

Exploring Filipino Learners' Experiences with Speaking Anxiety in English

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Abstract. This study investigated the speaking anxieties experienced by Filipino high school students, addressing a gap in existing research by focusing specifically on their unique experiences and coping mechanisms. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study explored the subjective experiences of ten Grade 11 Humanities and Social Science students through in-depth interviews. Data analysis revealed a diverse range of anxieties, including fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension. Key findings include the significant impact of cultural factors, the identification of distinct anxiety clusters for different speaking contexts (recitations, presentations, and oral examinations), and exploring effective coping strategies such as practice, relaxation techniques, and peer support. The study highlights the importance of creating supportive learning environments, addressing cultural influences, and implementing culturally sensitive interventions to mitigate speaking anxiety and enhance English language learning among Filipino students.

Keywords: EFL learners; HUMSS students; Qualitative research; Speaking anxiety; Thematic analysis.

1.0 Introduction

Speaking anxiety significantly hinders effective English communication among Filipino learners, impacting their language learning and academic performance. While English is one of the Philippines' official languages, many students experience considerable apprehension when speaking English, even with extensive exposure and educational use. This anxiety manifests in various forms, including fear of making mistakes, test anxiety, and communication apprehension.

Research across various contexts has consistently highlighted the detrimental impact of speaking anxiety on language learning. Studies by Mehdi and Kumar (2019) and Hulaifah and Sibuea (2023) emphasize how social pressure and fear of errors significantly impede language fluency and accuracy. Cabansag (2020), Olivera (2021), and Purcia et al. (2023) underscore the critical need for supportive learning environments and strategies to mitigate these anxieties. Several studies have identified key sources of speaking anxiety. Test anxiety, as explored by Damayanti and Listyani (2020) and Sinaga et al. (2020), significantly impacts speaking performance. Fear of negative evaluation is a prevalent concern, as evidenced by research conducted by Berowa (2018), Banagbanag (2019), Gatcho & Hajan (2019), Labicane (2021), Daymiel et al. (2022), Subekti (2018), and Amoah & Yeboah (2021). Communication apprehension, as highlighted by Gallego et al. (2021), Van Veen et al. (2024), and others, further exacerbates speaking anxiety. These anxieties often manifest as self-consciousness and a preference for written

assessments over oral communication (Ojanola, 2023). Learners employ various strategies to cope with speaking anxiety.

Consistent practice (Gumartifa & Syahri, 2021), therapeutic programs (Genelza, 2021), and effective language learning strategies (Rodriguez, 2023) are commonly adopted approaches. Enhancing self-assurance, engaging with academic literature, and dedicating ample study time can also be beneficial (Licaros et al., 2022). Interventions like Popsispeak have effectively reduced public speaking anxiety and improved oral communication skills (Pontillas, 2020). Creating a supportive learning environment, providing constructive feedback, and fostering a positive learning atmosphere is crucial for addressing student anxieties and enhancing their communication abilities (Milan, 2019). However, research specifically focusing on the experiences of Filipino students in overcoming speaking anxiety remains limited. While existing studies provide valuable insights into the prevalence and impact of speaking anxiety in general, a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and coping mechanisms employed by Filipino students is crucial. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the specific anxieties experienced by Filipino students during English communication, particularly during recitation, reporting, and oral examinations. It will delve into their feelings, perceptions of their anxieties, and their perceived speaking skills.

This research has significant implications for improving English language teaching methodologies in the Philippines. By understanding the specific anxieties experienced by Filipino students and their impact on learning, educators can develop more effective and culturally sensitive instructional approaches. This may involve incorporating anxiety-reducing strategies into classroom activities, creating more supportive and inclusive learning environments, and providing targeted interventions to address the unique needs of Filipino learners. The findings of this study can contribute to a more informed and practical approach to English language teaching in the Philippines, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes and fostering greater confidence in English communication.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate Filipino learners' experiences with speaking anxiety in English. This approach provides a rich and comprehensive summary of the phenomenon as experienced by participants, using their own words and perspectives. This aligns with the researcher's goal of understanding the complexities of speaking anxiety among Filipino learners in its natural state without attempting to manipulate or influence the phenomenon.

2.2 Research Locale

This study was conducted at Cavite National High School, Senior High School, in Cavite City, Cavite Province, Region IV-A (CALABARZON).

2.3 Research Participants

Ten Grade 11 Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS) students from a specific educational setting participated in this study. These participants, identified as Participants A through J, were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: current enrollment in the Grade 11 HUMSS strand, demonstration of academic achievement, self-reported or teacher-observed difficulty with English conversation despite their academic performance, and attainment of a grade of 85 or higher in three core Grade 11 English subjects: Oral Communication in Context (OCC), Reading and Writing Skills (RWS), and 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World (CLPW). Three language teachers from the school assisted in the selection process to ensure that the chosen participants met all established criteria.

