SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG TESL UNDERGRADUATES IN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

Sri Aiswarrya Achanan
Universiti Selangor
sriaiswarrya43@gmail.com

Punitha Ramuloo
Universiti Selangor
punitharamuloo1205@gmail.com

Ayu Rita Mohamad
Universiti Selangor
ayurita@unisel.edu.my

Abstract

English became the second language of Malaysia after independence. Thereby, fluency in speaking English has become essential, particularly for undergraduates studying Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), as English is their medium of instruction. However, despite learning the language for several years, undergraduates experience anxiety when speaking English. Due to that reason, this study aims to examine the level of anxiety in speaking English as a second language and the causes of speaking anxiety in the English language among TESL undergraduates in a private university. This study uses the quantitative method to collect the data. The quantitative data was gathered through a questionnaire named (ELCAS) English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale with 23 items which were adopted and adapted from (FLCAS) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. The data were examined using descriptive statistics in Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). This research included 100 TESL undergraduates from a private university. The results revealed that a significant number of undergraduates had high-level anxiety in speaking English. The findings also discovered that the main cause of speaking anxiety is a lack of confidence among the TESL undergraduates. The undergraduates should learn how to overcome speaking anxiety by practicing speaking independently and not feeling inferior about themselves.

Keywords: speaking anxiety, TESL undergraduates, second language, (ELCAS) English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

INTRODUCTION

Speaking anxiety in a second language can be distressing to Malaysian undergraduates since most higher education institutes in Malaysia use the English language extensively (Fen et al.,

2020). According to Suliman et al. (2019), the majority of the students have responded that they are not proficient and have problems in speaking and recalling words in English. Thus, such problems resulted in an alarming decline in English language competence that created a lack of exposure among Malaysians (Idrus & Tuan Ab Hamid, 2021).

According to Badrasawi et al. (2020), most Malaysian undergraduates undergo a greater level of speaking anxiety that impacts the ESL students' output. Therefore, it clearly shows that speaking is significant anxiety among ESL students. Speaking anxiety is the sense of apprehension during the use of language in verbal communication (Miskam & Saidalavi, 2018). Generally, speaking anxiety is the feeling of panicking with physical indications such as palpitation, adrenaline rush, breathing difficulties, pressure on the shoulder and neck (Boudreau et al., 2018). Researchers have included anxiety as communicative apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as the prominent component which triggers anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986).

TESL (Teaching English as Second Language) students need to use English effectively throughout their programme, which demands them to master the language. Nevertheless, most Malaysian undergraduates are still experiencing speaking anxiety to a certain level despite learning the target language for 11 years in schools (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018). Students may feel anxious during speaking in English with their lecturers or peers due to the unpleasant emotion of making errors or low self-confidence (AlKandari, 2020). Students' psychological barriers that create mental blocks would arise due to speaking anxiety when speaking in a second language (Taly & Paramasivam., 2020).

Furthermore, students would become reluctant and perform poorly in speaking ESL due to the existence of anxiety (Soo & Goh., 2017). Thus, many studies have proven that even an average degree of speaking anxiety among undergraduates significantly influences their speaking performances (Fatinah Dellah et al., 2020; Lau et al., 2019; Malik Abbasi et al., 2019). If the dilemma caused by speaking anxiety prolongs among the TESL students, it could highly impact the students' learning process, academic achievements, and the future job market, which has to be curbed as soon as possible. Even though anxiety is a disorder that cannot be cured yet, it can be controlled. As a solution, this study will help the readers lower their second language speaking anxiety by identifying its causes. Therefore, this study will examine the following research questions:

RQ 1: What is the speaking anxiety level in speaking English as a second language among the TESL undergraduates in a private university?

RQ 2: What causes speaking anxiety in English as a second language among TESL undergraduates in a private university?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking Anxiety

The English language has been immensely popular and is recognized as a global language necessary for education, communication, academics, and employment. All the government schools and educational institutes were instructed to teach English as the second language in Malaysia. In language classes, speaking seems to have the ability to elevate anxiety that causes worry, especially when English is not the learners' first language (Wilang & Vo, 2018). Mariam (2018) claimed that each learner has a unique psychological condition; some learners can talk boldly in front of the class, while others are shy, nervous, and unable to communicate in English. Similarly, it is noted that several Malaysian Undergraduates are struggling to speak the English language, and it has been proven through several studies (Badrasawi et al., 2020). Speaking anxiousness and dread of being poorly graded do not diminish as they progress through their academic careers. Instead, the higher their sense of worry becomes as they advance through their studies (Şenel, 2016). Underlying reasons are limiting the Malaysian undergraduate students to speak the second language, mainly addressed due to high levels of speaking anxiety that creates uneasiness, nervousness, and the feeling of apprehension.

