (Koizumi & In'nami, 2013). It was revealed that L2 learners with broader and wider vocabulary knowledge are more likely to have better speaking skills, allowing them to produce faster, more accurate, more syntactically advanced oral performances. Their anxiety level decreases as their proficiency level rises. Latif (2015) acknowledged that speaking anxiety is likely to be caused by problems regarding L2 proficiency.

The past studies reviewed above indicate that English language learners may experience speaking anxiety regardless of their proficiency in the language. Many other factors could contribute to the anxiety despite proficiency originally named as the primary candidate. This study will explore this issue further by trying to determine the nature of the relationship between the two variables, which are factors that could contribute to speaking anxiety and their overall English proficiency of ELS undergraduates.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) have constructed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to determine foreign language anxiety as a distinct variable in language learning. This theoretical framework was established with three primary sources. FLCAS comprises three categories which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. Communication apprehension can be defined as a type of shyness marked by a worry of interacting with others. Fear of negative evaluation is defined as "Apprehension about others' judgments, avoidance of evaluating circumstances, and the fear that others will evaluate oneself badly (p. 128)" meanwhile test-anxiety arises from a fear of failing in test-taking situations. Eventually, this framework has been utilized in research related to speaking anxiety. FLCAS consists of thirty-three items rated on a five-point Likert scale. This framework plays an essential part in revealing that L2 learners' learning performance is greatly affected by language anxiety. Additionally, Horwitz et. al (1986) constructed a framework to identify language anxiety, examine relationships between language anxieties as well as second language learning, and explore

relationships involving language anxiety and other types of anxiety. This framework is applied to this study as the framework can contribute to finding out and identify language anxiety, which correlates with the objective of this study which is to identify the factors of the phenomena. The main categories of the framework can act as a foundation for identifying and analyzing the factors, as well as the levels of language anxiety.

3. Methodology

The research design employed for this research is survey design, utilizing quantitative research methods. In this study, a questionnaire is utilized because the information on the specific data needed for the study will be easily obtained. The quantitative method is used to investigate the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety and overall English proficiency among ESL undergraduates. According to Borrego, Douglas, and Amelink (2009), quantitative methods are applicable for the deductive approach, in which a theory or hypothesis validates the variables, the goal statement, and the direction of the narrowly defined research questions.

Furthermore, based on the quantitative method used in this study, correlational research is also applied. It refers to when an independent variable explains a dependent variable and takes part in determining the relationship and the connection between the two variables investigated (Addow et. al, 2013). Correlational research aims to ascertain to what degree the relationship between the two variables is, to the extent that a change in one creates a change in the other.

The sample of this study consisted of 80 ELS undergraduates from UKM. The participants are undergraduates from the English Language Studies. (ESL) undergraduates are selected as participants because the participants employ and use their second language, English in their everyday lives and daily, especially during their classes. In addition to that, the participants also study the same language, and are familiar enough with relevant information on the language.

Furthermore, the participants will be chosen by stratified sampling approach. Under stratified sampling, simple random sampling is applied due to ELS undergraduates having an equivalent and similar probability of being selected to participate in the study. The participants also share the same characteristics, being ESL undergraduates from UKM. Hence, by using the approaches, the participants are divided into 3 strata which include those from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3.

The questionnaire and survey design are the main instruments used. The questionnaire is adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) that consists of 33 items set in the 4-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. Based on FLCAS, the questionnaire focuses on identifying and analyzing three general categories of language anxiety, which are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. However, considering this study focuses on speaking anxiety among English as L2 learners, the questionnaire has been modified to fit the aspect of speaking anxiety. The modified questionnaire adapted from FLCAS focuses more on anxiety while speaking in front of an entity or an audience. In this study, a questionnaire was used because the information on the specific data needed for the study may be easily obtained. From the modified questionnaire, the data acquired can specify and explain the phenomena and factors of speaking anxiety. Accordingly, the questionnaire consists of two sections of the modified FLCAS items, as well as a demographic section to determine the overall English proficiency of the UKM undergraduates. The demographic section will include items to attain data on the details of the undergraduates’ MUET Band scores. MUET is an English proficiency test that is widely used for university admissions in Malaysia: consequently, details on MUET and the Band scores recorded can show and specify the undergraduates’ English proficiency level.

This study aims to identify the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety, the extent of the phenomena and the correlation between speaking anxiety and overall English proficiency among

each year of ELS undergraduates in UKM. Therefore, the participants will be given the modified questionnaire to answer. The responses recorded then would be analyzed and examined to answer the research objectives.