2.4 Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a researcher-made, semi-structured interview guide. This guide was designed in three parts. The first part explored the manifestations of anxiety experienced by participants during various speaking activities, such as recitations, reports, and oral examinations. The second part investigated the potential causes of this anxiety, focusing mainly on fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and general communication apprehension. The final part of the interview guide explored the strategies that

participants employed to counteract their speaking anxiety. The guide incorporated a mix of general, specific, and open-ended questions, emphasizing open-ended questions (eight in the final section) to encourage detailed responses. To ensure the validity and appropriateness of the instrument, the interview guide was validated by three master teachers from the research division.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten Grade 11 HUMSS students, selected with the assistance of three language teachers. Semi-structured interview guides were developed to explore participants' experiences with speaking anxiety. These guides focused on three key areas: 1) Manifestations of anxiety, such as specific situations that trigger anxiety during recitations, reports, and oral examinations; 2) Causes of anxiety, including underlying factors like fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension; and 3) Coping strategies employed by participants to counteract speaking anxiety. The interview guide questions were validated by three master teachers from the research division. To allow participants ample time for reflection, they received the interview guide questions a week before the interviews. Data analysis was conducted using a modified thematic approach (Braun & Clark, 2006; Caulfield, 2023). This involved a six-phase process: 1) Familiarization with the data; 2) Generating initial codes; 3) Searching for themes; 4) Reviewing themes; 5) Defining and naming themes; and 6) Producing the report. This iterative process identified recurring patterns and underlying meanings within the interview data.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The response thoroughly examined the topic to ensure it did not cause harm to the respondents. After completing the proposal defense, the researcher meticulously followed the feedback provided for revisions. After accepting the revision process, the researcher requests the school principal to conduct the study. Also, she sought assistance from other master teachers in their division to validate her study. Subsequently, she asked permission to use the data-gathering procedure by sending a request letter to college officials. The University Board of Ethics in Research and other relevant offices directed her to obtain a letter. Once the researcher received approval from the UREC, she reached out to the participants through Facebook Messenger to ask for confirmation of the participants. Once the participants confirmed their participation, the researcher sent the interview questions via Facebook Messenger. During the interview, the researcher asked the participants' permission to transcribe their responses with the assurance of sending them back to them. While in the FGDs, the researcher informed that the session would have an audio recording with the assurance that confidentiality was violated. The participants agreed to the transcription and recording processes. As discussed in the consent forms, the participants' information was not reflected in the transcription of the recorded interview. To maintain their anonymity, the researcher classified the participants as Participants A to J. The researcher followed the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure the participants' privacy. All data collected from the study was kept strictly confidential.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Manifestations of Anxiety Experienced by Participants

Table 1 reveals a diverse range of anxieties experienced by students during class recitations, extending beyond linguistic challenges.

Table 1. Manifestations of Anxiety Experienced by Participants in Recitations	
Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Linguistic Self-Confidence	Sentence Construction Anxiety
	Language Dependence Anxiety
	Self-Doubt and Grammar Anxiety
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Nervousness Despite Positive Feedback
	Fear of Embarrassment
	Anxiety Leading to Stuttering and Avoidance
Cognitive and Situational Challenges	Impromptu Speaking Anxiety

While difficulties with sentence construction and a preference for using their native language (Filipino) were prevalent, as highlighted by Participants A and B, these anxieties were intertwined with deeper concerns about performance and self-perception. For instance, Participant D's "Self-Doubt and Grammar Anxiety" underscores the significant impact of grammar-related self-doubt, corroborating the findings of Bactol et al. (2023). This

anxiety, often manifesting as fear of grammatical errors, can significantly impede fluency and confidence. Notably, Participant E's "Impromptu Speaking Anxiety" highlights the heightened anxiety associated with spontaneous English speech, suggesting a need for more structured and scaffolded opportunities for oral participation.

Furthermore, the table reveals a complex interplay between internal and external factors in shaping student experiences. While external validation, such as positive feedback, can be beneficial, it does not always mitigate internal anxieties, as evidenced by Participant C's "Nervousness Despite Positive Feedback." This finding emphasizes the importance of addressing underlying anxieties, such as fear of judgment and self-doubt, beyond simply providing external validation. The behavioral manifestations of these anxieties, such as hesitation, avoidance of recitation, and even stuttering (Participant G), align with the research by Sedova & Navratilova (2020) and Hilliard et al. (2020), which explore the impact of anxiety on student engagement and performance. These behaviors hinder individual student progress and create a less inclusive and supportive classroom environment.

Regarding coping strategies, the preference for using a familiar language (Filipino) might reflect a deep-seated reliance on a more comfortable linguistic environment, potentially stemming from limited exposure to English outside the classroom. This suggests a need for increased opportunities for authentic language use and immersion experiences. Furthermore, the finding that "a favorable attitude from the teacher was the most favored coping mechanism" (Flores, 2024) highlights the crucial role of teacher support and encouragement in mitigating student anxieties. This finding suggests that fostering positive teacher-student relationships and creating a supportive and inclusive classroom climate are essential for addressing student anxieties effectively.