Level of Speaking Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) categorized the level of speaking anxiety into three levels: high, moderate, and low. According to Toubot et al. (2018), mild anxiety in second language learning can assist students in developing a desire to study, inspire them, and make them realise that they need to work harder to master the target language. On the other hand, learners who have a low level of

anxiety may be so comfortable that they do not study or acquire any new knowledge, and the language learning process will fail as a consequence. Meanwhile, students with high anxiety may see a second language learning scenario as frightening, and they may respond by performing poorly in class. In order to measure second language anxiety, Horwitz and her colleagues devised an instrument known as the FLCAS. In a study conducted by Raja (2017) among fifty Computer Science undergraduates in Karachi, he found out that the majority of them had high speaking anxiety. This is comparable to the findings of McCain (2012), who found that 90% of individuals had felt timid or uncomfortable speaking in front of others at some point in their life. Therefore, a high level of speaking anxiety is seen as a potential stumbling barrier in these learners' language acquisition process (Antoro & Khazanah, 2015).

Causes of Speaking Anxiety

There are several causes for anxiety among English-speaking students. As per Desfitranita's (2017) findings, the number of rules to communicate fluently is one of the causes. It is conceivable that this is attributable to the fact that educators are not emphasizing the meaning of language, but they are just highlighting the forms of language. This reveals that learners will be discouraged from studying the target language if the language teacher solely emphasizes grammatical structures or linguistic characteristics in class. Therefore, learners are expected to grasp the language to apply what they have learned in reality through interaction. Most English teachers are strict and concentrate on grammar; they emphasize sentence structure and construct excellent, acceptable phrases. They place a greater emphasis on correctness than fluency, correcting every learner's mistake (Sutarsyah, 2017). Therefore, students end up worrying about making mistakes when speaking in English. This falls under the fear of negative evaluation of speaking anxiety as the learners are afraid that making errors while speaking might create a bad image of them due to their lack of linguistic skills (Badrasawi et al., 2020).

Besides, individual personality characteristics such as shyness, silence, or hesitation are among the reasons for speaking anxiety under communication apprehension (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019). Learners will get self-conscious when obliged to communicate in English among their peers. This verdict is consistent with research conducted by Raja (2017), which demonstrated that the majority of learners were afraid to speak in an organized and structured environment in front of their peers of native speakers. Furthermore, according to ELCAS,

learners who possess speaking anxiety to a certain extent struggled to convey their ideas and views while interacting in English that precedes them to get worried. Anxiety interferes with the learners' capacity to concentrate on what was uttered in English due to the mental blocks created by anxiety. It means that worry might impair their speaking ability and cause communication apprehension.

Finally, an intimidating or stressful atmosphere can also be one of the causes, which falls under test anxiety. Students begin to analyse their planning, prior knowledge, and potential during the test anticipation phase and anticipate their probable performance (Duraku, 2017). When students realise they are going to fail an exam, they get nervous. Learners will begin to prepare for the exam in the second phase, test preparation, and will assess the efficacy of their test preparation. They set unrealistic goals for themselves, believing that any grade less than outstanding is unacceptable for nervous students, even if it is acceptable for others (Namsang, 2011). The third stage of test anxiety is the test-taking phase, during which students feel suppressed and irritated as a result of their worry. Their unfavourable impressions of taking a test are generally noticed in the last stage (Duraku, 2017). Hamouda (2012) discovered that 67.92 percent of Saudi students are more nervous during oral examinations. Furthermore, (Kayaoğlu & Sağlamel, 2013) claimed that students' worry about examinations creates a threatening environment. According to relevant studies, it is also to be noted that low levels of language competence and study abilities are among the characteristics that play a role in test anxiety among language learners (Duraku, 2017).

