

Contrasting the Immediate Impacts of Traditional Tools and Modern Digitalised Systems in Overcoming Speaking Anxiety in Foreign Language

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Abstracts

Speaking has remained a significant factor that impedes effective communication in foreign language learning (FLL). Exploring the degree of impact of traditional and digitalized methods became necessary. The paper established the difference between traditional and digitalized methods in reducing speaking anxiety among first-year university students learning a foreign language. The study was centred on defining the causative factors and signs of speaking anxiety. The study adopted a quantitative research design, including 936 first-year foreign language students obtained through social networks. The data were collected using a survey developed from the modified FLAS, supplemented with questions developed to capture specifics of the factors that lead to speaking anxiety and the effects of the different teaching methods. The survey was conducted online through Google Forms and shared on social media platforms to cover a wide population. The quantitative data were, therefore, analysed using descriptive statistics and a t-test to determine the levels of reducing anxiety based on traditional and digitalized learning. The study showed that the effect of the traditional methods, such as deep breathing, role-playing, and group discussions, was only moderate in reducing speaking anxiety, but in the case of the digitalized methods, it was found that these methods proved to be way more effective. Strategies like leveraging social networks, mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality interfaces, and automatic speech recognition technology offered significant degrees of anxiety reduction. The outcomes imply the need for a paradigm shift and the use of technology in the language classroom to foster a learning environment.

1. Introduction

Foreign language speaking anxiety has been identified as a common concern that hinders the learning of important communicative features to a great extent. This form of anxiety hinders pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary use, fluency, and comprehension, distorting language performance among learners. Because of their nervousness, speakers can mispronounce words or speak slowly and thus cannot convey messages effectively. Fluency is affected by anxiety as it interferes with proper thinking and fails to construct coherent and grammatically correct sentences. Choices of words that are used become less, and the learners often include simpler words to avoid mispronouncing them and narrowing their choice of expressive language. The

ability to speak smoothly, quickly, and accurately is significantly impaired, resulting in slow, interrupting, and inexpressive speech conveying uncertainty.

1.1. Study Background and Context

Previous studies on the traditional strategies for addressing speaking anxiety in foreign language learning (FLL) involved different classroom practices. To reduce the anxiety levels of their FL students, teachers use encouraging responses, rewards, and several speaking tasks (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991). Other social techniques used to reduce anxiety are peer cooperation and interactions during group assignments (Alrabai, 2014). Furthermore, many handbooks and formatted curricula aim to approach speaking systematically, thus decreasing the level of anxiety among the learners since they know what to expect and what skills are within the focus of accomplishment (Bailey & Nunan, 2004). Such conventional implements, though they are somewhat efficacious to some degree, tend to chiefly depend on the extent to which the teacher ensures the learners' comfort and acceptance (Horwitz et al., 1986). Furthermore, the problem of unfair distribution of competent teachers, as well as fluctuating circumstances in classrooms, can affect the outcomes of the given traditional approaches (Horwitz, 2013).

At the same time, the digitalized contemporary world presents innovative tools to handle speaking timidity. Technology has brought innovative language learning tools, including platforms, AI-driven applications, and artificial intelligence-based language-acquiring systems. Learner interaction on social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter offer learners a natural and relaxed way of practicing their speaking skills (Hsu, 2015). Speech recognition and immediate feedback systems are typical applications for learning a foreign language, since these components enable learners to achieve better pronunciation and fluency (Godwin-Jones, 2018). With the help of the AI models and virtual reality environment, the actual speaking situations can be replicated, and the learners get the chance to practice without worrying about the backlash from their peers or teachers (Cheng & Chan, 2019). Most of the applications used in this method can accommodate different learning rates and offer feedback, making it easier to handle some demerits of conventional practices (Boonmoh & Ghoneim, 2020). Moreover, the nature of technology enhances practice frequency as students can practice on their own time, away from the classroom, thus enhancing their speaking skills despite fear (Reinders & Wattana, 2015).

1.2. Study Objectives

The primary aim of this paper was to explore the degree of the impacts of traditional and digitalised systems of reducing foreign language speaking anxiety. The following specific objectives were pursued:

- a. To analyse factors that increase speaking anxiety in the communication ability of foreign language learners.
- b. To analyse the impacts of traditional activities that are aimed at reducing foreign language speaking anxiety.
- c. To analyse the impacts of digitalised systems in reducing foreign language speaking anxiety in FLL.

d. To compare the traditional and digitalised systems in reducing FL speaking anxiety.

1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions anchored the processes in this paper:

- a. What factors increase speaking anxiety in the communication ability of FL learners?
- b. To what extent do digitalised systems for reducing speaking anxiety function better than the traditional methods?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Speaking Anxiety; A General Review

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) is universally recognized as a social phenomenon that hinders the learning of a foreign language to a great extent. According to Tien (2018), Spielberger's measure of anxiety describes it as a state that is prevalent in certain situations. Tien (2018) further stated that anxiety results from the complex interaction between a person's biological predisposition and psychological status. Woodrow (2014) also elaborates that anxiety is commonly defined as either dispositional or situational. From this point of view, anxiety is considered an inherent disposition present in every individual from birth that may be activated due to some stress or threatening stimulus. Therefore, FLA is a constant low-grade anxiety, apprehension, or concern that may vary in quality. The importance of acknowledging the complexity of anxiety is that when it is present, it affects the learning process significantly when learning a foreign language. FLA can occur in different forms and to varying degrees, considerably hindering language learning and utilization. The psychological and emotional aspects of FLA are intricate and multifaceted because of the various symptoms and responses among the affected people. As indicated, tackling FLA entails recognizing its roots, symptoms, and effects on learners. Interventions should be done based on the learners' psychological and emotional states, with consideration given to their individuality. This approach can assist educators in designing better ways to contribute to the improvement of the learning experiences of their learners and the acquisition of language.