Table 2 reveals a range of anxieties experienced by participants during presentations and reports, extending beyond common fears of public speaking.

Table 2. Manifestations of Anxiety Experienced by Participants in Reports	
Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Preparation and Competence Anxiety	Preparation-Related Anxiety with Reassurance from Practice Nervousness Despite Preparation Pre-Exam Anxiety and Fear of Uncertainty
Performance Anxiety Under Pressure	Unfamiliar Questions Anxiety Unfamiliar Questions and Nervousness Extreme Nervousness and Pressure Fear of Stuttering and Inadequate Explanation
Linguistic Insecurity	Fear of Incorrect Answers and Language Barrier

While "Preparation-Related Anxiety" was prevalent, with participants finding relief through practice and the use of aids like index cards (Participant A), aligning with the findings of Lin and Hwang (2018) and Reitz et al. (2019), the table also highlights the significant impact of unexpected challenges. "Unfamiliar Questions" emerged as a primary source of anxiety for (Participants B and D), emphasizing the need for more robust question-and-answer preparation strategies. This suggests that educators should go beyond simple Q&A sessions and incorporate exercises that challenge students to think critically, anticipate potential questions, and formulate nuanced responses.

Furthermore, the table underscores the complex nature of presentation anxiety. Despite adequate preparation, "Nervousness" persisted for some participants (Participant C), highlighting the need for strategies that address underlying anxieties, such as self-doubt and fear of failure, beyond simply improving presentation skills. The significant impact of "Language Barriers" on presentation anxiety, mainly when speaking in English, was a recurring theme, echoing the concerns raised by Macayan et al. (2018) and Mateo and Suganob (2024). Participants expressed concerns about "Fear of Incorrect Answers" and "Language Barriers," suggesting a need for more language support, such as focused vocabulary building, pronunciation practice, and opportunities for peer feedback in English. This also highlights the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and learning from their experiences.

The participants' experiences also highlight the significant impact of "Extreme Nervousness and Pressure," mainly when speaking in English (Participant G), aligning with Lin and Hwang (2018). This finding suggests that the

pressure to perform, particularly in high-stakes situations or when speaking in a second language, can significantly exacerbate presentation anxiety. Addressing these anxieties requires a multifaceted approach beyond traditional presentation skills training. Educators must focus on creating a supportive learning environment that minimizes pressure, encourages risk-taking, and provides ample opportunities for practice and feedback. Incorporating innovative approaches, such as those suggested by Önal (2019) and Reitz et al. (2019), such as utilizing digital tools and interactive learning environments, can enhance student engagement, reduce anxiety, and improve the overall presentation effectiveness of the learners.

Table 3 reveals a range of anxieties experienced by participants during oral examinations, extending beyond typical test anxiety.

Table 3. Manifestations of Anxiety Experienced by Participants in Oral Examination

Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Physical and Cognitive Manifestations of Anxiety	Stuttering and Forgetfulness Nervousness Leading to Stuttering Nervousness and Mental Blocks
Preparation Incongruence	Incorrect Responses Despite Preparation Nervousness Despite Preparation Pre-Examination Nervousness
Content Uncertainty Anxiety	Fear of Uncertain Topics Uncontrollable Nervousness and Self-Doubt Familiarity with Words and Nervousness

While "Stuttering and Forgetfulness" (Participant A), "Nervousness Leading to Stuttering" (Participant B), and "Mental Blocks" (Participant G) highlight the significant impact of anxiety on cognitive function, aligning with Estrada-Madronero (2019) and Cristobal and Lasaten (2018), the table also reveals deeper concerns related to uncertainty and the impact of language barriers. The significant role of "Fear of the Unknown" in exacerbating anxiety is evident. Participants expressed anxiety related to "Uncertain Topics" (Participant F) and "Unfamiliar Words" (Participant E), suggesting that the perceived unpredictability of the examination significantly contributes to student stress. This resonates with Grieve et al. (2021) and Sotiriadou et al. (2019), who emphasize the detrimental impact of uncertainty and lack of preparedness on performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights the persistence of anxiety despite preparation. Participants such as C, I, and J reported experiencing "Nervousness Despite Preparation," indicating that adequate preparation alone may not fully mitigate anxiety in all cases. This finding suggests that underlying factors, such as perfectionism, fear of failure, and low self-esteem, may contribute significantly to anxiety levels. The significant impact of "Language Barriers" on oral examination anxiety is also evident. Participant I expressed concerns about "Fear of Incorrect Responses" and "Language Barriers," reflecting the challenges students face in navigating the complexities of oral communication in a second language. This finding aligns with Kilag et al. (2024), who emphasize the crucial role of language proficiency in mitigating language learning anxiety.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that language anxiety is not solely a linguistic issue. Cultural factors can also influence it, such as the emphasis on error-free performance and the potential for social stigma associated with language mistakes. Addressing these anxieties requires a multifaceted approach beyond simply increasing preparation time. Educators should implement structured review sessions and practice exams to help students build confidence and reduce uncertainty by providing opportunities to practice and receive feedback in a low-pressure environment. It is crucial to foster a positive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel safe to make mistakes and learn from their experiences. Utilizing task-based learning and active learning strategies can enhance student engagement and reduce anxiety by making learning more interactive and less stressful. Offering individualized feedback and guidance on anxiety management techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, mindfulness techniques, and positive self-talk, can help students develop effective coping strategies and build resilience.