After the responses from the questionnaire are collected, the data obtained will be analyzed, by utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software that allows the analysis of the data statistically. The mean and standard deviation values, as well as the percentages recorded would then be used in order to investigate the factors of speaking anxiety, and the extent of the phenomena, as well as to specify the English proficiency level of the participants. The mean scores to measure level of speaking anxiety are as follows:

TABLE 1: Mean value for speaking anxiety

Anxiety Level	Mean Value (Range)
High	From 1.00 to 2.50
Moderate	From 2.51 to 3.50
Low	From 3.51 to 5.00

Based on a study by Latif (2015), the data from the study that aimed to investigate the level of speaking anxiety among the participants of the study are analyzed into the rubric as shown in Table 1. There are three levels of speaking anxiety derived from the study. Range 1.00-2.50 is high, range 2.51-3.50 is moderate and range 3.51-5.00 is low.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Demographic

In the demographic section, the participants are asked to fill their age, gender, year of study, course and English proficiency test scores. The participants are all from the same course, as the research is focused on ELS undergraduates only, and as for the year of study, the participants are either from Year 1, Year 2, and Year 3. The English proficiency test scores are able to determine the participant's English proficiency, thus able to contribute to examining the relationship between English speaking anxiety and English proficiency.

TABLE 2: Age, frequency, percentage

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-21	17	21.3
22-25	60	75.0
26-29	3	3.8
Total	80	100.0

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage of the age. The age is divided into 3 ranges and as it can be seen from the table, the range 22-25 of 75% is the highest range recorded, with 60 participants aged between 22 and 25 years old. The second highest is 17 participants from the age of 18-21 group and lastly 3 participants from the range of 26-29 years old. Thus, it can be concluded that most of the participants are from the age range of 22-25 years old.

TABLE 3: Gender, frequency, percentage

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	9	11.3
Female	71	88.8
Total	80	100

Table 3 above shows the frequency and percentage of gender. A total of only 9 male participants with the percentage of 11.3% participated in the study. As for female participants, a total of 71 participants are recorded, with the percentage of 88.8%. This shows that there are more female participants as compared to male participants.

TABLE 4: Year, frequency, percentage

Year of study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Year 1	18	22.5
Year 2	15	18.8
Year 3	47	58.8
Total	80	100

The table above shows the year of study, including the frequency and percentage. Most of the participants are from Year 3, which is the final year of ELS undergraduates with a total of 47 participants and a percentage of 58.8%, followed by the second highest which is participants from Year 1 with 18 participants and 22.5%. Meanwhile 15 participants with a percentage of 18.8% are participants from Year 2, with the lowest number of participants.

TABLE 5: English proficiency test, frequency, percentage

MUET score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Band 4	68	85
Band 5	12	15.0
Total	80	100.0

Table 5 above shows the category of MUET scores as well as the frequency and percentage for each category. Results from the questionnaire listed out 2 band scores, which are Band 4 and Band 5. Each category represents the level of English proficiency, and as it can be seen from the table that most of the participants achieved Band 4 for MUET, with a total of 68 participants and a percentage of 85%. Only 12 participants achieved the score of Band 5, with a percentage of 15%. The entry requirement for ELS course in UKM is a minimum of MUET Band 4. Hence, there are no MUET scores lower than Band 4. As MUET score is a measure of English proficiency, Band 4 score is deemed as a satisfactory user, meanwhile Band 5 score is deemed as a proficient user. It can be concluded that there is no participant who achieved Band 6 which is the highest band score, and most of the participants are only at the satisfactory level, which is regarded as satisfactory expressive and fluent, appropriate language but with occasional inaccuracies.

4.2 Level of speaking anxiety

The questionnaire which is modified and adapted from FLCAS is used to determine the levels of speaking anxiety among UKM undergraduates. The questionnaire consists of 23 items that are focused on items that are related to speaking anxiety in the classroom. This questionnaire also used a 4-point Likert scale which ranged from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. The participants are instructed to pick a number that represents their answer. There are three sections in the questionnaire, which are the demographic section and two sections of items that are adapted from FLCAS. The items are also categorized into three categories, which are communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test-anxiety.

Table 6: Mean and level for speaking anxiety categories

Category	Mean	Level
Communication comprehension	2.85	Moderate
Fear of negative evaluation	2.84	Moderate
Test-anxiety	2.89	Moderate
TOTAL	2.88	Moderate

Table 6 above shows the mean and standard deviation values for each of the speaking anxiety factors, which are communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test-anxiety. Based on a study by Hammad and Ghali (2015), the level of speaking anxiety is determined as shown in Table 1 earlier. The levels of speaking anxiety are divided to three levels, which are, high, moderate, and low. The findings revealed that the mean value of 2.89 for test-anxiety was the highest mean as compared to other factors, which is then followed by communication comprehension with the mean value of 2.85. On the other hand, the lowest scores are fear of negative evaluation, with a mean value of 2.84. Based on the findings that have been analyzed, it shows that the level of speaking anxiety that consisted of communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test-anxiety are categorized as moderate.