FLA can be dissected into two primary categories: state anxiety and specific-situation anxiety, according to Ellis (1994). State anxiety, on the one hand, is a temporary condition that affects a person in specific circumstances only and does not have a direct link with his/her personality. This is a rather chronic form of anxiety and one that poses enormous resistance to change. State anxiety is a short-term affective state emerging from the existence of specific environmental stimuli; it entails temporary, intense stress. Specific-situation anxiety occurs in certain situations, e.g., speaking in a foreign language class, since there are negative expectations regarding one's performance. It is, therefore, helpful in establishing the categorization of anxiety so that the root causes can be pinpointed and adequate interventions put in place to counter the effects of this condition. There is a clear distinction between the types of anxiety, and its treatment and prevention methods are different. Trait anxiety, for instance, requires long-term psychological

interventions to manage, while state anxiety can be managed using short-term coping strategies. When it comes to specific situations of anxiety, one focuses on employing effective ways and means of overcoming the fears experienced within certain circumstances. Therefore, knowing the differences between these types of anxiety will allow educators and researchers to have a clearer strategy for assisting language learners.

Among the identified FLAs, speaking anxiety is particularly distinctive due to the proximity of the related issues to the assessment of speaking abilities. This kind of anxiety is shown through several physical symptoms, as analyzed by Beatty and Dobos in Damaida Sari (2017). Some of the symptoms exhibited in such situations include tachycardia, clamminess of the palms, and tingling in the extremities, which can impact speaking performance negatively. Other reactions that Edmund J. Bourne classifies include palpitations, muscular tension, nausea, dry mouth, and sweating. When the physical signs affirm learners' body language, these constraints may prevent them from expressing ideas concisely and precisely, thus stunting their language development. Such symptoms as short breath, palpitations, trembling, and others pressure learners comprehensively into discomfort once they are involved in speaking activities. These symptoms manifest in different intensities in various speakers, thus affecting their speaking performance in a less or more severe manner. This consequently presents the need to appreciate the physiological responses to design the right mechanisms that can be used to approach speaking anxiety. This knowledge can enable one to plan and develop modes of handling anxiety that include the psychological and physical systems. In other words, when speaking anxiety is distinguished from other known forms of anxiety, the need arises to understand how physiological and psychological factors interact and contribute to the learning process so that learners can be effectively helped in managing their situation. Its integration signifies that the focus on developing the language learners' speaking proficiency is all-round, as it has been seen to be balanced and responsive to languages' various dynamics.

Horwitz et al. delineated three critical components of language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is a general fear of interacting with others, failing to speak in groups and to the public, listening, and learning oral messages. Students' anxiety is defined as the fear of evaluation and is directly linked to perfectionism. Impaired negative evaluation refers to a focus on negative constituent feedback, particularly in social evaluation conditions, for instance, interviews, oral presentations, and contests in speech. This fear stretches to other forms of interactions and thus augments the level of anxiety experienced by language learners. These components shed light on the complexity and pervasiveness of language anxiety in the learning context among students. Each component has its peculiarities; thus, the approach to its management and minimization is also peculiar. For instance, communication apprehension will require personal tactics to overcome feelings of anxiousness in interpersonal communication. Techniques for accustoming the learner to anxiety and the process of taking the test are the main facets of test anxiety. The presented conception of language anxiety contributes to the understanding of more effective and diversified interventions, which are essential to meet the individual demands of learners. Thus, it is possible to conclude that only a complex approach that includes the identification of its causes, manifestations, and effects on learners is effective in managing language anxiety.

2.2. Diiferent Dimensions of Speaking Anxiety in FLL

Speaking anxiety in a foreign language involves several complex dimensions. Gardner and MacIntyre in Melouah (2013) defined FLA as possessing a particularly negative effect on learners whenever the individuals are supposed to operate in a foreign language. This reaction is characterized by an intricate network of self-esteem, personal and emotional attitudes, and behaviors regarding the distinct language acquisition process. Douglas, Samuel, and Cope, as cited in Alsowat (2016, p. 165), explain that language anxiety is more than the fear of speaking the FL, for it is a complex affair concerning the individual. These include a lack of self-esteem, claustrophobia, and extraneous thoughts regarding perceptions from fellow students. The above factors make language learning complex as the learners' anxiety and performances are compromised. The nature of this connection shows that it is necessary to focus not only on speaking anxiety but also on various interconnected aspects. It means that the intervention should include psychological, emotional, and social dimensions so that learners can be effectively helped. Thus, one can design more adequate interventions for language learners by acknowledging the role of various factors that cause speaking anxiety. Such an approach is necessary for understanding individual learners' needs and enhancing the learner's speaking abilities. In managing speaking anxiety, it is necessary to understand its determinants, modes of presentation, and effects on the learners. Thus, by focusing on these aspects, educators can facilitate favorable conditions for the language learning process and enhance its results.

