

# A Snapshot on the Speaking Anxiety of the EFL Students at a Rural School

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**Abstract:** *The present study intends to investigate English-Speaking Anxiety levels experienced by junior high school students and identify the major contributing factor that provokes their anxiety. A Descriptive Research Design was applied for the present study, involving 130 junior high school students as participants. The data were collected through the adapted version of the Questionnaire constructed by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014) named the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) Questionnaire. Descriptive Statistics, with the help of SPSS Software, were performed to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed that the majority of junior high school students indicated experiencing English-Speaking Anxiety at a moderate level. Moreover, classroom procedure was chosen as the most provoking factor of students' English-Speaking Anxiety.*

**Keywords:** English-Speaking Anxiety; English-Speaking Anxiety level; Major factors of English-Speaking Anxiety; Junior high school students; EFL students from rural school.

## INTRODUCTION

Excellent communication skills and foreign language proficiency are necessary for everyone to master nowadays. Especially for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, it will be a valuable skill that brings enormous benefits to students' lives (Petruja, 2012). Hence, students are expected to practice speaking English frequently to reinforce their English-speaking skills. Unfortunately, while learning English in class, most EFL students commonly suffer from Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) (Horwitz et al., 1986). Foreign Language Anxiety is categorized as situation-specific anxiety; Horwitz et al. (1986) define it as students' negative emotional reaction resulting from their self-perception, attitudes, and beliefs toward the foreign language learning process, caused by factors such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Therefore, EFL students often are reluctant to actively participate in the English language learning process.

Furthermore, it is revealed that speaking English causes students to feel anxious and experience Foreign Language Anxiety in class. Generally, EFL students claimed that speaking English is challenging and greatly stimulates their anxiety (Suleimenova, 2013). Students commonly suffer from excessive worries and anxiety when they have to communicate using English with other people, which causes them to experience fear of speaking. This condition is widely known as English-Speaking Anxiety (Kralova & Petrova, 2017). As a consequence, EFL students tend to show less interest, for example, by reducing participation and being unwilling to interact or speak English with their classmates or teacher, which could interfere with the language learning process and hinder the enhancement of their English-speaking skills (Batiha et al., 2016).

In reference to Foreign Language Anxiety in language classrooms, researchers from across the world have carried out numerous studies to investigate Foreign Language Anxiety among EFL/ESL students. Even though the previous studies already discussed the issue of Foreign Language Anxiety, those prior studies mainly focused on examining college students (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Batiha et al., 2016; Cagatay, 2015; Naudhani et al., 2018; Toubot et al., 2018), and only a few of the previous studies involved high school students (Bas & Ozcan, 2018; Dewaele & Macintyre, 2014). However, college students and junior high school students have different reasons and motivations for learning English. Junior high school students' reasons to learn English are mainly because they want to get good scores and pass their tests to receive praise or avoid punishment from their parents or teachers, resulting in them being reported as less motivated and having less interest while learning English (Long et al., 2013). Unlike college students who recognize the importance and benefits of mastering English, they reported having high motivation and being more eager to learn English (Daif-Allah & Aljumah, 2020). As a consequence, junior high school students or EFL/ESL learners in their teens were revealed to experience higher levels of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety compared to college students or those who are in their twenties (Bas & Ozcan, 2018; Dewaele & Macintyre, 2014).

Hence, this study intended to fill the gap from the prior studies and was mainly focusing on investigating the English-Speaking Anxiety of junior high school students who lived in rural areas. Considering that students in rural areas are likely to have fewer resources compared to students who live in urban areas, as well as fewer opportunities to learn and be exposed to English outside of school (Hamid & Idrus, 2021; Lamb, 2012). Furthermore, students in rural areas are reported to be less motivated in learning English compared to students who live in urban areas or cities (Lamb, 2012). These conditions might provoke English-

Speaking Anxiety among students who live in rural areas, as they are still unfamiliar with and under-exposed to the English language. Therefore, the research questions for the present study were formulated based on the information above.