4.3 Factors of anxiety in speaking English

The data collected from the questionnaire are used to identify the factors of anxiety in speaking English among the participants. The items in the questionnaire are also questions that have been categorized into three categories, and the participants choose one answer from the 4-likert scale.

TABLE 7: Communication Comprehension items

No	Communication comprehension	Mean	Std Dev
1	It worries me when I know I need to give multiple presentations in the ESL class.	2.79	0.90
2	I feel overwhelmed, because I have to learn the rules about how to give a good presentation in the ELS class.	2.73	0.93
3	It worries me when I know I need to give multiple presentations in the ELS class.	2.85	1.07
4	In ELS classes, I start to panic when I give the presentation without enough preparation.	3.18	0.89
5	I don't worry about making mistakes when I give the presentation in the ESL class.	2.51	1.02

6	In ESL classes, sometimes I can't express my true feelings and thoughts in English after I make mistakes in my presentation, and this situation makes me uncomfortable.	2.5	1.01
7	In the process of giving presentation, I often stutter or repeat words when the teacher and other classmates gaze at me.	2.72	0.93
8	I am usually at ease after finishing my presentation in the class.	3.53	0.81
9	I get upset when I don't understand the teacher's specific feedback on my presentation.	2.84	0.84

Based on Table 7, it can be seen that these items fall under the communication comprehension category, and there are 9 items listed. The table above also displays the mean and standard deviation for every item under the category. It can also be seen that the highest mean is 3.53 for Item No. 8, and the lowest mean is 2.5 for Item No. 6.

TABLE 8: Fear of negative evaluation items

No	Fear of negative evaluation	Mean	Std Dev
1	It frightens me when I know the in-class presentation will be graded by the teacher.	2.83	0.97
2	In ESL classes, I'm afraid that my teachers tend to correct mistakes I make during the presentation.	2.38	0.98
3	In ESL classes, when I give presentations, I feel like a different person.	2.60	0.96
4	I keep thinking that the other students are better at giving presentations in English than I am.	3.10	1.01
5	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I give the presentation.	2.39	1.08
6	It embarrasses me to volunteer oral comments on my classmates' presentations in English.	2.69	1.11
7	After giving the presentation, I feel relaxed and happy when the teacher praises my performance.	3.68	0.71
8	I get nervous when the teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance after I finish the presentation.	3.06	0.86

The table above shows the 8 items that are under the category of fear of negative evaluation, including the mean and standard deviation for each respective item. It can be seen from the table that the highest mean is 3.68 for Item No. 7 meanwhile the lowest mean is 2.38 for Item No. 2.

TABLE 9: Test-anxiety items

No	Test-anxiety	Mean	Std Dev
1	In ESL classes, I feel more tense and nervous about the presentation than other class activities.	2.88	1.05
2	I worry that I cannot make a good presentation in the ESL class.	3.06	0.97
3	In ESL classes, I start to panic before the presentation even if I have a good preparation for it.	2.68	1.00
4	I tremble when I know that I will be the next one to give the presentation in ESL class.	2.65	0.96
5	In the presentation, I may get so nervous that I forget what I know.	3.09	0.87

6	I can feel my heart pounding when I give the presentation in the ESL class.	2.95	0.99
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Based on table above, there are 6 items that represent test-anxiety category. The highest mean for this category is 3.09 which is for Item No. 5 and the lowest mean is 2.65 for Item No. 4. Table 7, 8 and 9 are a list of factors that contribute to speaking anxiety in English among ELS undergraduates.

4.4 Relationship between English speaking anxiety and overall English proficiency

To examine the relationship between English speaking anxiety and the overall English proficiency, the data that was collected from the questionnaire was analyzed. To obtain data on English proficiency, a sub-section in the demographic section is included for the respondents to fill their English proficiency test (MUET) scores in. Afterwards, the data is analyzed to find the correlation between the two variables using the Spearman test.