Krashen's Second Language Theory

Krashen significantly contributed to the understanding of second language learning. He is the linguist who had considered and associated anxiety with second language learning. According to Krashen, multiple affective traits such as anxiety, self-confidence, personality, and motivation play a non-casual, facilitative role in second language learning. Krashen had identified that the low anxiety level of the learner enhances the self-image, self-confidence, motivation of the learner, which is the main driving force in succeeding to acquire substantial competency in second language learning (Raju & Joshith, 2019). Anxiety, low- motivation, inhabitation, introversion, and low self-esteem can create a mental block, craft affective filter which prevents learner's comprehensible input from being used in acquiring competency in second language learning. Feeling worried and being anxious prevents individuals from

participating in oral conversation in a second language, which impacts the learner's self-confidence, which further prevents her or him from participating in such group interaction in a second language, which worsens the anxiety level of the learner. Apart from these issues, Krashen had identified that to bring more perfection, and accuracy in the communication process in a second language instead of giving importance to fluency eventually enhances the anxiety level of the learner and prevents the learner from bringing the second language into their communication approach.

Semantic Theory

One of the main reasons for building anxiety among the learners of the second language is difficulties in the acquisition of meaning, which is considered an essential task incorporated into the process of second language learning. Meanings are segmented into grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, and semantic (Kormos, 2020). To ease the distress and anxiety of the learner learning a second language, they need to identify the meaning stored in an individual's mental lexicon. Calculating and encoding the sentences eases the process of identifying the essence of meaning hidden into the sentence. Apart from that, building competency in understanding the meaning of the context of any sentence is essential to reduce the level of anxiety in second language learning.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design is a type of quantitative research that implies the phenomenon being investigated about speaking anxiety in ESL. Therefore, this study examines speaking anxiety levels in English as a second language among the TESL undergraduates in a private university. Likewise, the second research objective of this study is to find out the causes of speaking anxiety in English as a second language among TESL undergraduates from a private university.

Research Method

The quantitative method was employed to gather data through a self-administered questionnaire in this study. Moreover, the questionnaire utilized English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS). Similarly, several previous studies have used the same questionnaire to discover the causes of speaking anxiety and its level among second-language speakers (Hashim & Isa, 2012). Since this study highlights the TESL undergraduates in a private university, the questionnaire was distributed to TESL undergraduates from a higher learning institute. The questionnaire was created using Google form and shared its link with 100 respondents to collect the needed data for this study.

Participants

The purposive sampling method was used to choose its group of respondents, which is an intentional selection of the population. Therefore, the respondents for this study were selected based on their enrolment course in the higher learning institutes, which is to be TESL. Besides, the respondents are from the Universiti Selangor, Bestari Jaya Campus, since the study aimed to collect data among the respondents from one private university. Based on this method, non-probability sampling was used to select the respondents from the private university. In total, 100 samples of TESL undergraduates from the Universiti Selangor managed to participate in this study as a respondent. Precisely, the majority of the respondents were female undergraduates, and most of the students were final-year students.

Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was utilized based on the possible causes of speaking anxiety experienced by ESL students in educational settings. The ELCAS (English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) was suitable to determine the research objectives. The ELCAS (English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) helps segregate the respondents based on the situational examples provided explicitly in the instrument. The situational examples in the instruments are adapted to the TESL students that may cause them speaking anxiety which is mostly related to English as a second language learning environment. Therefore, it will be helpful for this research to analyse the root cause of speaking anxiety and its level among the TESL undergraduates.

The questionnaire consists of section A and section B. Section A comprises two demographic questions such as gender and year of study. Section B consists of 23 items in the questionnaire. Those 23 items were adopted and adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986), initially created as FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) with 33 items. However, ten items from the original questionnaire were omitted to fit the research objectives (2, 5, 6, 11, 17, 21, 22, 23, 28, and 32).

