



Faculty of Language and Communication

**A STUDY OF ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG
TERTIARY STUDENTS IN A MALAYSIAN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITY**

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MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

by

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ABSTRACT

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TIE W I L I N

This study aims to determine the English speaking anxiety level, examine the relationship of English proficiency levels and their anxiety level, identify the factors that lead to such anxiety as well as to identify the strategies of overcoming speaking anxiety. The study was conducted at University Malaysia Sarawak, with a total number of 120 undergraduates. The instrument used for the survey was Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) which was developed by Huang (2004). The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS version 22. The findings show that majority of the students had a moderate level of speaking anxiety and fear of evaluation being the major factor. Besides, students' speaking anxiety levels had no relationship with their English proficiency levels. The students in this study encouraged themselves to take risk in language learning, and they also preferred using relaxation techniques to reduce their anxiety. The findings from this study would help students to be aware of the factors that cause their nervousness as well as the strategies that are available to cope with their anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety level, English proficiency levels, factors of language anxiety, anxiety coping anxiety

ABSTRAK

KAJIAN MENGENAI KERESAHAN BERCAKAP BAHASA INGGERIS DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR UNIVERSITI DI INSTITUSI PELAJARAN TEMPATAN AWAM

TIE WI LIN

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menentukan tahap keresahan berbahasa Inggeris, mengkaji hubungan tahap penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris dengan tahap keresahan pelajar, mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan keresahan serta mengenal pasti strategik yang mengatasi kebimbangan percakapan. Kajian ini dijalankan di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, dengan bilangan pelajar seramai 120 pelajar. Maklumat kajian diperolehi melalui soal-selidik Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) yang telah diadaptasi daripada Huang (2004). Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 22. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa majoriti pelajar mempunyai tahap keresahan berbahasa Inggeris yang sederhana dan keresahan terhadap penilaian negatif menjadi faktor utama. Selain itu, tahap keresahan pelajar tidak mempunyai hubungan dengan tahap kemahiran Bahasa Inggeris mereka. Pelajar dalam kajian ini menggalakkan diri untuk mengambil risiko dalam pembelajaran bahasa, dan mereka juga memilih teknik relaksasi untuk mengurangkan perasaan kecemasan mereka. Penemuan dari kajian ini akan membantu pelajar menyedari faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kegelisahan mereka serta strategik yang sedia ada untuk menangani keresahan berbahasa Inggeris.

Kata kunci: Tahap keresahan, tahap kemahiran berbahasa Inggeris, faktor kebimbangan bahasa, strategik mengatasi keresahan

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter		Page
	ABSTRACT	i
	<i>ABSTRAK</i>	ii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
1	INTRODUCTION	
	1.0 Background of the research problem	1-3
	1.1 Problem statement	3-4
	1.2 Aim of study	4
	1.3 Objectives of study	4
	1.4 Significance of study	5
	1.5 Operational definition of terms	
	1.5.1 Second language anxiety	6
	1.5.2 Tertiary students	6
	1.5.3 English speaking anxiety level	6
	1.5.4 Language proficiency	7
	1.5.5 Factors of English speaking anxiety	7
	1.5.6 Language anxiety coping strategies	7-8
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
	2.0 Anxiety level	9-12
	2.1 Language anxiety and English proficiency levels	12-13
	2.2 Language anxiety and gender	13-15
	2.3 Second language anxiety and its factors	15-16
	2.4 Language anxiety coping anxiety	16-17

	2.5 Summary	18
3	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
	3.0 Research design	19
	3.1 Selection of sample	19-20
	3.2 Instrument	20-22
	3.3 Data collection procedures	22-23
	3.4 Data analysis procedures	23-26
	3.5 Limitation of study	26-27
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
	4.0 Demographic information	28
	4.1 English speaking anxiety level	28-30
	4.2 Relationship between English proficiency levels and speaking anxiety	30-31
	4.3 Main factors of English speaking anxiety	31-35
	4.4 English speaking coping anxiety	35-36
	4.5 Discussions	37-40
5	CONCLUSION	
	5.0 Summary	41-42
	5.1 Implications of study	42-43
	5.2 Recommendations	43-44
	References	45-53
	Appendix	54-62

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Level of English speaking anxiety among tertiary students	29
2	Descriptive statistics for English proficiency levels	30
3	Median scores and the percentages of the responses among moderately and high anxious students	32
4	Frequency and percentage of each strategy.	35-36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Online questionnaire in Google Form	22
2	Data collection procedures	23

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNIMAS	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
FLSAS	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
FLAQ	Factors of Language Anxiety Questionnaire
ELCAS	English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the research problem

Language plays a prominent part in our life. Language is used as a communication tool in daily interaction and communication. Through language, people are able to share their knowledge and information with other people. According to Miskam and Saldalvi (2019), the importance of learning more than one language has been well acknowledged by most people, especially the students. Being proficient in their first language is not the only focus, but for the prospective market, they have started to master more than one language, mainly English as their second language (Miskam & Saldalvi, 2019).