1. What is the level of English-Speaking Anxiety of junior high school students in the English Classroom?
2. What are the major contributing factors that provoke students' English-Speaking Anxiety?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Levels of English-Speaking Anxiety

Speaking English in the language classroom was reported to be a major source of anxiety for students (Suleimenova, 2013). Students commonly suffered from English-Speaking Anxiety on three different levels: high, moderate, or low, which causes them to feel doubtful and unwilling to speak English in class due to fear and restlessness when they need to actively communicate using English with others (Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2014). However, students might suffer from different symptoms based on their English-Speaking Anxiety levels (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013).

A high level of English-Speaking Anxiety commonly makes students suffer from more severe symptoms compared to students with a moderate or low level of English-Speaking Anxiety. These symptoms include trembling, panic, rapid heartbeat, loss of focus, mind going blank, looking pale, upset stomach, sweaty palms, freezing, and feeling intimidated (Videbeck, 2008). In addition, it also leads students to lose interest, feel less motivated, become restless, feel scared and doubtful, experience mental blocks, and even attempt to be absent from class to avoid speaking English (Horwitz et al., 1986; Zhu & Zhou, 2012). In contrast, experiencing English-Speaking Anxiety at a moderate level allows students to still process information, concentrate, and solve tasks with the help of friends or teachers (Videbeck, 2008). Therefore, they do not fully avoid speaking English in class but may choose to procrastinate or sit in the back rows (Horwitz et al., 1986). Generally, they exhibit signs such as excessive sweating, stuttering, speaking too fast or too slow, displaying nervous habits, and avoiding eye contact when speaking (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013). While, students who experience a low level of English-Speaking Anxiety will be more focused and eager to learn because their ability to focus and learn increases due to increased sensory stimulation (Videbeck, 2008). Moreover, a low level of anxiety helps students think quickly to find solutions to the problems they face. Generally, they often experience fidgeting, heightened motivation, increased learning ability, improved problem-solving, sharpened senses, irritability, and sweaty palms (Videbeck, 2008).

### Factors Provoking English-Speaking Anxiety

Students experience English-Speaking Anxiety due to six main factors: communication apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986), fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986), test anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986), self-confidence (Toubot et al., 2018), the student's beliefs about the language learning process (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019), and classroom procedures (Suleimenova, 2013). All of these factors might provoke students' English-Speaking Anxiety in EFL classrooms, making them anxious to communicate using English with their peers or teachers and it will surely interfere with their language acquisition process and the development of their speaking skills (Batiha et al., 2016).

Firstly, **communication apprehension**, defined as the fear of participating in oral communication with others, affects students' willingness to communicate due to both reception apprehension and production apprehension (Horwitz et al., 1986). Secondly, **fear of receiving negative evaluations** from peers and teachers can also provoke students' English-Speaking Anxiety. Students often perceive evaluations while speaking English as provoking situations rather than opportunities to develop their speaking skills (Batiha et al., 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986). Then, **test anxiety** refers to the unease experienced by students during test-taking situations when they are uncertain about their capabilities, leading to anxiety about test results (Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, **self-confidence** also triggers students' English-Speaking Anxiety. It makes students feel embarrassed and burdened by being the center of attention due to their lack of confidence and low self-esteem. They also tend to worry about others' opinions (Toubot et al., 2018). **Students' beliefs** about language learning constitute another key factor affecting their English-Speaking Anxiety. Some of these beliefs stem from students' unrealistic and fallacious conceptions about language learning, which can lead them to feel excessively self-conscious about speaking English (Horwitz et al., 1986). Furthermore, students' English-Speaking Anxiety can also be provoked by **classroom procedures**. In general, students who live in countries where English is a foreign language, like Indonesia, rarely use English during their daily conversations. As a result, they lack practice, lack language proficiency, and have a limited vocabulary, and cannot speak English spontaneously (Toubot et al., 2018; Batiha et al., 2016).

## METHOD

A Descriptive Research Design was applied for the present study. The sample of the present study involved 15% of the overall population, which consisted of 130 students from every grade of an Indonesian state junior high school in Kencong, Jember. The Stratified Random Sampling technique was applied to select the participants. The data for this study were primarily obtained using an adapted version of the questionnaire constructed by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014), known as the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) Questionnaire. This questionnaire comprised 18 items, and it was divided into six classifications related to the factors of English-Speaking Anxiety. Furthermore, the questionnaire was adapted to a four-point Likert Scale questionnaire, with the neutral option removed due to its ambiguous meaning and lack of alignment with participants' true perceptions (Simms et al., 2019). Additionally, Item 15 "I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting" was replaced with Item 7 from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) Questionnaire constructed by Horwitz et al. (1986): "I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am" (Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, to enhance participants' understanding of the item questions, the questionnaire items were translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Furthermore, the translated FLSAS Questionnaire demonstrated very high reliability for the entire scale, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.906.