Figure 1 presents a thematic map that visually illustrates the diverse manifestations of anxiety experienced by participants across three key academic activities: recitation, oral examinations, and report presentations. The thematic map reveals distinct clusters of anxieties associated with each activity. Recitation, characterized by

themes such as "Linguistic Self-Confidence," "Fear of Negative Evaluation," and "Cognitive and Situational Challenges," highlights the immediate pressures and uncertainties inherent in spontaneous speech. Students may experience anxiety from concerns about their language proficiency, the fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers and instructors, and the cognitive demands of formulating responses on the spot. This cluster suggests that recitation anxiety is deeply intertwined with the social and cognitive demands of the activity itself.

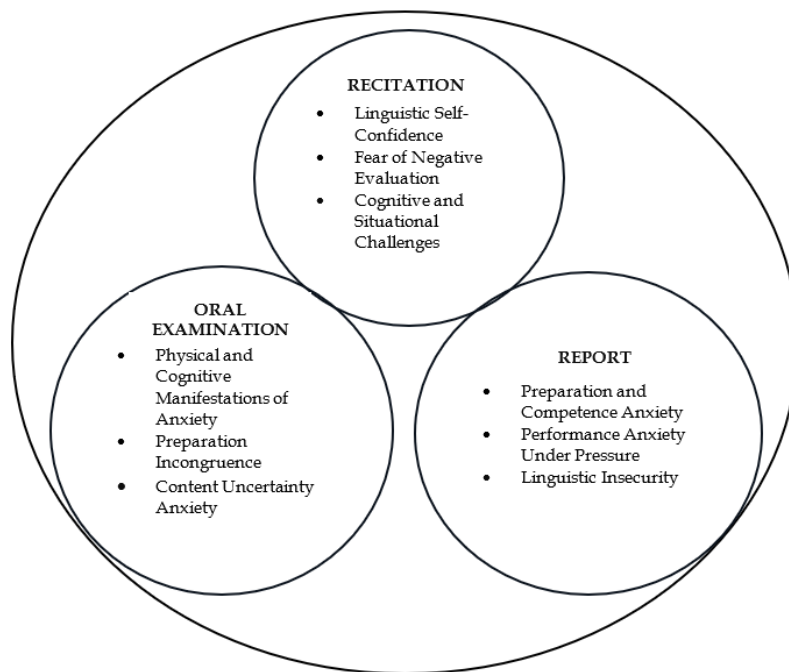


Figure 1. *Manifestations of Anxiety Experienced by Participants*

In contrast, oral examinations were characterized by "Physical and Cognitive Manifestations of Anxiety," "Preparation Incongruence," and "Content Uncertainty Anxiety." This cluster suggests that oral examinations present unique challenges for students. The "Physical and Cognitive Manifestations of Anxiety" theme indicates that anxiety can manifest not only as emotional distress but also as physiological symptoms that can interfere with cognitive function. The "Preparation Incongruence" theme highlights the gap between perceived preparedness and the actual examination experience, emphasizing the importance of preparing content and developing strategies to manage unexpected situations and maintain composure under pressure. The "Content Uncertainty Anxiety" theme underscores the significant impact of uncertainty and the fear of encountering unfamiliar questions or topics on student anxiety levels.

Report Presentations, characterized by "Preparation and Competence Anxiety," "Performance Anxiety Under Pressure," and "Linguistic Insecurity," highlight the unique challenges associated with this form of assessment. "Preparation and Competence Anxiety" suggests that students may experience anxiety related to the adequacy of their research, the quality of their presentation materials, and their ability to convey their findings effectively. "Performance Anxiety Under Pressure" emphasizes the social and evaluative pressures associated with public speaking, which can significantly impact student confidence and performance. "Linguistic Insecurity" suggests that language fluency, grammar, and pronunciation concerns can also contribute to presentation anxiety. This thematic map provides a valuable visual representation of the diverse and interconnected nature of student anxieties across different academic activities. By understanding these distinct clusters of anxieties, educators can develop more targeted interventions and support strategies to help students overcome their fears and achieve their educational goals.