It is undeniable fact that English becomes the domain language in most countries (Hwa & Peck, 2017). It has been expanded to developing countries due to the influence of science and technology. It carries various functions which is inclusive of political language, the media, higher education and other domains. The use of English Language has higher demand in higher institutions (Argellan et al, 2019). Graddol (1997) has already pointed out the increasing number of universities courses having English as the medium of instruction and this has become the most significant educational trends in the world (as cited in Chang, 2015). Many non-English speaking countries have transformed their educational programs into English medium instruction.

In Malaysia, English is placed as the second language according to the education policy (Gill, 2002). Ministry of Education in Malaysia has taken action and agreed on English Language being learned as early as in kindergarten (Lin 2013 as cited in Miskam

& Saidalvi, 2019). Furthermore, the plan of using English language in Mathematics and Science implemented in 2003 and a new policy of MBMMBI (Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English) was introduced in 2009 to improve students' English proficiency in Malaysia (Rokiah & Rozita, 2012). With the implementation of MBMMBI policy, the medium instruction in national schools reverts back to Malay language however, the efforts to improve the command of English is not abandoned. This was to prepare learners at the university level particularly on Science and technology for most reference materials are mainly in English. They are also expected to possess excellent communication skill in their respective technical field.

Despite all the efforts taken by government, it has been observed that English language competence in our country are still a long way from satisfactory. It has observed that Malaysian undergraduate students are still facing difficulties in mastering English although they have 11 to 13 years of experiences in learning formal English (David et al 2015 as cited in Rusli, Yunus, & Hashim, 2018). This might increase the number of unemployed graduates when they could not speak English during job interviews (Singh & Chuah, 2012). Companies nowadays not only look at their certificates but also their good communication skills in English. According to Nor Zaihid Ali, the chief economist at Malaysian Rating Corp Bhd informed that the number of jobless undergraduates Malaysia has increased throughout the years (Rusli, Yunus, & Hashim, 2018). He further explained that poor English capability is the main factors that cause the issue of unemployment in Malaysia. Other than low English speaking proficiency, psychological factor such as anxiety also influence their speaking performance during interview. This is due to the fact that, they had less opportunity to speak English outside the classroom. Thus, their English proficiency are lower, and this restricted them to communicate English with people.

It is therefore not surprisingly that several research (Catagay, 2015; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019; Sadiq, 2017) were conducted on second language anxiety among English learners. Brown (1994) asserted that second language learning is a complex process and has a huge impact on acquisition and learning process. The extent to which language learners participate actively in second language learning is determined by their attitudes. Feeling positively toward language lead to higher achievement in learning. Nevertheless, Ozturk and Gurbuz (2013) claimed that speaking is the major source of anxiety among four language skills in language classroom. Horwitz (2001) further explained that speaking anxiety can cause students to have lower scores and to be passive learners. In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the English speaking anxiety of undergraduates in a Malaysian public university.

1.1 Problem Statement

A lot of research has been conducted on factors of English speaking anxiety of different ages (Gaibani & Elmenfi, 2016), grades (Mestan, 2017) and gender (Rafek et al, 2018). There are, however, fewer studies regarding the relationship between speaking anxiety levels and proficiency levels (Debreli & Demirkan, 2015). These studies have also shown mixed conclusions concerning the correlation between anxiety levels and proficiency levels. For example, some studies indicated a lower level of anxiety among students of higher language proficiency (Nahavandi & Mukundan, 2013) while others suggested otherwise (Debreli & Demirkan, 2015). And also, Luo (2014) found no relationship between speaking anxiety and proficiency level.

This research also fills the gap by investigating speaking anxiety and their coping strategies among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels. It has observed

that past research only focus on overall learners' anxiety level and the anxiety contributory factors (Chin, Ting, & Yeo, 2016). However, their studies do not focus on the strategies used to cope with anxiety across different proficiency groups.

1.2 Aim of study

This study aims to examine second language anxiety among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels in a Malaysian public university.