The data retrieved from the FLSAS Questionnaire were analyzed using Descriptive Statistics through SPSS 25 version software. To assess the English-Speaking Anxiety level of junior high school students, the mean score for the total scores of all participants was calculated. This mean score was then categorized as a level of English-Speaking Anxiety based on the measurement criteria of the FLSAS Questionnaire adapted from Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014). Additionally, to identify the major contributing factors to students' English-Speaking Anxiety, the frequencies, and percentages of the response options 'strongly agree' and 'agree' for each questionnaire item were summed. Subsequently, the average score for each factor was calculated. These factors were then ranked from highest to lowest to determine the most provoking to the least provoking factor of students' English-Speaking Anxiety. The criteria for measuring English-Speaking Anxiety, adapted from Ozturk and Gurbuz (2014), are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1 The Measuring Criteria of FLSAS Questionnaire*

Score	Identification
55-72	High level of English-Speaking Anxiety
36-54	Moderate level of English-Speaking Anxiety
18-35	Low Level of English-Speaking Anxiety

(Source: Ozturk and Gurbuz, 2014)

## FINDINGS

### Levels of Junior High School Students' English-Speaking Anxiety

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that a majority of junior high school students in Kencong, Jember, are indicated to suffer from a moderate level of English-Speaking Anxiety. This is evident from the calculated mean score which was found to be 50.35 (SD = 6.96). To provide a more precise breakdown, approximately 65.4% of the students were found to suffer from a moderate level of English-Speaking Anxiety. Moreover, around 24.6% of the students indicated dealing with a high level of English-Speaking Anxiety, while about 10% of the students indicated experiencing English-Speaking Anxiety at a low level. To summarize the data analysis results for the students' English-Speaking Anxiety levels, please refer to Table 2 below.

*Table 2 The Recapitulation Result of Students' English-Speaking Anxiety Levels*

Mean	Std. Deviation	Low Level (18-35)	Moderate level (36-54)	High Level (55-72)
50.35	6.96	13 students (10%)	85 students (65.4%)	32 students (24.6%)

### Factors Provoking English-Speaking Anxiety

#### A. Communication Apprehension (CA)

The result of students' responses to the CA items is demonstrated in Table 3

Table 3 Students Responses on CA Items

<u>CA</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A+SA</u>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>10</b> (7.7%)	<b>33</b> (25.4%)	<b>71</b> (54.6%)	<b>16</b> (12.3%)	<b>87</b> (66.9%)
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>9</b> (6.9%)	<b>36</b> (27.7%)	<b>68</b> (52.3%)	<b>17</b> (13.1%)	<b>85</b> (65.4%)
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>5</b> (3.8%)	<b>28</b> (21.5%)	<b>84</b> (64.6%)	<b>13</b> (10%)	<b>97</b> (74.6%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>89.67</b>

Table 3 reveals that the average score of students' agreement with the items in the communication apprehension factor was 89.67 points. Regarding Item 3, approximately 74.6% of the students agreed with it, indicating that many students often felt uneasy and doubtful when speaking English. Additionally, around 66.9% of the students expressed fear when they could not grasp information from their teacher during English class, as reflected in their agreement with Item 1. Moreover, about 65.4% of the students acknowledged feeling restless when unable to understand the meaning of each English word spoken by their teacher. This sentiment was evident from their agreement with Item 2.