This phenomenon of speaking anxiety has evolved as a significant concern to scholars in the past, and previous studies offer rich information on the situation concerning foreign language learners. NurIsnaini (2018) analyzed the speaking anxiety of the students of UIN Raden Intan Lampung and stated that some of the factors included fear of self-prediction, irrational belief, oversensitivity to hazards, anxiety sensitivity, wrong perception of body signals, and low self-efficacy. It revealed that students were frequently uncertain, did not want to fail, got stressed when asked to speak out, and had stage fright. These results shed light and stress that speaking anxiety is complex and has a direct influence on the learner's communication and participation in language learning activities. In another study by Mareeyah and Aleemasah in 2018 on Thai students' speaking English anxiety, the subject anxiety had influenced poor practice, insufficient vocabulary in English, nervousness in making presentations, and poor understanding of the materials. Other reasons included as factors are:

- i. The students disliked the FL.
- ii. Class conditions were not favourable.
- iii. Ineffective ways used in teaching
- iv. Limited use of technology.

More specifically, the study pointed out that these students groomed themselves before speaking and aimed at avoiding stress as the ways of dealing with the identified anxiety. The framework of this research is founded on the point that the talking anxious phenomenon needs psychological and pedagogical intervention.

Mai-Munah (2015) studied the factors contributing to speaking anxiety of senior high school students in Jambi City. The study identified five primary factors:

- i. Little speaking skills,
- ii. Insecurity,
- iii. Concerns with others' responses,
- iv. Perceived low self-confidence,
- v. Apprehension when it comes to communicating with teachers in English, and
- vi. Culture that emphasizes on teachers' authority.

The research presented here implies that end-user speaking apprehension was caused by both individual variables and environmental factors. Practical suggestions for effective practices for supporting the learning of mathematics, disability, low self-esteem, and high anxiety levels were also underlined by the study. Another study on speaking anxiety among students of UIN Walisongo Semarang by Huda (2018) shed more light. The findings pointed toward anxiety as being evident, with effects: overthinking, not being prepared, previous unfortunate experiences, low skill level, lack of confidence, fear of doing poorly on tests, and test anxiety. As such, the factors highlighted above are, namely, some of the reasons that pointed to a high level of speaking anxiety during the presentations. Research findings suggested that it was necessary to design measures to effectively reduce each of these factors, as they precipitated anxiety in order to enhance students' speaking ability and language acquisition process.

Santriz (2018) focused on the anxiety in the speaking performance of the second-grade students of SMAN 5 Banda Aceh. Consequently, the study noted that 72% of the students had test anxiety, 73% had communication apprehension anxiety, and 55% had negative evaluation anxiety. These findings categorize students' anxiety into three major types: test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation, which are terms that can be used interchangeably. The study highlighted the importance of such approaches to tackle these forms of anxiety and boost the learners' self-esteem and performance in speaking English.

2.3. Traditional and Digital Interventions for Reducing Speaking Anxiety

2.3.1. Traditional Interventions

There are various traditional means of reducing FL speaking anxiety. Group discussions can be made relevant and interesting by organizing topics important to the special student group. Presentations, one of the main strategies, allow the preparation and giving of formal speeches. However, the stress of having to do presentations often can be very off-putting, which, with time, can be erased as the students get used to speaking in public. These presentations help the students get acquainted with the powers of establishment and rhetoric, which are important for speaking. Role-play activities complement speaking fluency, as students can participate actively in groups and encourage each other. These activities allow the students to speak out in public because the immediate scorn from their peers is not levelled on them. In this way, students gain confidence

gradually due to regular practice and positive reinforcement. Thus, the effectiveness of the given strategies is based on the opportunities to practice speaking in conditions that will not be stressful.

Furthermore, the influence of teacher intervention on speaking anxiety is interactive and effective in promoting the learning environment. Affirmative feedback has been cited as one of the most useful ingredients that assist students in identifying what they need to do better. Such feedback must be constructive and written positively, guiding the students to a higher level of understanding. Teacher support is also important in equal measure, as it assists in boosting the morale of students. Credit goes to teachers for fostering a classroom environment conducive to students freely sharing anything they want to share. Due to positive reinforcement, students can be confident in overcoming their fears and phobias, which is why a teacher's role is very important. Constructive feedback, if shared appropriately, helps boost the students' self-esteem and interest in speaking. Teachers can also conduct one-on-one feedback sessions to re-establish and ease specific learning apprehensions. The above sessions enable the students to be given a chance to debate their difficulties before being advised on the same, hence increasing their confidence levels. Finally, teachers can also show how some speaking can be done and how you can reduce nervousness and do better. Thus, the rendered techniques are important to see how, in applying them, one can build up his or her coping strategies.

2.3.2. Modern Digitalized Systems

Speaking anxiety has been eased with the help of modern digitalized systems, particularly language learning. The approaches presented new, efficient ways to minimize speaking anxiety with the use of technology like social media, online forums, and mobile applications. In particular, social networks allow students to speak foreign languages in a freer atmosphere and without pressure. Such applications enable learners to converse with natives and other learners and, therefore, feel that they are not alone. The other communication possibilities are connected with online forums and discussion boards where students can practice and get feedback. Such forums prove especially useful for students who may feel uncomfortable speaking, provoking a shift from writing to speaking. Applications developed for language practice are interactive and filled with the elements of games, so practicing speaking will not be boring. Such apps usually have some options like voice recognition, the analysis of pronunciation, and speaking with native speakers simultaneously. If students include these tools in the learning procedure, they can speak daily and receive feedback, avoiding nervousness and working on mistakes.