3.2 Causes Participants' Attribution of Their Anxiety in Speaking

Table 4 delves into the significant role of "Fear of Negative Evaluation" in driving student anxiety during English oral communication. Participants expressed a range of anxieties, including "Nervousness in Response to Unfamiliar Questions" (Participant E) and "Fear of Unfamiliar Topics" (Participant F), highlighting the anxiety associated with encountering unexpected challenges. These anxieties, along with "Fear of Making Mistakes Despite Preparation" (Participant I), "Pressure and Focus from the Audience" (Participant G), "Fear of Stuttering and Miscommunication" (Participant H), and "Ongoing Struggle and Worry Despite Experience" (Participant I), all stem from a more profound fear of judgment and its potential consequences. Participants expressed concerns about being judged by their peers and instructors, fearing negative consequences such as low grades or public humiliation. This fear often manifested as a heightened awareness of audience scrutiny, leading to "Pressure and Focus from the Audience" (Participant G) and a fear of "Stuttering and Miscommunication" (Participant H).

Table 4. *Causes Participants' Attribution of their Anxiety in Speaking, particularly Fear of Negative Evaluation*

Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Fear of Performance Inadequacy	Nervousness in Response to Unfamiliar Questions
	Fear of Unfamiliar Topics
Audience-Induced Anxiety	Fear of Making Mistakes Despite Preparation
	Pressure and Focus from the Audience
	Fear of Stuttering and Miscommunication
Persistent Self-Doubt	Ongoing Struggle and Worry Despite Experience

These findings align with Daymiel et al. (2022), who note that speaking performance can deteriorate under the weight of audience observation and perceived judgment. The study also reveals the persistent nature of "Self-Doubt" despite adequate preparation. Participant I, despite thorough preparation, experienced ongoing anxiety and the fear of making mistakes, emphasizing the enduring impact of fear of negative evaluation on student performance. This finding supports Subekti (2018) and Amoah & Yeboah (2021), who assert that psychological factors like the fear of making errors can significantly impact language performance. This persistent self-doubt may be exacerbated by cultural factors emphasizing perfectionism and avoiding mistakes, leading to a heightened fear of failure and a reluctance to take risks in communication.

Addressing the anxieties stemming from fear of negative evaluation requires a multifaceted approach. Educators should prioritize creating a supportive and encouraging learning environment where students feel safe to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Implementing constructive feedback mechanisms, shifting the focus from identifying errors to providing specific and constructive feedback on strengths and areas for improvement, can help reduce the fear of negative evaluation and promote a growth mindset. Integrating mindfulness and anxiety management techniques, such as incorporating mindfulness, relaxation, and deep breathing exercises, can help students manage their stress and anxiety during oral communication tasks. Gradually exposing students to speaking tasks in low-stakes settings, starting with low-pressure activities such as peer discussions and small group presentations, can help build confidence and reduce anxiety before progressing to more challenging tasks. Equipping teachers with the skills to recognize and address student anxieties, such as providing emotional support and offering alternative assessment methods, can create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Table 5 explores the causes of student anxiety during oral examinations, focusing on participants' attributions.

Table 5. *Causes Participants' Attribution of their Anxiety in Speaking particularly Test Anxiety*

Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Cognitive Overload	Fear of Forgetting Words
	Unfamiliar Vocabulary
Emotional and Physical Response to Stress	Physical Symptoms of Anxiety
	Fear of Failure and Uncontrollable Nervousness
Psychological Uncertainty	Concealed Anxiety and Uncertainty
	Nervousness Affecting Performance

Key themes emerged from the data, including "Cognitive Overload," "Emotional and Physical Response to Stress," and "Psychological Uncertainty." "Cognitive Overload" manifested as a significant concern, with participants

expressing anxiety related to "Fear of Forgetting Words" and struggling with "Unfamiliar Vocabulary" (Participants A and E). This finding aligns with Damayanti and Listyani (2020), who emphasize the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge in reducing speaking anxiety. "Emotional and Physical Response to Stress" emerged as a prominent theme, with participants reporting "Physical Symptoms of Anxiety" such as trembling and cold sweats (Participant C) and experiencing "Fear of Failure and Uncontrollable Nervousness" (Participant D).

These findings resonate with Pabro-Maquidato (2021) and Soriano and Co (2022), who emphasize anxiety's physiological and emotional manifestations during oral communication. This highlights the need for educators to recognize and address students' emotional and physical well-being during high-stakes assessments. Finally, in "Psychological Uncertainty," the study revealed the presence of "Concealed Anxiety and Uncertainty," with participants experiencing "Nervousness Despite Preparation" and internalizing their anxiety (Participants F and B). This finding aligns with Giray et al. (2022), who observed that students may experience significant internal anxiety despite appearing outwardly confident. This highlights the importance of creating a safe and supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing their fears and concerns.