Besides, a digital platform called Google form was used to develop the questionnaire and distributed its link to 100 respondents via social media such as Instagram and WhatsApp. The participants were instructed to answer all 23 questions using the five-point Likert Scale to express their level of speaking anxiety for each item. The five-point Likert Scale in the questionnaire ranged from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), strongly agree (5).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is a method to gather information or data related to the study's objectives. In this study, two types of data were used to proceed with this research: primary data and secondary data. The ELCAS (English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) questionnaire was used as the primary data to collect quantitative data from the 100 respondents. Similarly, secondary data were used as supporting references and reading materials as the ground knowledge for the current research. Therefore, articles, journals, books, and online sources have been used as the background study and to obtain the necessary data required for this research.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure employed quantitative data that used descriptive statistics, which helped to classify the data constructively. Thus, the obtained responses were calculated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Furthermore, tabulations and pie charts, including frequency and percentage, interpreted the respondents' demographic information. Likewise, to measure speaking anxiety levels in English as a second language among the TESL undergraduates in a private university, tabulation and bar graphs were used,

including frequency and percentage, to interpret the data by differentiating the levels among high, moderate, and low. Subsequently, to interpret the 23 items of the second research objective of this study, tabulations including population size, mean and standard deviation were used with brief explanations.

RESULTS

This chapter describes the findings of the collected data. As for the current thesis, data was collected using survey questionnaires consisting of two sections, demographic and 23 questions related to speaking anxiety towards speaking English as a second language among TESL undergraduates in a private university. This section used demographic and descriptive analysis to accomplish the research objectives of the current study. This questionnaire describes the level and the causes of speaking anxiety towards speaking English as a second language among TESL undergraduates in a private university.

Demographic characteristics

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

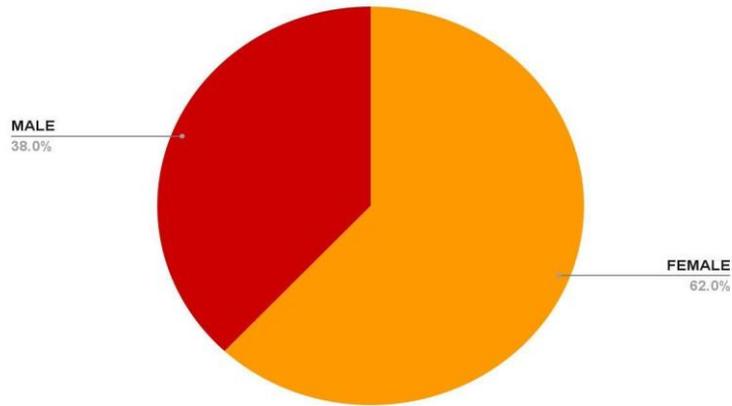|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
	Male	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentages of male and female genders in the sample. The table above shows that the frequency of female TESL undergraduates was 62, which is 62% of the sample. In comparison, the frequency of male TESL undergraduates was 38, which is 38% of the sample. Therefore, Table 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents were female TESL undergraduates in a private university.

Table 2: Year of study of all participants

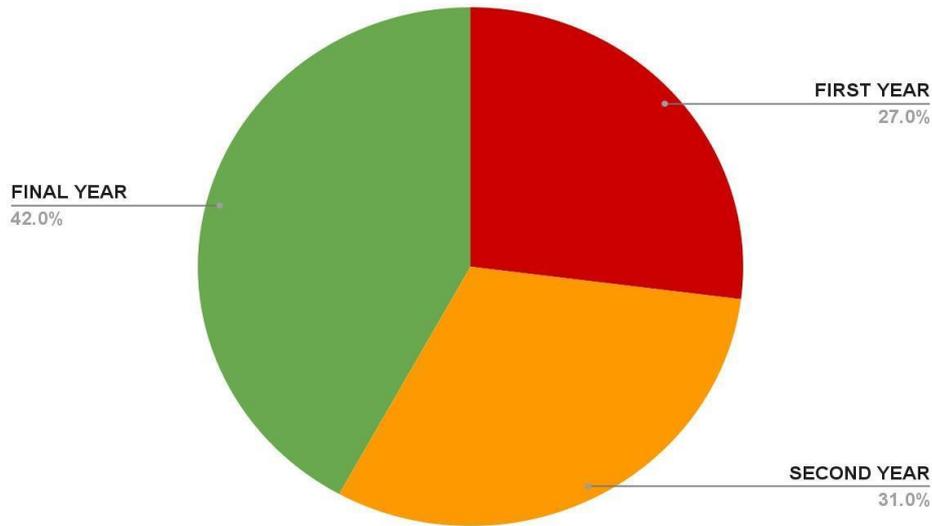|		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Final year	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	First year	27	27.0	27.0	69.0
	Second year	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 2: Year of Study

Table 2 shows the undergraduate's year of study. It indicates that the majority belonged to final year students with 42% of the entire sample, followed by second year students with 31% of the sample. Besides, the rest of the respondents were first year students, with 27% percent of the total research sample. Thus, the findings revealed that most of the respondents in this study were final year TESL undergraduates in a private university.