As much as it would encourage more actions, incorporating technology in language learning is also as effective because exhibiting actions or speaking can be set at one's convenience and pace. Thus, it can be advantageous for the students, especially those who struggle to speak in front of a full classroom due to nerve issues. Through practicing in such an environment, a student may slowly and steadily increase his level of confidence and, in the process, decrease his level of anxiety. In addition, there is the use of technology, which offers a variety of resources and materials that improve the learning process. Students can listen to podcasts, watch videos, or any form of multimedia, and in the process, they will be enhancing their listening and speaking skills.

The next effective approach to alleviating speaking anxiety in language learning is digital game-based learning (DGBL). DGBL incorporates features such as games, which, in this case, will be applied to make practicing speaking more fun. These games have tasks, incentives, and levels that encourage student practice and the enhancement of skills. Being a blend of game play and game competition, DGBL can help enhance learners' interest since they play to learn and not be stressed or anxious while speaking. For instance, games that promote language learning let the students use the language in many different capacities. Such games involve dialogues, role plays, and other speaking activities to assist learners in mastering their speaking skills and overcoming any fear they might have. The application of DGBL also enhances social aspects by encouraging students' cooperation to accomplish given objectives and address various issues. Thus, implementing such cooperation can bring positive changes in how classmates help each other, decreasing speaking apprehension.

3. Study Methodology

There are methodological processes followed in both the data collection and analysis in this study. The methods are discussed in various sections.

3.1. Study Approach

The approach employed for this study is quantitative, which is most appropriate in evaluating the efficiency of the implementation of traditional and digitized language learning promotional strategies in the reduction of speaking anxiety in FLL. This approach is highly apt considering the fact that it is likely to offer quantitative, specific, and scientific findings since structured tools such as questionnaires, assessment, and statistics shall be used in the study. Quantitative research style used in the study is useful in that it enables the systematic determination of the levels of speaking anxiety and the proficiency in speaking as well as the vocabulary skills before and after the intervention. The work employs pre-tests and post-tests to obtain quantifiable data on the learners since the purpose of the comparison is numerical in nature. Furthermore, the practice of using assessment scales, including a Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), guarantees that the anxiety levels are measured correctly. This methodology not only helps in establishing the presence of any changes in the anxiety level, it also aids in comparing or analysing the effectiveness of various approaches used in teaching and the changes that occur in speaking anxiety level.

3.2. Study Population

The target participants are first-year university students studying foreign languages; this is a heterogeneous group of learners at a relatively early level of learning. These participants were recruited from different social sites by targeting the frequently used social sites among university students, hence the coverage and representation. Invitations for the study were shared on Facebook, Instagram, and discussion boards related to universities, ensuring that the target population is reached through the internet. The criteria for selecting participants were based on enrolment at the first level of a foreign language learning process, which is the most suitable for

observing the effects of both traditional and applied approaches to teaching and learning on students' speaking fear and language fluency. Besides, this approach allows to achieve a relevant population sample concerning the study purposes while relying on the communication and interaction patterns of students in social networks to achieve a higher response rate and participant variability.

3.3. Sampling Strategy and Size

In this research, a stratified random sampling procedure was used in order to increase the likelihood of attaining an accurate representation of first-year university student taking foreign language classes and their demographic characteristics. A total of 936 participants were included in order to have adequate data to compare the traditional and the digital teaching methodologies at 95% and a margin of error of 3%. This was done in order to have a proper representation of the subgroups defined by age, gender, and major in the selected population. Specifically, the sample includes approximately 52% female and 48% male participants, with age distributions reflecting the typical university freshman cohort: 75/100 of them were 18-19 years old, 20% were 20-21 and only 5% were those who were 22 years and above. Also, 40% of the sample represents students of humanities, 35% of students of social sciences, 15 % of students of natural sciences, and 10% of students of other fields. This type of sampling guarantees not only the size of the sample but also the variability, which makes the final results widely applicable in terms of explaining the level of speaking anxiety in foreign language learners based on the difference in the choice of teaching methods.

3.4. Instrument for Data Collection

The tool used in this study is a self-administered survey questionnaire that has been carefully constructed to assess multiple dimensions of foreign language speaking anxiety as well as the effects of traditional and digital methods of learning. The questionnaire is designed in the form of three major sections consisting of 30 items in all. The first dimension contains 10 items from the original FLAS that measures the participants' level of anxiety in speaking the foreign language after taking into account aspects such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. The second part consists of 10 items which are aimed at the assessment of the extent to which different factors that might cause speaking anxiety in the foreign language are influential, such as, lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, pressure from other students, and so forth. The third and last part includes 10 items that refer to the frequency and estimations of the traditional and digitalized learning materials and tools which are used in the classroom and their perceived helpfulness and effectiveness regarding such factors as students' interest, ease of use, and speaking skill development. Each survey item is answered with a 5 Likert scale with the options; strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree, which is very helpful as it does not lead to students giving very generalized answers about their attitudes, experiences or preferences. This Likert scale enables the measurement of abstract data, which requirement for statistical analysis enables the determination of the effectiveness of traditional as well as digitalized techniques in eradicating foreign language speaking anxiety. This consideration of the survey design enables an all-round collection of qualitative data on psychological features of speaking anxiety as well as quantitative

data on the practical effects of various teaching-learning approaches to back up the study's research questions.