1.3 Objectives of study

There are 4 research objectives that are shown as below:

1. To determine the English speaking anxiety level among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels in a Malaysian public university.
2. To examine the relationship between students' speaking anxiety level and their language proficiency level.
3. To identify the main factors of English speaking anxiety among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels based on Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale.
4. To identify the coping strategies used by the students in reducing their speaking anxiety.

1.4 Significance of study

This study aims to contribute in related education field namely second language learning. Less studies have been carried out regarding the relationship between anxiety levels and English proficiency levels (Debreli & Demirkan, 2015). Moreover, the findings from this research would provide the literature with more data about how proficiency level of language may affect anxiety. This is because, the correlation between English proficiency and anxiety level are still not clear since several studies have different results. More studies are then needed to gather more conclusive evidence in order to gain better understanding in second language anxiety. Thus, this study addresses the language proficiency-anxiety relationship as a possible factor in determining the speaking anxiety level in the Malaysian context.

In addition, although several studies have explored English language as a foreign learning in different contexts, this study may provide information about the sources of second language anxiety regardless their English proficiency levels in Malaysia context (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019). Due to the reason English is not their native language, speaking anxiety may occur when they feel uncomfortable to interact with people in English. This study may assist the lecturer to implement more appropriate teaching strategies for different proficiency levels and increase their participation in oral activities.

Past research studies done in Malaysia have given more focus on the major sources of anxiety among the students (Hashemi, 2011). However, besides the anxious factors, this research want to find out the affective strategy used to overcome anxiety with language anxiety. Therefore, learners could benefit in particular from guidance in developing the good self-management skills.

1.5 Operational definition of terms

1.5.1 Second language anxiety

Young (1999) believes that second language anxiety is the negative feelings and behaviour when learning and utilizing a second language. Language anxiety is also defined as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with classroom language learning process” (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986, p. 125). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), language anxiety is “the feeling of tension and apprehension in the second language contexts, including speaking, listening and writing” (p. 284). In this study, second language anxiety is the apprehension experienced when using English orally in the language classroom.

1.5.2 Tertiary students

Tertiary in the education field refers academic pursuit undertaking after secondary education or high school (Learn.org, 2003). In this study, tertiary students are undergraduates in University Malaysia Sarawak who have registered for English generic courses.

1.5.3 English speaking anxiety level

English speaking anxiety level refers to the degree of anxiety one experiences when speaking in English (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019). According to Miskam and Saidalvi (2019), there are three levels of anxiety levels according to the scores from Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS): low (28-69), moderate (70-97) and high (98-140). In this study, degree of speaking anxiety is measured based on the scores from FLSAS which was developed by Huang (2004).

1.5.4 Language proficiency

Language proficiency is defined as the ability of using language in a real language use situation (Farhady, 1982) and determined by the actual performance of learners (Stern, 1983). In this study, language proficiency of English is identified through the English courses taken by Unimas undergraduate students. The students are categorized into three different proficiency levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced. In Unimas, Preparatory English is offered to students with Muet bands 1 and 2 (elementary level), Academic English 1 is offered to students with Muet band 3 (intermediate level) and Academic English 2 is offered to students who achieved band 4 and above (advanced level) (Official Portal of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 2019).

1.5.5 Factors of English speaking anxiety

Factor of speaking anxiety refers to the sources that generate uncomfortable feelings of speaking foreign language in communication-based classroom (Rafieyan, 2016). In this study, factors of English speaking anxiety are identified based on the theory of Foreign Language Anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986)

1.5.6 Language anxiety coping strategies

In general, language anxiety coping strategies are the remediation of anxiety in academic settings that focus on cognitive, affective and behavioral approaches (Hembree 1988 as cited in Kondo & Ling, 2004). To this study, coping anxiety is identified through the 11 affective strategies developed by Hauck, Mirjam & Hurd, Stella (2005). The strategies are positive self-talk, take risks in language learning, imagine a friendly informal chat, tell own self speaking won't take long, give own self a reward, be aware of physical sign of stress, writing

down feelings in a day, share worries with others, let tutor know their anxiousness and using relaxation techniques.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Anxiety level