Table 3: Cronbach alpha reliability

Reliability Statistics		
Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Anxiety level	0.968	23

Before proceeding to any further analysis, the reliability of the questionnaire was checked. The data was collected using questionnaires with 23 items named ELCAS (English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), which was originally developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) as FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale). The reliability of the 23 item scale was determined by using Cronbach alpha. The Cronbach alpha represents the internal consistency of the scale. The values of Cronbach alpha closer to 1 are considered more reliable. Usually, for interpretation of the reliability value, lower than 0.4 is deemed weak.

In contrast, the value from 0.4 to 0.7 reflects a moderate level of internal consistency, while the value above 0.7 indicates a high degree of internal consistency. In the current scale, the value of Cronbach alpha for 23 items in ELCAS (English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) revealed 0.968, which indicates that the scale's internal consistency and reliability were substantially high. Hence, the data can be considered reliable for any further analysis.

Levels of speaking anxiety among TESL undergraduates in a Private University

Table 4: Levels of Speaking Anxiety

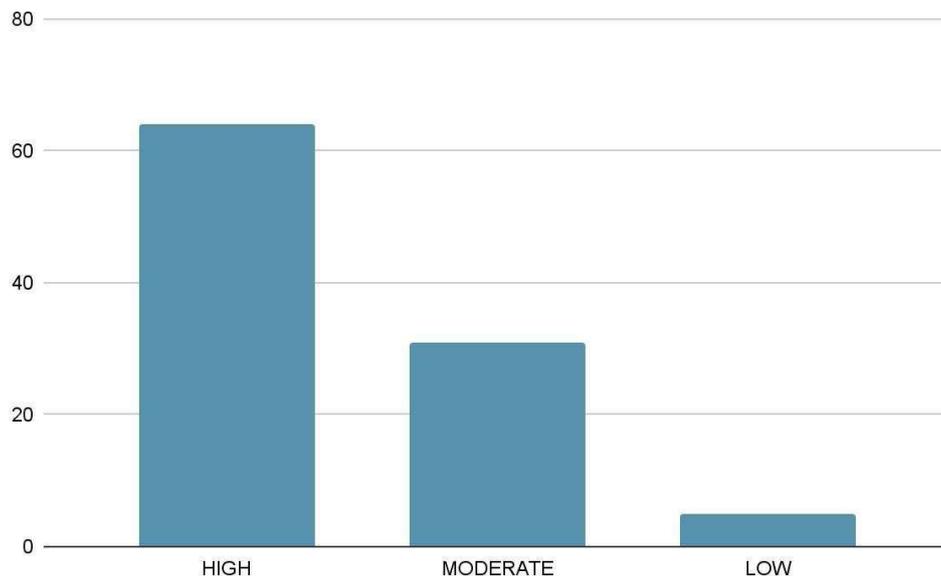|	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High Valid	64	64.0	64.0	64.0
Low	5	5.0	5.0	71.0
Moderate	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 3: Levels of Speaking Anxiety

Table 4 shows speaking anxiety levels towards speaking English as a second language experienced by the TESL undergraduates in a private university. The findings were classified into three categories: low, moderate, and high speaking anxiety levels among the TESL undergraduate students. The above table shows the frequency and percentage of each level of speaking anxiety among the total sample.

The findings show that the majority of the students fall in the category of experiencing high levels of speaking anxiety towards speaking English as a second language, constituting almost 64% of the total sample. In comparison, 31% of the sample fall under the category of moderate level of speaking anxiety, while only 5% of the total sample fall under the category of low level of speaking anxiety towards speaking English as a second language. Thus, the findings in table 4 reveal that most TESL undergraduates in a private university face high levels of anxiety in speaking English as a second language.