3.5. Administration of Administration

The administration of the instrument was done through Google Form since it provided a platform to designing and distributing the survey. The current study adopted Google Form as a data collection tool that avails itself as a user-friendly medium that enhances compliance with the questionnaire's implementation, thus enhancing the responses' reliability. The survey link was shared on the university's Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts, focused on first-year foreign language students. These were chosen based on the popularity of the platforms within the target audience, thus the researchers were assured of a large, and varied revue of participants. With face-book, ability to share materials reach a large population and in a short time allows for compiling responses from a diverse geographical region within a short span of time. The digital and automated format of the survey also ensured that data was collected and monitored in real-time hence any problems that may be associated with the survey could be quickly corrected in addition data could be quickly compiled and analysed. This method of administration was preferred in order to capture the impartiality of respondents while at the same time be easy to administer to the participants, in addition to creating a comprehensive set of data for the subsequent analysis.

3.6. Data Analysis Method

This paper's survey data was analysed descriptively, as well as through t-test analysis, in order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the effects that traditional and digitalized approaches to learning possess on foreign language speaking anxiety. Frequency analyses was used for organizing and condensing the data to give simple quantitative characteristic of the responses of the 936 participants including measures of central tendency, dispersion and shapes of the responses. These encompass arithmetical means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages that will describe the broad tendencies and features of the data. After that, an independent samples t-test will be used to test the hypothesis that means of two groups; the one with traditional learning and the one in contact with digitalized systems, differ significantly. This statistical test established whether, or not, there was any significant difference in the levels of speaking anxiety between the used groups with the aim of providing adequate comparison for the effectiveness of each learning method. The utilization of these analytical tools made it possible to conduct comprehensive and profound analysis of the data thus providing the study with the basis for analysis of the factors that motivate speaking anxiety and analysis of the difference in the effectiveness of various teaching approaches.

4. Results and Discussion of Findings

4.1. Results

Foreign language speaking anxiety encompass varying concerns, including physical, emotional and psychosocial concerns. To explore and compare the impacts of traditional and digitised

means of reducing FL speaking anxiety, it was pertinent to establish anxiety from the view of the study participants, expand on the causative factors and manifestations. Hence, this section is further segmented into different units.

A. Evidence of Speaking Anxiety in FL Learners

The initial effort in the survey was to elicit the views of the first-year university students in foreign language education on establishing their speaking anxiety. Ten survey questions were developed from the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLAS) and also modified to suit the immediate requirements in this study. The table below contains the results of the survey and other relevant statistical measures:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Evidence of Speaking Anxiety

Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	Skewness	Kurtosis
I feel confident when speaking a foreign language during online learning sessions.	3.05	4.97	0.16	0.59	-0.88
I panic if I have to speak a foreign language in online learning without prior preparation.	7.46	1.87	0.06	0.36	-1.04
The more speaking tests I take, the more confused I become.	8.76	0.76	0.02	0.23	-0.67
I feel anxious and lack confidence when asking and answering questions in my foreign language class.	10.57	0.66	0.02	-0.16	0.55
A patient lecturer helps to reduce my nervousness when speaking a foreign language.	6.04	2.49	0.08	0.42	-0.78
I fear that other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language.	12.04	0.44	0.01	-0.38	1.24
I get nervous even when speaking a foreign language that I have prepared in advance.	7.38	1.27	0.04	0.16	-0.54
I tremble at the thought of being called upon to speak in my foreign language class.	12.85	0.41	0.01	-0.29	1.58
I am not relaxed whenever I have to speak in my foreign language class.	11.19	0.52	0.02	-0.46	1.09
I get anxious when I have to speak a foreign language in online learning.	8.48	1.33	0.04	0.38	-0.96

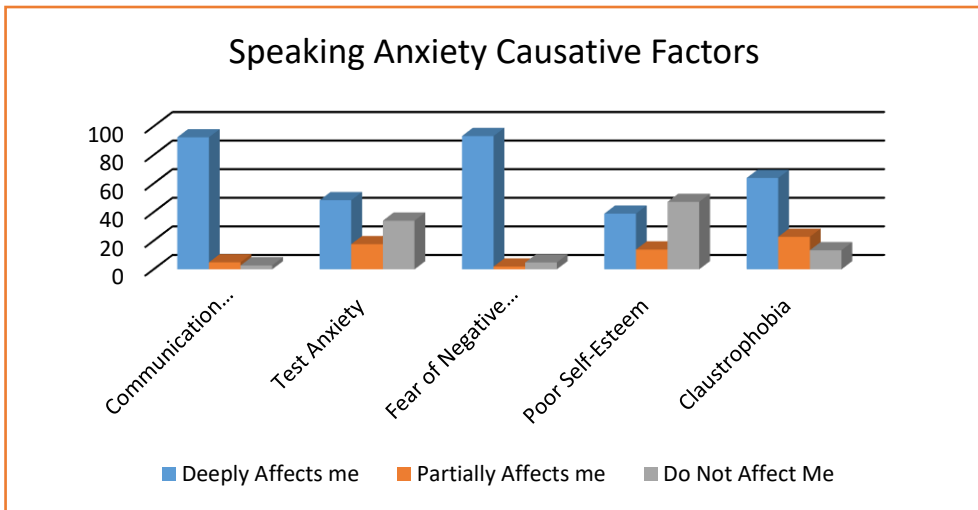
The descriptive statistics table summarizes the degree of Speaking anxiety experienced by first-year foreign language students during online learning sessions. The overall finding that the estimated means are significantly different also means that there are significant differences in the levels of anxiety about specific elements of foreign language learning, with such items as “I tremble at the thought of being called upon to speak in my foreign language class (M=12.85, SD=0.41) and “I fear that other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language”