Several studies that related to this topic have been conducted such as the study by Sadiq (2017). This study aim to investigate the level of foreign language anxiety among 100 university students in Saudi Arabia who are learning English. Quantitative research design was carried out using a survey research methodology. Research data were collected through questionnaires based on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The findings in this study found that third year students had significantly lower levels of anxiety than the first and second students. Overall, majority of them experienced a moderate level of anxiety in the language class. They did not feel too anxious about learning the English language, but they are still anxious when they think about nothing to do with the English course. This results is in line with the previous studies by Heng, Abdullah and Yosaf (2012) which suggested majority Malaysians students experienced a medium of oral communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Cagatay (2015) also conducted a similar study using quantitative methods which aim to examine the level of anxiety among tertiary students who learned English as a foreign language in Turkey. Data were collected from questionnaires adapted from Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) that examine the levels of foreign language anxiety among 147 Turkish students at the English preparatory program of a state university. The result in this study revealed that EFL students undergo a moderate level of FLSA. Furthermore, it was found that their anxiety level increases when communicate with native speaker compared to classmates. The reason is that, students in

this study have less opportunity to come across the native speakers to have an authentic communication.

The research by Miskam and Saidalvi (2019) was conducted to investigate English language speaking anxiety among Malaysian undergraduate learners. This survey research study aims is to determine the level of English language speaking anxiety and the dominant contributory factor. In order to avoid biasness, researcher decided on random sampling method. 42 third year undergraduates from public universities taking the English Professional purpose were selected and given a set of questionnaire. Utilizing the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) as instrument of data collection, it was found that 76% of participants have moderate level of English language speaking anxiety. However, even with moderate level of English speaking anxiety, it still can bring negative effects on learners' performance. This study found that communication apprehension is the dominant factor that contribute English language speaking anxiety among these learners with high and moderate level of speaking anxiety. They have trouble speaking in class and feel self-conscious when they are asked to speak English in front of people.

The study carried out by McCroskey (1992) using another scale, which is Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) differ from FLSAS which only focus on the speaking and anxiety. The findings found that majority of the learners experienced communication apprehension when they speak in a formal setting, such as classroom. There is a similar result with Miskam and Saldavi 's study (2019). High and moderate anxiety learners in their study cannot express their thoughts and opinions effectively while speaking English and their readiness to communicate. Furthermore, learners with low level of speaking anxiety have experienced test anxiety. This give the

justification of the study by Llinas and Garau (2009) that low anxiety learners understand and they are more concern of their purpose in learning a foreign language. This study suggest that instructor may consider having group work for the purpose of reducing anxiety level by learners.

Aside from that, Suleimenove' (2013) study proved that anxiety impede speech performance despite learners have high capability in the target language. In other words, communication apprehension has the ability to influence their learning performance and causing them not able to speak English. This was proven in the study where high proficiency students are more anxious about their English' oral test as they need to pass the requirement. They need to pass the requirement because of the higher demand of employment. Thus, it is believed that speaking anxiety have the ability to influence the performance of learners in speaking and learning English as a second language.

Chin, Ting and Yeo (2016) also carry out a study which is related to the second language learning. This study aims to investigate the level of English language anxiety among Malaysian public university students and its factors that lead to anxiety. The study was conducted on first year Diploma students and 149 students from Faculty of Engineering, Public Administration and Business Management are involved in this study. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which is developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was administered and data collected were analysed using SPSS 22. The findings have shown that majority of the respondents, who are dominantly teens, have a moderate level of anxiety with anxiety of English classes being the major factors, followed by fear of test, speech comprehension and finally fear of negative comments. They do not have motivation to attend their English language classes. They choose to avoid attending classes as a way to escape their source of anxiety.

Another similar study by Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015) utilized a mixed-methods approach to investigate the anxiety level among undergraduate English language learners in Malaysia. The presence of anxiety is obviously never far away from second language learners' mind as it affect learner's view of themselves and world view. Overall, this study documents the tertiary students had moderate level of anxiey while writing skills causes the greatest comprehension when learning English language. Thus, some implications were made such as creating less competitiveness in the classroom especially when engaging in writing activities.

2.1 Language anxiety and English proficiency levels

Several studies have been proven that there are significant correlations between anxiety and language proficiency measures. For instance, Onat (2003) as cited in Damla (2016) in her thesis investigate the anxiety level among three different groups namely beginners, pre-intermediate and intermediate levels in Eastern Mediterranean University. The objectives of her study is to find out whether the level of the learners would affect the anxiety level of the learners. Her findings reveals that when the students' proficiency level increases, their anxiety level decreases. Her results supported by Hismanoglu's (2013) findings which was conducted with the participation of 132 candidates at different grades at a state university in Turkish. The researcher utilized FLCAS consisting of 33 items presented on a five-point Likert scale. Convenient sampling method was used in this study because it was difficult to distribute the questionnaire to a large number of respondents owing to time constraints, lack of resources and budget. With respect to the relationship of grade levels and foreign language learning anxiety, this study showed that learners at the advanced level are less anxious than the learners at the beginner level. This could provide

evidence in support of Elkhafaifi (2005) who stressed that students in the third year of their study had significantly lower levels of foreign language anxiety than those in the first and second year of their study.