### B. Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)

The result of students' responses to the FNE items is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Students Responses on FNE Items

<u>FNE</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A+SA</u>
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>6</b> (4.6 %)	<b>29</b> (22.3%)	<b>80</b> (61.5%)	<b>15</b> (11.5%)	<b>95</b> (73%)
<b>Item 5</b>	<b>8</b> (6.2 %)	<b>54</b> (41.5%)	<b>57</b> (43.8%)	<b>11</b> (8.5%)	<b>68</b> (52.3 %)
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>12</b> (9.2%)	<b>45</b> (34.6%)	<b>54</b> (41.5%)	<b>19</b> (14.6%)	<b>73</b> (56.1%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>78.67</b>

The conclusion that could be drawn from Table 4 was the average score of students' agreed responses to the items of fear of receiving a negative evaluation factor was 78.67. Looking at Item 4, approximately 73% of the students agreed with it, indicating that many students were apprehensive about making mistakes while speaking English. Furthermore, around 56.1% of the students expressed fear that their friends might mock them or laugh when they spoke English. This concern was evident from their agreement with Item 6. Additionally, about 52.3% of the students agreed with Item 5, which implies that the students were largely concerned with the corrections they might receive from their teacher for speaking errors made in English conversations.

### C. Test Anxiety (TA)

The result of students' responses to the TA items is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Students Responses on TA Items

<u>TA</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A+SA</u>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>14</b> (10.8%)	<b>25</b> (19.2%)	<b>71</b> (54.6 %)	<b>20</b> (15.4%)	<b>91</b> (70 %)
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>9</b> (6.9 %)	<b>29</b> (22.3 %)	<b>64</b> (49.2 %)	<b>28</b> (21.5%)	<b>92</b> (70.5 %)
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>10</b> (7.7%)	<b>25</b> (19.2%)	<b>73</b> (56.2%)	<b>22</b> (16.9%)	<b>95</b> (73.1%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>92.67</b>

Table 5 demonstrates that test anxiety received an average score of 92.67 points. Regarding Item 9, approximately 73.1% of the students agreed with it, indicating that a significant number of students felt highly uncomfortable when confronted with unpreparedness questions from their teacher. Furthermore, Item 8 inquired whether students felt burdened by the multitude of rules they had to study to speak English; about 70.5% of students expressed their agreement with this item. Moreover, around 70% of the students claimed that their bodies started shaking when they were about to be called for a test. This observation was reflected in the students' responses to Item 7.

#### D. Self-Confidence (SC)

The result of students' responses to the SC items is presented Table 6

Table 6 Students Responses SC Items

SC	SD	D	A	SA	A+SA
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>5</b> (3.8 %)	<b>27</b> (20.8%)	<b>83</b> (63.8%)	<b>15</b> (11.5%)	<b>98</b> (75.3%)
<b>Item 11</b>	<b>3</b> (2.3%)	<b>34</b> (26.2%)	<b>80</b> (61.5%)	<b>13</b> (10%)	<b>93</b> (71.5%)
<b>Item 12</b>	<b>6</b> (4.6%)	<b>29</b> (22.3%)	<b>84</b> (64.6%)	<b>11</b> (8.5%)	<b>95</b> (73.1%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>95.3</b>

From the three items mentioned in Table 6, it can be inferred that the average of students' agreement with the items in the lack of confidence factor was 95.3 points. Looking at Item 10, approximately 75.3% of the students agreed with it, indicating that in most instances, students felt doubtful about themselves when speaking English. Additionally, for Item 12, around 73.1% of the students agreed with it, suggesting that students commonly felt uncomfortable when conversing with English native speakers due to their low self-confidence. Moreover, about 71.5% of the students claimed that they lacked confidence in their English-speaking abilities, a sentiment that was evident in their agreement with Item 11.

#### E. Students' Belief

The result of students' responses to the SB items is presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Students Responses SB Items

SB	SD	D	A	SA	A+SA
<b>Item 13</b>	<b>5</b> (3.8 %)	<b>27</b> (20.8%)	<b>81</b> (62.3%)	<b>17</b> (13.1%)	<b>98</b> (75.4%)
<b>Item 14</b>	<b>6</b> (4.6%)	<b>35</b> (26.9%)	<b>76</b> (58.5%)	<b>13</b> (10%)	<b>89</b> (68.5%)
<b>Item 15</b>	<b>5</b> (3.8 %)	<b>40</b> (30.8%)	<b>69</b> (53.1%)	<b>16</b> (12.3%)	<b>85</b> (65.4%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>90.67</b>

Referring to the findings of students' beliefs items presented in Table 7, the average score of students' agreement with the items in the students' beliefs factor was 90.67 points. Considering Item 13, around 75.4% of the participants agreed with it, indicating that students generally believed they possessed the poorest English-speaking ability compared to others. Additionally, students held the belief that their peers were more adept at language learning, as depicted in Item 14, where about 68.5% of the students agreed with this statement. Moreover, due to these beliefs, approximately 65.4% of the students claimed they were felt excessively self-conscious about speaking English in public. This sentiment was evident in their agreement with Item 15.