(M=12.65). However, items in the confidence dimension, such as ‘I feel confident when speaking a foreign language during online learning sessions’, have lower mean scores (M= 3.05 SD=4.97), implying that students lack confidence. The standard deviations and standard errors measure the dispersion and reliability of these findings; large standard deviations like ‘I feel confident when speaking a foreign language during online learning sessions’ (SD= 4.97) imply more variance. Skewness and kurtosis values also describe the distribution, negativity of which in the item, “I feel helpless and uneasy when answering or asking questions in my foreign language class” (- 0.16) points towards the accumulation of lower scores, the positivity of which in the item “I stammer at the thought of speaking to my foreign language class” (1.58) which suggests high peak around the mean. Such statistical information is helpful to distinguish the particular aspects that might influence the increase of speaking anxiety in the context of foreign language learners and ensure that focused efforts are implemented accordingly. Specifically, for evaluating intrapersonal barriers and students’ anxiety levels, the data confirms introducing intrinsic barriers and ‘fear of ridicule’ or ‘lack of preparation’ extrinsic barriers and behavioural aspects of the (sleepy, heated, or irate) lecturers. Thus, knowing these factors, the study would be able to design further research by comparing traditional and digitalized teaching approaches and improve the conditions of learning for foreign language students.

B. Causative Factors of Speaking Anxiety in FLL

There are various causes of language anxiety, but when it comes to speaking anxiety in FL, there are five main causes of speaking anxiety, as evidenced in the reviewed studies. These five causes were included in the survey, and the results are summarised in the graph below.

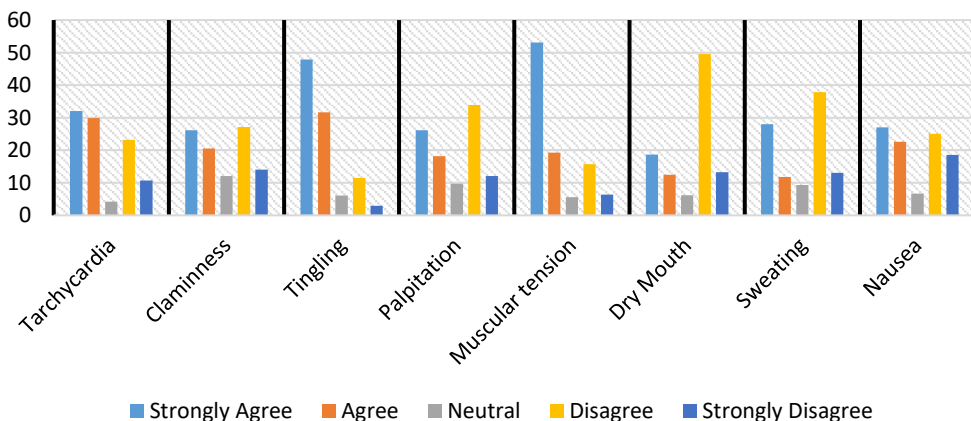
Fig 1: Results of Causative Factors for Speaking Anxiety



From the findings highlighted in the Figure 1, there is much that can be understood about the probable causes of speaking anxiety among first-year foreign language students. Communication apprehension appears as a dominant factor, as 92.37% said that it ‘deeply affects’ them – quite a contrast from the meagre 2.75% who are unaffected. Likewise, fear of negative evaluation markedly affects 93.22%. Test anxiety remain somewhat substantial, yet it proves to be more evenly spread across all the domains in question, reaching the rate of 48.03%. Low self-esteem seems to be less generally relevant, severely affecting 38.47%. Contrary to expectations, claustrophobia to a large extent impacts 63.91% of the students as a result of fear that may arise due to limited space required to carry out learning or observation during language tasks. These statistics prove that speaking anxiety is a complex phenomenon, and apprehension and fear of negative evaluation are the most observed problems. Hence, there is a need for intervention in language education to address such specific anxieties, be it in terms of communication approach, methods for test preparation, the climate otherwise in a classroom. Therefore, the need to address these factors is imperative in promoting students’ language learning experiences and achievements to support the combination of both the conventional and ICT techniques in minimizing speaking apprehension.

Fig 2: Results of Manifestation of Speaking Anxiety in FL

Manifestation of Speaking Anxiety



Concerning the data of the first-year foreign language students’ speaking anxiety level, figure 2 illustrates a detailed explanation of the intensity and frequency of the physiological symptoms of speaking anxiety. Most of them indicated that muscular tension was manifesting feature of speaking anxiety, with a score of 53.23% who strongly agree to have experienced it while 19.22% accepted they have experienced manifestation of muscular tension due to speaking anxiety. This result means that nearly 72% of the participants ac of the respondents are moderately/heavily influenced. Tingling sensations are also evident as manifestation, as about

47.86% of the participants strongly agreeing and 31.66% respondents agreed, which depicts that this anxiety marker is very common as per the result. On the other hand, symptoms such as dry mouth and sweating present conflicting patterns compared to the above symptoms with nearly half of the students, 49%.52% and 37.83% respectively, denied that they suffer from these symptoms because speaking anxiety manifests physically in so many ways. Tachycardia and clamminess are moderately serious signs, which affect approximately 32.07% and 26.19% of the respondents strongly agree in experiencing these symptoms, with the results on palpitations and nausea more spread out because, again, anxiety is diverse. The range of scores for the neutral response to all the symptoms is also quite low, meaning that students are quite clear on their physical reaction to anxiety. Thus, the described research proves that speaking anxiety is poly-dimensional and students experience a number of physiological manifestations.