Educators should implement a multifaceted approach to effectively address student anxieties during oral examinations. Enhancing vocabulary knowledge through strategies like vocabulary-building exercises, journals, and authentic materials can reduce anxiety related to unfamiliar words. Building student confidence requires creating a supportive classroom environment, providing positive feedback, and emphasizing effort and improvement over grades. Addressing stress's physical and emotional manifestations involves incorporating mindfulness exercises, relaxation techniques, and stress management strategies into the curriculum. Providing regular practice opportunities, such as simulated exams and peer feedback sessions, helps students develop confidence and reduce anxiety related to the uncertainty of performance. Lastly, equipping teachers with the skills to recognize and address student anxieties, such as providing emotional support and offering alternative assessment methods, is crucial for creating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Table 6 reveals multifaceted causes of communication apprehension, including cognitive, emotional, and linguistic factors.

Table 6.
Causes Participants' Attribution of their Anxiety in Speaking particularly Communication Apprehension

Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Cognitive and Linguistic Struggles	Cognitive Load
	Self-Doubt and Grammar Concerns
	Language Preference and Nervousness
	Hesitation and Language Preference
Emotional Impact and Behavioral Responses	Physical Impact of Fear and Anxiety
	Anxiety and Stuttering
	Fear of Embarrassment
Preparation Incongruence	Nervousness Despite Preparation
	Discrepancy Between Preparation and Performance

Key themes emerged: "Cognitive and Linguistic Struggles" (e.g., "Fear of Forgetting Words" and "Unfamiliar Vocabulary" experienced by Participants A and E), "Emotional and Physical Response to Stress" (e.g., "Trembling" and "Cold Sweats" reported by Participant C, and "Fear of Embarrassment" and "Uncontrollable Nervousness" experienced by Participant D), and "Confidence and Learning Dynamics" (e.g., "Self-Doubt" regarding "Grammar Concerns" and "Hesitation" due to "Language Preference," and "Nervousness Despite Preparation" experienced by Participants I and J, and a "Discrepancy Between Preparation and Performance" reported by Participant H). "Cognitive and Linguistic Struggles" highlighted the crucial role of vocabulary knowledge (Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). "Emotional and Physical Response to Stress" resonated with Pabro-Maquidato (2021) and Soriano & Co. (2022), emphasizing the physiological and emotional manifestations of anxiety. "Preparation Incongruence" underscored the importance of strategies beyond memorization, such as active learning (Gallego et al., 2021). These findings align with existing research on the multifaceted nature of communication anxiety (Gallego et al., 2021; Van Veen et al., 2024) and the impact of "Fear of Making Mistakes" and "Negative Evaluation" (Aulia, 2022; Fauzi, 2021). Implications for educational practice include enhancing vocabulary knowledge, building student confidence, addressing stress, providing practice and feedback, and equipping teachers with the skills to recognize and address student anxieties.

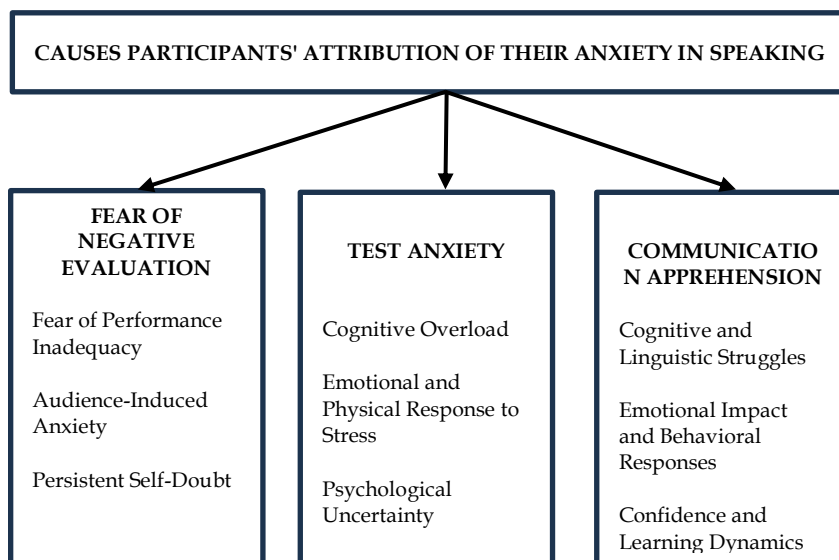


Figure 2. *Thematic Map: Causes Participants' Attribution of Their Anxiety in Speaking*