Causes of speaking anxiety among TESL undergraduates in a Private University

The second objective of the study is to determine the causes of the speaking anxiety in English as a second language among the TESL undergraduates in a private university. Horwitz et al. (1986) argued that the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) could include three main domains of: 1) communication apprehension, 2) fear of negative evaluation, and 3) test anxiety. The 23 items used in the questionnaire adopted and adapted from the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) are classified according to the three domains. Therefore, the following questions, namely 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 23, fall under communication apprehension. Secondly, items 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, and 22 reflect the fear of negative evaluation, whereas the remaining 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 19 reflect the test anxiety.

Communication apprehension among TESL undergraduates in a Private University

Table 5: Communication Apprehension

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English language class.	100	4.11	1.270
It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English language.	100	4.02	1.318
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.	100	4.17	1.111
I would be nervous speaking in English language with native speakers.	100	4.31	1.051
I feel very self-conscious about speaking in English language in front of other students.	100	4.25	1.201
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.	100	4.10	1.307
I get nervous when the English language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	100	4.11	1.254
Valid N (listwise)	100		

Table 5 shows the mean range is from 4.2 to 4.31. Based on this finding, the fourth item, "I would be nervous speaking in English language with native speakers" records the highest mean, which is 4.31 with SD=1.051. In contrast, the second item in the table, "It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English language" records the lowest mean with 4.02, SD=1.3.

Fear of negative evaluation among TESL undergraduates in a Private University

Table 6: Fear of Negative Evaluation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation

I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	100	4.09	1.223
I don't feel confident when I speak in English language class.	100	4.07	1.289
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak in English language.	100	2.55	1.250
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on to speak in English language class.	100	4.06	1.317
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English language.	100	4.20	1.231
I feel more tense and nervous speaking in my English language class than in my other classes.	100	4.14	1.279
I worry about making mistakes when I am speaking in English language class.	100	4.35	1.123
I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking in English language than I am.	100	4.15	1.250
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.	100	4.11	1.310
Valid N (listwise)	100		

Table 6 indicates the mean range from 2.55 to 4.35. In this table, the lowest mean for the third question, "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak in English language" with 2.55, SD= 1.2. In comparison, "I worry about making mistakes when I am speaking in English language class" records the highest mean that is 4.35, with SD=1.1.

Test anxiety among TESL undergraduates in a Private University

Table 7: Test Anxiety

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.	100	2.40	1.456
I am usually not at ease during oral tests in my English language class.	100	4.08	1.195
I worry about the consequences of failing my English language oral tests.	100	4.13	1.203
When I speak in English language class, I can get so nervous forgetting things I know.	100	4.22	1.160
Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious to speak during the class.	100	4.13	1.169
I am worried about being left behind when I lack speaking skills in English language.	100	3.81	1.475
I worry about making mistakes when I am speaking in English language class.	100	4.20	1.189
Valid N (listwise)	100		

Table 7 shows the drastic mean range from 2.40 to 4.22. In the table above, the first item, "I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says" records the lowest mean with 2.40, SD= 1.4. On the contrary, the fourth item, "When I speak in English language class, I can get so nervous forgetting things I know" records the highest mean with 4.22, SD= 1.1.

DISCUSSION

The first research objective of this study is to examine the speaking anxiety level in English as a second language among the TESL undergraduates in a private university. According to the ELCAS results, the vast majority of undergraduates (64%) have high speaking anxiety, consistent with the findings of (Bashori et al., 2020; Raja, 2017 and McCain, 2012). The high level of speaking anxiety is alarming, and it can have an enormous influence on students' capacity to express themselves in English and their willingness to interact (Fatinah Dellah et al., 2020 & Cagatay, 2015).

The second research objective of this study is to investigate the causes of speaking anxiety in English as a second language among TESL undergraduates in a private university. It is then followed by communication apprehension and test anxiety. The majority of the research findings mentioned below agreed with Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) 's three components of foreign language anxiety, which served as a guide for this study. Similarly, the current research found out that the TESL undergraduates suffered from fear of negative evaluation the most, corresponding to a study conducted by Hammad Rafada & Ahmad Madini (2017).