C. Comparing the Traditional and Digitalised Methods for Reducing Speaking Anxiety

The onus of this study was to evaluate the degree of impacts of the traditional methods and digitalised tools in reducing the foreign language speaking anxiety. We developed 15 survey items for the comparison.

Table 2: Results of Traditional and Digitalised Systems

Survey Items Table with Hypothetical Statistical Measures

Survey Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom (df)	F-value	t-value	P-value
Taking deep breaths before speaking helps me feel less anxious about using a foreign language.	3.52	2.52	935	4.23	2.12	0.034
Practicing meditation reduces my anxiety when speaking a foreign language.	3.23	2.6	935	4.56	2.14	0.032
Engaging in mindful exercises improves my confidence in speaking a foreign language.	3.76	2.4	935	4.78	2.36	0.019
Role-playing activities in class help me feel more comfortable speaking a foreign language.	3.83	3.3	935	4.32	2.40	0.018
Participating in group discussions reduces my fear of speaking a foreign language.	3.47	2.5	935	4.54	2.25	0.024
Direct intervention from my teacher lowers my anxiety about speaking a foreign language.	3.62	2.6	935	4.22	2.31	0.021
Practicing with classmates in a supportive environment makes me less nervous about speaking a foreign language.	3.73	2.4	935	4.76	2.37	0.019
Interacting with others on social media platforms helps me feel more confident speaking a foreign language.	6.58	0.4	935	11.56	5.89	0.000
Participating in online forums reduces my anxiety about using a foreign language.	7.37	0.5	935	11.12	5.67	0.000
Using mobile applications for language practice helps me feel less anxious when speaking a foreign language.	5.92	0.3	935	12.34	6.23	0.000

Virtual reality environments make me more comfortable speaking a foreign language.	6.83	0.4	935	11.78	5.92	0.000
Augmented reality tools help me feel less nervous about speaking a foreign language.	6.83	0.4	935	11.45	5.84	0.000
Automated speech recognition technology reduces my anxiety about pronouncing words in a foreign language.	6.92	0.3	935	12.11	6.12	0.000
Digital game-based learning activities make me feel more relaxed about speaking a foreign language.	6.84	0.4	935	11.87	5.97	0.000
Engaging in language practice through digital tools is more effective for reducing my anxiety than traditional methods.	6.95	0.3	935	12.45	6.25	0.000

Table 2 offers a breakdown of the results formed based on the effectiveness of the traditional approaches and application of the digitalised systems to reduce speaking anxiety from the angle of the foreign language students. The mean values, SD, df, F-values, t-values, and p-values, as presented above, clearly show the relative effectiveness of the described anxiety-reducing strategies. The deep breathing technique (mean = 3.52, sig = 0.034) has a moderate rating, indicating that this technique could successfully reduce anxiety. Meditation (mean = 3.23, sig = 0.032) and Mindful exercise (mean = 3.76, sig = 0.019) also score moderate ratings, which indicates a positive feeling towards the use of these. Likewise, role-playing activities (mean = 3.83, p = 0.018) and participating in group discussions (mean = 3.47, p = 0.024) also depict a decrease in anxiety levels, supporting the fact that interactive and traditional techniques that involve speaking decrease speaking anxiety.

On the other hand, digitalised methods have significantly higher mean values and highly significant p-values, therefore showing much greater effectiveness in mitigating anxiety. For instance, communication on social networks (mean = 6.58; t = 0.000), being a member of online communities (mean = 7.37; t = 0.000), and utilising mobile applications (mean = 5.92; t = 0.000) reduce anxiety. Additional support for the higher efficacy of digital interventions also came from the comparison of computerised aids and technologies, including virtual reality environment (mean=6.83, p=0.000), augmented reality tools (mean=6.83, p=0.000), and automated speech recognition technology (mean=6.92, p=0.000). Not only do these technologies make the learning process more interactive, but the immediate feedback along with tailored practice, which is so beneficial in combating the fear derived from speaking a foreign language, is provided. Digital game-based learning activities (M = 6.84, F = 0.000) and the overall perceived usefulness of using digital tools rather than traditional ones (M = 6.95 F = 0.000) point out that technology integration in language education, calls for a shift in the paradigm towards the use of technology in mitigating speaking anxiety.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

4.2.1. Findings on the Causative Factors for Speaking Anxiety

Following the findings illustrated in Figure 1 regarding the causes of foreign language speaking anxiety, current research in this area is corroborated and supplemented. Communication

apprehension was identified as the most obvious factor. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope ((1986)) were the first to define communication apprehension as one of the factors inhibiting language anxiety and claimed that it greatly influenced students' communication skills. The findings in this study also agreed with MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), who observed that individuals avoid communicative situations, thus minimizing their practice of the foreign language. The finding that 93.22% of students get deep anxiety because of the fear of negative evaluation aptly correlates with Young's (1990) contention that fear of negative judgment by fellow students as well as instructors is a key reason for FL anxiety. The data also reveals major concerns regarding anxiety and test-taking, with the students expressing stress and anxiety averaging 48.35%. This conforms with prior research by Aida (1994), who noted that test stress was a key predictor of FL acquisition, especially with pressure arising from the consequential tests in languages. Another core attribute, low self-esteem, was noted, which aligns with Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999), who confirmed that self-perceptions and self-worth are important components of FL learning experiences. Furthermore, claustrophobia affects many students, an area not discussed considerably in past research, meaning that physical and psychological concerns related to learning spaces might also be influential.