Figure 2 presents a thematic map that categorizes the causes of speaking anxiety into three primary domains: "Fear of Negative Evaluation," "Test Anxiety," and "Communication Apprehension." "Fear of Negative Evaluation" encompasses themes such as "Fear of Performance Inadequacy," "Audience-Induced Anxiety," and "Persistent Self-Doubt," highlighting the significant impact of perceived or actual judgment on student anxiety. Participants expressed concerns about failing to meet expectations, the pressure of audience scrutiny, and the fear of negative evaluation, significantly impacting their self-confidence and overall performance. "Test Anxiety" is characterized by "Cognitive Overload," "Emotional and Physical Response to Stress," and "Psychological Uncertainty." This cluster highlights the stress and cognitive difficulties associated with formal assessment settings, including concerns about "Fear of Forgetting Words," "Nervousness Leading to Stuttering," and "Physical Symptoms of Anxiety." The unpredictability and high-stakes nature of these situations further exacerbate anxiety and impact student performance. "Communication Apprehension" encompasses "Cognitive and Linguistic Struggles," "Emotional Impact and Behavioral Responses," and "Confidence and Learning Dynamics." This cluster highlights the challenges associated with communicating in a second language, including concerns about "Language Preference and Nervousness," "Self-Doubt and Grammar Concerns," and "Hesitation and Cognitive Preparation." Furthermore, it emphasizes the emotional and physical manifestations of anxiety, such as "Anxiety and Stuttering" and "Fear of Embarrassment," and their impact on overall confidence and learning. This thematic map effectively visualizes the interconnectedness of these different aspects of anxiety, providing a clear framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety in students. It highlights how these three primary domains interact and influence each other, creating a complex interplay of factors contributing to student anxiety during oral communication.

3.3 Strategies Used by the Participants to Counteract their Speaking Anxiety

Table 7 shows a diverse range of strategies employed by participants to counteract their speaking anxiety. Notably, many participants utilized a combination of practical and emotional coping mechanisms. For instance, Participant A integrated "Practice and Exposure" techniques, such as conversing with friends and watching American movies, with "Relaxation Techniques," like listening to music and deep breathing exercises. This multifaceted approach highlights the importance of combining skill-building with emotional regulation in addressing speaking anxiety. Furthermore, participants employed various cognitive and behavioral strategies. Participant D effectively utilized "Speech Pacing" and "Mirror Practice" to improve clarity and build confidence. While finding "Slow Speaking Limitations" ineffective, Participant E emphasized the importance of "Focus and Learning" as a key to overcoming language barriers. This highlights the individual nature of anxiety management strategies and the importance of personalized approaches.

Table 7. *Strategies Used by the Participants to Counteract Their Speaking Anxiety*

Themes Generated	Initial Codes
Practical Language Skills Enhancement	Practice and Exposure Relaxation Techniques Speech Pacing Slow Speaking Limitations Focus and Learning Mirror Practice and Media Exposure Language Immersion
Psychological and Emotional Management	Breathing Exercises, Self-Acceptance Calmness and Clarity Perceived Confidence
Interactive and Social Strategies	Familiar Faces Topic Familiarity and Feedback Peer Support and Feedback Mirror Practice and Eye Contact

Participants also demonstrated a range of emotional coping mechanisms. Participant H effectively utilized "Self-Acceptance" by acknowledging and accepting potential grammatical errors, prioritizing effective communication over perfection. Participant I emphasized "Calmness and Clarity," highlighting the importance of maintaining composure and utilizing deep breathing techniques to improve cognitive function and communication effectiveness. Some participants employed strategies aimed at projecting confidence. Participant J, for example, utilized "Perceived Confidence" by maintaining eye contact and smiling to mask nervousness and alleviate inner tension. This demonstrates the psychological impact of outward behavior on inner emotional states. Finally, social support emerged as a significant factor for several participants. Participant B emphasized the comforting presence of "Familiar Faces" during presentations, while Participant C highlighted the value of "Peer Support and Feedback" in a safe and non-judgmental environment. These findings underscore the crucial role of social interaction and support in fostering confidence and reducing anxiety. These findings align with existing research on language learning. For instance, the use of affective and social language learning strategies, as discussed in Cabansag (2020), is evident in the participants' utilization of peer support and relaxation techniques. Moreover, the confidence-boosting effects of tailored strategies like media exposure and mirror practice, as supported by Olivera (2021), are evident in the strategies employed by several participants. Furthermore, the impact of emotions on language learning, highlighted by Purcia et al. (2023) and Bactol et al. (2023), is reflected in the participants' self-acceptance and emotional management strategies.