TABLE 10: Correlations – Spearman Test between English speaking anxiety and proficiency

Test	Category		Result
Spearman's rho	Communication comprehension	Correlation coefficient	0.210
		Sig	0.061
	Fear of negative evaluation	Correlation coefficient	0.225*
		Sig	0.045
	Test-anxiety	Correlation coefficient	0.205
		Sig	0.068

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 shows the Correlation-Spearman test result between three variables which are Test Anxiety, Communication Apprehension and Fear of Negative Evaluation and the participants' overall English proficiency. The results showed that the correlation value between English proficiency and fear of negative evaluation was $r = 0.225$. This indicated that there is a negative correlation between English proficiency and fear of negative evaluation at $p < 0.05$. This correlation shows that the higher the English proficiency, the lower the fear of negative evaluation and the opposite, which is the lower the English proficiency, the higher the fear of negative evaluation. On the other hand, there was no significant correlation between the English proficiency and communication comprehension with ($r = 0.210, p > 0.05$), and the same result is also showed with the correlation between the English proficiency and test-anxiety with ($r = 0.205, p > 0.05$). Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that fear of negative evaluation is the only category that is significantly correlated with English proficiency among ELS students in UKM. On the other hand, both communication comprehension and test-anxiety do not correlate with English proficiency.

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between English speaking anxiety and the overall English proficiency among ELS students in UKM. Consequently, three research objectives were formulated for the study. A questionnaire with 23 items that was adapted from 33 items in FLCAS was used in the study, and to obtain data on the undergraduates' speaking proficiency level, their MUET Band scores were recorded. The first objective of the study is to

determine the level of speaking anxiety among the undergraduates, and the data was analyzed to obtain the mean and standard deviation values for each of the categories. The findings show that the mean value for each category was at a moderate level. The participants in this study are identified as undergraduates of English course and having a satisfactory level of English proficiency such as Band 4 and Band 5 scores for MUET test is a critical requirement to be accepted in the ELS course in UKM. Accordingly, the fact is that the participants do have decent English skills and proficiency, but with minor inaccuracies. Due to the fact that most of the participants achieved Band 4 MUET score, and it is known for a fact that they can make minor mistakes and errors, thus, it suggests that the speaking anxiety level is moderate, which is in the middle, and average. It is not high, and not low either. Findings from the study by Long et. al (2019) stated that the ELS students in their study also experienced moderate level of speaking anxiety.

The second objective of the study is to determine the factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among ELS undergraduates in UKM, and the findings and results were obtained from the data received and analyzed from the questionnaire. The items were divided into 3 categories, which are communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test-anxiety. For the first category, the items mostly focused on fear, worry and feeling upset when giving a presentation, which involves speaking in public, and to an audience. The sum of mean for this category is the second highest as compared to other categories. As for the category of fear of negative evaluation, which focuses most on being evaluated on their speaking situations, as well as volunteering to speak, this category had the lowest mean as compared to other categories. So, for the category of test-anxiety, which focuses on general feeling of anxiety presenting and speaking in ELS class, this category recorded the highest mean. This finding of the study is consistent with findings from a study by Alias & Rashid (2018) in which their respondents reported that they feel nervous even if they are prepared, and they can feel their heart pounding when they had to take a speaking test.

The third objective of the study is to examine the relationship between English speaking anxiety and English proficiency among ELS undergraduates, and the findings showed that there is a negative correlation between English proficiency and fear of negative evaluation, and no correlation recorded between English proficiency and both communication comprehension and test-anxiety. The negative correlation shows that when the undergraduates have low English proficiency, they have a higher fear of negative evaluation. Hence, they feel worried and nervous knowing that they are being evaluated when they have a lower English proficiency compared to their peers. This suggests that they feel anxious of their speaking skills when presenting in front of an audience because they are aware of their English proficiency level not being as good as others, and they are aware that their proficiency could hinder their ability to speak.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study showed that the ELS undergraduates have a moderate level of speaking anxiety, and the factor of test-anxiety is the highest factor that contributes to English speaking anxiety. Moreover, the category of fear of negative evaluation is negatively correlated to their English proficiency. Therefore, it can be concluded that test-anxiety is the one getting in their way of having good speaking

skills and level, and they are worried and nervous of being evaluated, or to offer evaluation because they are self-conscious about their English proficiency level. It can be said that ELS undergraduates generally are anxious, but at a medium level and this is related to them being nervous about their skills.

The findings of the study suggest that lecturers and teachers need to be aware of the phenomena of speaking anxiety, even if the students major in English in their studies. If they are not aware, this could possibly result in their teaching methods being hindered by reluctant learners who are anxious. Furthermore, in regard of the fear of making mistakes while speaking in public or in front of an audience or the feeling of anxiety in speaking occasions, the policymakers and curriculum designers should give these practice-based tasks more consideration and make students more attuned to them. Besides, further research should employ both quantitative and qualitative methods, as mixed methods could contribute to obtaining more information, in depth and in detail, rather than just relying on questionnaire solely. Instead of having only three categories, it would be a good idea to have more variables added to get more accuracy in the study.

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