**F. Classroom Procedure (CP)**

The result of students' responses to the CP items is presented in Table 8

*Table 8 Students Respons of CP items*

CP	SD	D	A	SA	A+SA
<b>Item 16</b>	<b>1</b> (0.8%)	<b>14</b> (10.8%)	<b>89</b> (68.5%)	<b>26</b> (20%)	<b>115</b> (88.5%)
<b>Item 17</b>	<b>4</b> (3.1%)	<b>20</b> (15.4%)	<b>69</b> (53.1%)	<b>37</b> (28.5%)	<b>106</b> (81.6%)
<b>Item 18</b>	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>28</b> (21.5%)	<b>92</b> (70.8%)	<b>10</b> (7.7%)	<b>102</b> (78.5%)
<b>Average Score of Agree and Strongly Agree Responses</b>					<b>107.67</b>

From the three items mentioned in Table 8, the average score of students' agreement with the items in the classroom procedures factor was 107.67 points. Notably, the classroom procedure involving spontaneous speaking activities was found to highly provoke students' anxiety, with about 88.5% of the students agreeing with Item 16. Furthermore, Item 17 revealed that approximately 81.6% of the students agreed, indicating that students experienced English-Speaking Anxiety while waiting for their turn to speak. Moreover, around 78.5% of the students acknowledged feeling embarrassed when voluntarily speaking in English class. This sentiment was expressed through their agreement with Item 18.

Drawing upon the findings presented above, it can be inferred that the classroom procedures factor significantly stimulated students' English-Speaking Anxiety, receiving the highest average score among the six factors of English-Speaking Anxiety. Followed by the self-confidence factor, test anxiety factor, students' beliefs factor, communication apprehension factor, and fear of getting a negative evaluation factor. The detailed results are presented in Table 9.

*Table 9 Most Provoking to the Least Provoking Factor of Students' ESA*

No.	Factor	Average of A+SA
1.	Classroom Procedure	107.67
2.	Self-Confidence	95.3
3.	Test Anxiety	92.67
4.	Students' Belief	90.67
5.	Communication Apprehension	89.67
6.	Fear Of Negative Evaluation	78.67

**DISCUSSION****The Level of Junior High School Students' English-Speaking Anxiety**

Most junior high school students found speaking English in class difficult to do, and it greatly heightened their anxiety. According to the findings, approximately 65.4% of the students experienced moderate levels of English-Speaking Anxiety. This implies that these students were still capable of comprehending knowledge and information. Additionally, these students could become proficient speakers and overcome their anxiety by adequately preparing and applying effective strategies (Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2020). Furthermore, students who experienced moderate levels of English-Speaking Anxiety did not exhibit severe symptoms that hindered their participation in speaking activities. Instead, they commonly engaged in procrastination, completing their tasks at the last minute or sitting in the back rows (Horwitz et al., 1986). These findings align with previous studies that yielded similar results, indicating that students tend to suffer from English-Speaking Anxiety at a moderate level (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020; Batiha et al., 2016; Çagatay, 2015; Naudhani et al., 2018; Toubot et al., 2018).

In addition, the findings revealed that a higher number of students indicated suffering from English-Speaking Anxiety at a high level, as compared to those who reported experiencing it at a low level. The statistics indicated that around 24.6% of the students reported undergoing English-Speaking Anxiety at a high level. Students grappling with high levels of English-Speaking Anxiety usually exhibit more severe symptoms, impeding their ability to absorb and comprehend information. They often experience excessive worry and doubt when it comes to speaking English, ultimately leading them to avoid using the language in class (Zhu & Zhou, 2012). In line with the findings, approximately 10% of students indicated suffering from English-Speaking Anxiety at a low

level. This level of anxiety generally fosters greater eagerness and concentration among students, propelling them to learn and strive toward their goals (Videbeck, 2008).