The majority of TESL students expressed being bothered about making errors when speaking in English class. The leading cause is teacher and peer pressure which falls under the domain of fear of negative evaluation. Two of the main factors why learners encounter speaking anxiety are their fear of making pronunciation errors and their fear of being ridiculed by their peers and teachers as a consequence of such errors. Students fear making mistakes when teachers focus more on the correctness of the sentence structure instead of fluency (Sutarsyah, 2017). According to Alrabai (2014), the majority of EFL teachers thought that the teacher should be threatening at times, that the instructor should correct every slight error made by the learners, and that the teacher is the absolute commander of the class. Al-Saraj (2014) went on to say that EFL students may feel like they are taking a big risk by speaking in class since they could incorrectly answer a question, mispronounce a term, or simply fail to communicate effectively in the new language.

On the other hand, in this study, the undergraduates have reported that they would be nervous speaking in English with native speakers, which is in the domain of communication apprehension. This is due to linguistic factors, which play a huge role in high anxiety levels among undergraduates (Badrasawi et al., 2020). As per the semantic theory, undergraduates lack competence in the language, syntax, and speaking techniques contributes to their anxiety

when speaking (Antoro et al., 2015). Learners are afraid of mispronouncing words, making grammatical errors, giving the wrong answer, or being laughed at (Hammad Rafada & Ahmad Madini, 2017). As a result, students may avoid taking such risks by remaining passive in a formal setting such as the classroom or in front of native speakers to avoid making mistakes and being ridiculed by their classmates.

Finally, the study also revealed that the undergraduates feel nervous forgetting things when they speak. This can be caused due to an intimidating atmosphere as it is in the test anxiety domain. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), students who knew the answer before the assessment usually experience amnesia as a result of their anxiousness, which leads them to lose memory power and provide incorrect responses in a test. Their negative thoughts build up a psychological barrier resulting in forgetting things when they speak (Hammad Rafada & Ahmead Madini, 2017). Students create unreasonable expectations for themselves, and when they realise they may fail a test, get anxious, and forget what they are supposed to speak (Aydin et al., 2020; Namsang, 2011). Krashen's second language theory, the affective filter hypothesis, is well relatable as he has stated that anxiety creates a barrier for the learners to acquire the targeted language.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study explored the level of speaking anxiety and the causes of speaking anxiety in English as a second language among 100 TESL undergraduates at Universiti Selangor, Bestari Jaya Campus. The study findings uncovered that the undergraduates experienced a high level of speaking anxiety. The main causes of high speaking anxiety are teacher and peer pressure, linguistic factors, and an intimidating atmosphere. Speaking anxiety is highly prevalent among most ESL learners, but neither teachers nor learners are completely aware of how to deal with it (Hasibuan & Irzawati, 2020). This study's findings contribute to the advancement of ESL teaching and learning. English is taught as a compulsory subject in schools and formal settings in Malaysia. The teaching of English includes not just writing, listening, and reading ability but also English language speaking skills. Identification of personal speaking anxiety levels would assist ESL learners in recognizing and implementing

particular tactics to avoid inability in speaking class and attempt to resolve their issues and achieve a better speaking performance.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that speaking anxiety may affect interaction in the chosen language, instructors must identify that anxiety as a significant source of students' failures in second language communication and assist them in getting rid of their emotional states of unease and discomfort. The following recommendations can be made based on the study's findings.

Firstly, ESL instructors recognise individuals who exhibit characteristics of stress and anxiety and then implement suitable techniques to assist them in coping with these feelings. Conclusion: there are three approaches, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioural, that can be recommended. These approaches help the learners change their negative thoughts into positive ones, hence reducing their anxiety.

In addition to that, it should be guaranteed that students are given a pleasant, casual, and learning-supportive environment in order for them to participate in classroom discussions actively. The teacher should be aware of their instructional method and not often correct the learners' mistakes as they can embarrass them. Since students tend to be hypersensitive to the dread of making errors, teachers should encourage them to learn from errors to improve communication abilities. This may be accomplished by teachers' supportive manner, which encourages students to speak out in class.

Also, the learners themselves should realize that the anxiety can be controlled, and they should take the initiative to control their fear as they know themselves better. If they feel the situation is very intimidating to them, they should at least consult their peers or teacher to feel better. ESL learners also need to bear in mind that most native speakers are not even fluent in speaking. The learners should always look at the brighter side and reduce their speaking anxiety.

Finally, future researchers should use other methods like observation and interviews. This is because such methods help locate the exact causes of English speaking anxiety. They

also need to study the perfect method to curb this alarming issue. Such research could highly reduce the challenges in the field.

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