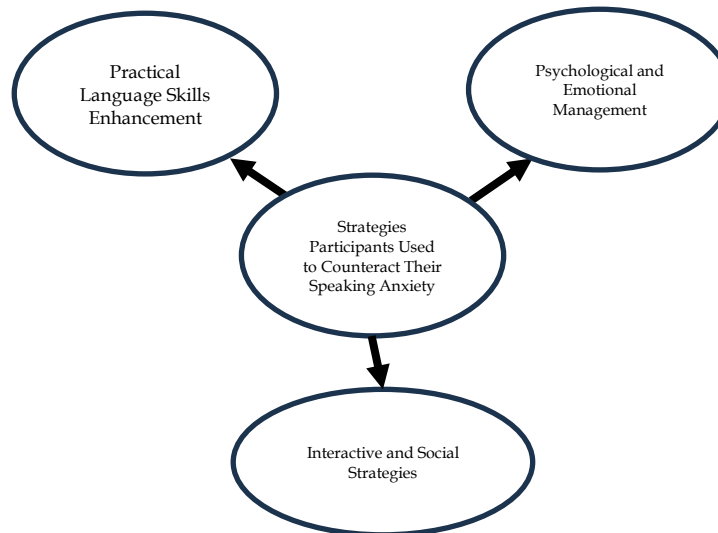


Figure 3. *Thematic Map: Strategies Used by the Participants to Counteract their Speaking Anxiety*

Figure 3 presents a thematic map that visually categorizes strategies employed by participants to manage speaking anxiety into three distinct constructs: "Practical Language Skills Enhancement," "Psychological and Emotional

Management," and "Interactive and Social Strategies." This visual representation effectively captures the diverse approaches participants utilize to cope with their anxieties, highlighting their interconnectedness while emphasizing their unique characteristics. "Practical Language Skills Enhancement" encompasses strategies aimed at directly improving language proficiency, such as "Practice and Exposure," "Speech Pacing," "Slow Speaking Limitations," "Focus and Learning," "Mirror Practice," and "Media Exposure." These strategies demonstrate a proactive approach to addressing speaking anxiety by improving language skills and building fluency. This aligns with communicative language teaching principles, emphasizing the importance of active language use and authentic language input for effective language learning. "Psychological and Emotional Management" emphasizes coping mechanisms that address the emotional and psychological aspects of speaking anxiety. These strategies include "Relaxation Techniques" such as breathing exercises and mindfulness practices, "Self-Acceptance" of imperfections, and cultivating a sense of "Calmness and Clarity" during communication. These strategies suggest that participants recognize the significant impact of emotional and psychological factors on their speaking performance and actively seek ways to manage their anxiety. This aligns with research on the effects of emotion regulation on language learning (e.g., MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2024), highlighting the importance of managing anxiety and cultivating a positive emotional state for successful language acquisition."

Interactive and Social Strategies" highlight the importance of social interaction and support in mitigating anxiety and enhancing language proficiency. These strategies include "Familiar Faces," "Topic Familiarity and Feedback," and "Peer Support and Feedback." This emphasis on social interaction and support likely reflects the importance of social and cultural factors in language learning. In many cultures, including Filipino culture, collaborative learning and peer support are crucial in social and academic development. The visual representation of these constructs as distinct circles effectively emphasizes their unique nature while acknowledging their interconnectedness. Depending on their needs and preferences, participants may employ strategies from one or more of these domains. For example, some participants may primarily rely on "Practical Language Skills Enhancement" strategies, while others may find "Psychological and Emotional Management" techniques more effective. This flexibility in strategy use suggests that effective anxiety management is a personalized process requiring individuals to identify and utilize the strategies that best suit their needs and learning styles.

4.0 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety among Filipino learners. By identifying key manifestations, causes, and coping strategies, the research contributes significantly to our understanding of this critical aspect of language learning. The findings highlight the diverse range of anxieties experienced by learners across different speaking contexts, including recitations, presentations, and oral examinations. These anxieties are deeply intertwined with cultural values, such as the emphasis on social harmony and respect for authority, which can significantly influence student experiences. Furthermore, the study underscores the crucial role of Fear of Negative Evaluation, Test Anxiety, and Communication Apprehension in shaping speaking anxiety. These factors interact complexly, impacting learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses.

The identified coping strategies, including practical language skills enhancement, psychological and emotional management, and interactive and social strategy, offer valuable guidance for learners and educators in mitigating the impact of speaking anxiety. Future research could explore the effectiveness of specific intervention strategies in addressing speaking anxiety among Filipino learners. Longitudinal studies could track the impact of these strategies over time, providing valuable data on their long-term efficacy. Additionally, further research could investigate the interplay between cultural factors, individual differences, and speaking anxiety within diverse learner populations. The findings of this study have significant implications for language teaching practices, informing the development of more effective and supportive learning environments that address Filipino learners' unique needs and anxieties. By incorporating these findings into teacher training programs and classroom instruction, educators can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that foster language development and reduce speaking anxiety among their students.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Julieth T. Tapado conducted this research under the guidance of Ma. Junithesmer D. Rosales, DEM. The author was responsible for all aspects of the research, including conceptualization, methodology, data collection, data analysis, writing of the original draft, review and editing, and preparation of the final manuscript.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The researcher declares no conflicts of interest. The researcher had no financial or personal interests, including but not limited to employment, consultancies, honoraria, stock ownership, or expert testimony, that could have influenced this research's design, conduct, analysis, or interpretation. The study was conducted objectively and without any undue influence from external factors.

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