### **The Factors Provoking English-Speaking Anxiety**

As is widely known, EFL/ESL students often experience English-Speaking Anxiety in their English classes, which makes them anxious about speaking English due to several factors. Based on the findings, it can be observed that all six factors of English-Speaking Anxiety influence students' apprehensions about speaking English. However, the classroom procedure was identified as the primary factor exacerbating students' English-Speaking Anxiety.

Referring to the findings, a majority of the students were found to struggle with classroom procedures involving impromptu speaking activities, voluntary speaking, or random calling methods. This was evident from the student's responses to the items related to the classroom procedure factor, which indicated that, in most cases, students felt uneasy and restless when speaking English spontaneously. This discovery aligns with prior studies conducted by Toubot et al. (2018), Tridinanti (2018), Batiha et al. (2016), Suleimenova (2013), and Horwitz et al. (1986), all of which reported the same outcome: that spontaneous speaking significantly heightens students' English-Speaking Anxiety. Unpreparedness heavily influences students' English-Speaking Anxiety, as these students rarely have the opportunity to speak English outside the classroom. Consequently, they prefer memorizing their dialogues (Tridinanti, 2018). As a result, they lack practice, lack language proficiency, and had limited English vocabulary, rendering them unable to speak English spontaneously (Toubot et al., 2018; Batiha et al., 2016). Consequently, classroom procedures that demand unprepared English speaking were found to significantly trigger their English-Speaking Anxiety (Toubot et al., 2018; Batiha et al., 2016).

Furthermore, concerning the findings, self-confidence emerged as the second most significant factor contributing to English-Speaking Anxiety. Generally, students exhibited low self-confidence and self-esteem when speaking English, leading them to feel uncertain and insecure about their speaking abilities in public. This discovery is in line with a prior study conducted by Naudhani et al. (2018) and Toubot et al. (2018), both of which highlighted the crucial role of self-confidence in students' experience of English-Speaking Anxiety. As per those studies, students who lacked confidence displayed passivity in the language learning process and seldom expressed their opinions due to a fear of being the focal point of attention (Toubot et al., 2018). Additionally, they tended to excessively worry about others' opinions, often perceiving themselves as less capable of speaking English compared to their peers (Toubot et al., 2018). Consequently, students lacking self-confidence were reported to encounter English-Speaking Anxiety, stemming from their apprehension about potentially embarrassing themselves in public and becoming the center of attention (Naudhani et al., 2018; Oteir & Otaibi, 2019; Toubot et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the factor of test anxiety emerged as the third most influential element contributing to students' experience of English-Speaking Anxiety. The student's responses to items related to the test anxiety factor indicated that a majority of them felt uncomfortable and uneasy in test-taking situations, primarily due to apprehensions about the test outcomes, leading to the provocation of their English-Speaking Anxiety. Generally, tests evoke considerable stress for most students, causing restlessness and anxiety. This is particularly pronounced in the case of oral tests, as EFL students commonly encounter difficulties in learning and applying all the rules necessary to communicate effectively in English, which can be overwhelming (Batiha et al., 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986). Moreover, English-Speaking Anxiety resulting from test anxiety subjects students to uneasiness, stress, and fear. This emotional state can even cause speech stuttering as they forget the material they have learned, resulting in poor performance (Aydin et al., 2020; Amiri & Ghonsooly, 2015; Heng et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, concerning the findings about students' beliefs, it was revealed that students generally held the belief and perception that their peers spoke English more fluently or possessed greater talent in learning and speaking the language compared to themselves. Consequently, when they engaged in English communication, they could not help but feel insecure and excessively self-conscious, ultimately leading to the experience of English-Speaking Anxiety (Batiha et al., 2016). Additionally, these beliefs among students prompted them to evaluate their own abilities in a negative light and fueled concerns about how others viewed them. They tended to underestimate their own skills and constantly compared themselves to peers whom they believed were more adept at speaking English. As a result, students became increasingly anxious and avoided speaking English, driven by the fear of becoming objects of ridicule and humiliation in public settings (Batiha et al., 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986). This situation was accurately reflected in students' responses to the items related to the factor of students' beliefs, which emerged as the fourth most influential trigger of students' English-Speaking Anxiety.