The outline in Figure 2 presents an expansion and a distinction of earlier studies about the manifestations of speaking anxiety. Notably, tachycardia is documented to be experienced by 61.34 students (32.07% strongly agree and 29.88% of the students agree), as seen in the physiological symptoms of anxiety described by Gregersen and collaborators (2014). Clamminess was reported by 46.74% of students who responded that they agree, with 26.19% strongly agreeing with the statement and 20.55% responding that they only partially agree. Tingling sensation: 79.52% of respondents' percentage (47.86% strongly agree and 31. 66% agree) could specify the high level of physical anxiety symptoms, which is in agreement with Liu and Jackson (2008), who defined the importance of the physical component in language anxiety. These symptoms explain why cognitive and somatic intervention modalities are needed to treat anxiety conditions. Moreover, muscular tension, which was experienced by 72.29%, 53.07% of students claiming to strongly agree and the 19.22% agreeing with the statement engages with the physical indicators of FL anxiety, as supported by the research detailed by Ewald (2007) conducted.

Therefore, the results of Figure 1 2 not only support the prior literature on the antecedent causes and consequent performance features of FL speaking anxiety but also extend it by revealing additional factors not considered before the use of the technological gadget in reducing anxiety. The high percentage of discouraged communication apprehension, the fear of negative evaluation and physical signs such as tachycardia and muscular tension also justify the multi-faceted aspect of FL anxiety, as argued by Horwitz and others. In addition, the comparison with the findings of previous research by Liu & Jackson (2008) and Gregersen et al. (2014) enhances the literature's understanding of how the application of traditional and modern teaching approaches affects students' anxiety levels while learning FL and the emergence of new approaches to the FLE process.

4.2.2. Comparing the Traditional and Digitalised Systems for Reducing FL Speaking Anxiety

The findings, as presented in Table 2, show a statistically significant difference between the traditional and the digital approach toward reducing speaking anxiety among foreign language students. This is in tandem with other studies that have examined methods of coping with anxiety. For example, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) emphasised the significance of techniques of anxiety modulation, such as deep breath, that indicated moderate efficacy (mean = 3.52, $p = 0.034$) in the light of Table 2. Nonetheless, the data indicate that the digitalised approaches are significantly more effective in handling speaking anxiety, supported by higher numerical averages and lower p -values. For instance, social networks (mean = 6.58, $p = 0.000$) and online communities (mean = 7.37, $p = 0.000$) exhibit great progress in anxiety decrease. Furthermore, using of mobile applications (mean = 5.92, $p = 0.000$) supports the view of Liu and Jackson (2008), who noted that MALL (mobile-assisted language learning) allows individuals to learn in a personal and context-sensitive manner. Lee and Hsieh (2019) confirm the possibility of lowering the anxiety level with the help of virtual reality and augmented reality tools as the authors prove that the application of advanced technologies helps students get exposed to specific language practice in an environment that facilitates the speaking process.

The enhanced mean scores of the targeted anxiety, established for digital game-based learning and the automated speech recognition technology, at 6.84 and 6.92 respectively, significantly different from the control at $p = 0.000$, underscore the potential of technology-enhanced language learning. Reinders & Wattana (2015) and Sykes & Reinhardt (2013) also support these findings, as game-based learning and automated feedback have been shown to increase student interest and reduce anxiety through non-critical feedback. With a mean score of 6.95, $p = 0.000$, this study has revealed the overall perceived effectiveness of digital tools over traditional methods in language education. This not only suggests a shift towards the use of technology in language education, as highlighted by Warschauer (2000) and Chapelle (2009), but also provides reassurance about the positive direction of the field, inspiring confidence in the potential of digital tools.

5. Conclusions

The paper established the difference between traditional and digitalised methods in reducing speaking anxiety among first-year university students learning a foreign language. The study was centred on defining the causative factors and signs of speaking anxiety. The study adopted a quantitative research design, including 936 first-year foreign language students obtained through social networks. The data were collected using a survey developed from the modified FLAS, supplemented with questions developed to capture specifics of the factors that lead to speaking anxiety and the effects of the different teaching methods. The survey was conducted online through Google Forms and shared on social media platforms to cover a wide population.

The quantitative data were, therefore, analysed using descriptive statistics and a t -test to determine the levels of reducing anxiety based on traditional and digitalised learning. The study showed that the effect of the traditional methods, such as deep breathing, role-playing, and group

discussions, was only moderate in reducing speaking anxiety, but in the case of the digitalised methods, it was found that these methods proved to be way more effective. Strategies like leveraging social networks, mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality interfaces, and automatic speech recognition technology offered significant degrees of anxiety decrease. The outcomes imply the need for a paradigm shift and the use of technology in the language classroom to foster a learning environment. However, it is important to note the following limitations of the study: the results collected from the survey might have been influenced by self-report bias, and more research, especially longitudinal, is needed to determine the lasting effects of the intervention. This reiteration of the need for further research underscores the study's commitment to academic rigour and encourages future studies in the field. Accordingly, educators' use of both traditional and digital approaches addressing the students' need to minimise anxiety and improve language acquisition is suggested.

Acknowledgements

The authors extend their appreciation to the Deanship of Scientific Research at King Khalid University for funding this work through Large Research Groups under grant number (RGP.2 / 439 /44).

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