Additionally, communication apprehension emerged as the fifth factor that triggers students' experience of English-Speaking Anxiety. According to the findings, a significant number of students were observed to feel confused and uneasy when speaking English. This unease stemmed from their concerns about effectively conveying information and ensuring that their listeners grasped the main points of their speech. Furthermore, students generally experienced nervousness within the English class, driven

by reception apprehension – the fear of not fully comprehending what others were saying. A notable aspect was the students' reported distress when they struggled to understand every word spoken by their English teacher, leaving them feeling frightened and unable to grasp the complete meaning. This sentiment is evident from the responses students provided to Item 1 and Item 2. Consistent with prior research, these findings mirror the experience of English-Speaking Anxiety due to communication apprehension (Toubot et al., 2018; Batiha et al., 2016; Horwitz et al., 1986).

Lastly, the factor of the fear of receiving a negative evaluation was found to be the least influential in provoking students' English-Speaking Anxiety. In most cases, students were concerned about how others would evaluate their English-speaking abilities. Consequently, they were often afraid of making mistakes while speaking English, fearing that their peers would mock them and their teacher would point out every mistake they made during English conversations. Many students were apprehensive about receiving a negative evaluation from their teacher in front of the class because it would draw attention to their weaknesses and errors, potentially causing embarrassment (Oteir & Otaibi, 2019). This fear of negative evaluation ultimately contributed to their experience of English-Speaking Anxiety. On the other hand, students also recognized the importance of receiving feedback from their teacher, but they emphasized that the manner and approach the teacher used when correcting their errors were equally significant (Oteir & Otaibi, 2019). Therefore, it might explain why Item 5 (fear of teacher correction) received the lowest number of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' responses compared to all the items in the FLSAS Questionnaire.

In conclusion, classroom procedures were revealed to be a major trigger of English-Speaking Anxiety among junior high school students. Speaking activities that did not allow students sufficient time to prepare, such as impromptu speaking, speaking in turn, random selection, and volunteering, were identified as the most provoking factors. This was largely because junior high school students typically had limited daily use of English, resulting in limited experiences and poor spontaneous speaking abilities. Additionally, self-confidence, test anxiety, incorrect beliefs about their own abilities, communication apprehension, and the fear of receiving negative evaluations were all identified as significant contributors to students' anxiety.

## **CONCLUSION**

The junior high school students were found to experience English-Speaking Anxiety at a moderate level, with the mean score for the total scores of all participants being 50.35. Specifically, 65.4% of the students were identified as experiencing a moderate level of English-Speaking Anxiety, 24.6% were revealed to face a high level of English-Speaking Anxiety, and the remaining 10% of participants reported experiencing a low level of English-Speaking Anxiety.

Moreover, in terms of the factors contributing to English-Speaking Anxiety, the classroom procedure garnered the highest average score among the students' agreed responses to the factor items. This factor was determined to be the most significant trigger of students' English-Speaking Anxiety. The majority of students concurred that classroom procedures that allowed minimal preparation time, such as speaking in turn, employing random calling methods, and voluntary speaking, induced feelings of panic, unease, and embarrassment. These conditions were reported to have a strong influence on stimulating students' experience of English-Speaking Anxiety.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

The teacher is recommended to allocate sufficient time for students to prepare their speeches. Additionally, it would be beneficial for the teacher to select topics for discussion that are familiar to the students, enabling them to possess ample background information to share with their peers. These suggestions are essential as students have been shown to experience anxiety stemming from classroom procedures. Furthermore, the teacher should focus on enhancing students' self-esteem by offering encouragement and compliments. This approach can aid in boosting their confidence and reducing their apprehension to speak in the EFL classroom. Moreover, creating a supportive and friendly learning environment is crucial. This would help students overcome their fear of making mistakes while speaking English, as they will believe that both their teacher and peers will provide positive feedback and reactions even when mistakes occur.

Addressing the limitations of the present study, which include a small participant size and limited instruments, future researchers are encouraged to undertake studies involving a larger number of participants from diverse schools. Utilizing a wider array of instruments to measure junior high school students' English-Speaking Anxiety would provide more comprehensive insights into this phenomenon. Additionally, future research endeavors could explore the correlation between English-Speaking Anxiety and other variables such as school location and students' family backgrounds. Another valuable avenue for future research is to examine the impact of online classes (distance learning) on students' levels of English-Speaking Anxiety. This investigation could shed light on other significant factors that potentially trigger students' English-Speaking Anxiety.



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