On the other hand, there has been controversy in which the increasing proficiency does not reduce anxiety level. For instance, Llinas and Garau (2009) carried out the research which related to anxiety level among the Spanish students at three different proficiency levels. The results showed that participants at the advanced level have higher anxiety levels than the beginner level. The findings further explained that advanced students are more aware of their grades because they are preparing themselves for employability. They are reported being interested in learning foreign language and culture in order to work with native Spanish speakers. Beginners, on the other hand, there are no such of this pressure and intentions. Their findings similar to Saito and Samimy (1996), who studied language anxiety of Japanese students at three different levels and it reported that advanced students were the most language-anxious as reading and writing were given more focus in the advanced classes. As a result, they felt less confident in speaking Japanese because of the lack of oral practice.

2.2 Language anxiety and gender

There are studies related to the language anxiety and gender namely the research by Ozturk and Gurbuz (2013) and Park and French (2013) mentioned that gender regarded as a contributing factors in language learning anxiety. In Ozturk and Gurbuz's study, 383 Turkish university students who were learning English in the preparatory program were from different department such as business administration, economics, tourism management, chemistry, physics and biology. Based on the results on Foreign Language

Speaking Anxiety questionnaire (FLSAQ), there is a significant difference of speaking anxiety levels between female and male. Female students experienced a moderate level of anxiety whereas male students have low level of speaking anxiety. Although male students have lower anxiety level, but their motivational level is also lower compared to female students. Along the study by Park and French (2013), a total number of 948 students enrolled in an English communication course at a Korea university participated in this study. The Korea version of FLCAS which have been translated was used for this study. The results indicated that females students experienced higher anxiety levels compared to male students, in the aspect of speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) context. However, they received better grades than male students, confirming that anxiety play a facilitating role in language learning.

Those studies are in contrast to the study by Azher, Anwar and Naz (2010) and Tsai (2013). As mentioned by Azher, Anwar and Naz, female undergraduates from Pakistan are more confident and they have the ability to learn a new language faster. They manage to overcome their anxiety and nervousness in learning English. On the other hand, male students did not perform well because they are more anxious if compared to the females students. 256 high students in Taiwan involved in Tsai's study (2013) and it also shows the same results. Their study also support by the Rafek, Ramly and Hasni (2018) which aims to investigate the level of apprehension of evaluation among tertiary students in a public university. 22 males and 34 females involved in this study and it indicated that males have negative responds during evaluation. This might due to the fact male usually have tendency to maintain face compared to female. They try as soon as possible not to look stupid in front of the opposite gender.

2.3 Second language anxiety and its factors

Numerous studies reveal that second or foreign language acquisition is the most anxiety-provoking (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Young (1991). Horwitz et al. (1986) as the pioneers provide the foundation concept of foreign language anxiety. They had identified three primary causes of second language anxiety: (1) communication apprehension (CA), (2) test anxiety and (3) fear of negative evaluation. It was found that communication apprehension has a greater impact on the performance and especially in foreign language classroom. As stated by McCroskey (1977), communication apprehension is a negative emotion that occur during interaction with people (as cited in Apaibanditkul, 2006). Apprehension of communication can negatively contribute to language anxiety when students feel shy, quiet and nervous. An example of communication apprehension according to Shabani (2012) is when the learners found difficulties in oral communications despite they have good ideas and thoughts. The second type of anxiety is the fear of negative evaluation. It is a situation when students are too concern about others' evaluation, avoid evaluation situation because they worry others would give negative comments on themselves (Watson & Friend, 1969 as cited in Horwitz et al., 1986). Test anxiety comes to the last which refers to learners' negative expectations about their performance in the academic setting. According to Covington (1985), test anxiety involved in test anticipation, test preparation, test-taking stage and test reaction. Not only that, Kamarulzaman et al. (2013) conducted a study on gifted learners from Malaysian Public University. The study applied the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et. Al. (1986) which comprise of 4 components: communication anxiety, fear of negative feedback, anxiety of test and English class. The

result turned out show the gifted students experience moderate anxiety level despite their good performance in their tests.

2.4 Language anxiety coping strategies

According to the research carried by Kondo and Ling (2004), which investigates the language anxiety among the students in Japan. The main goal of their study is to develop a typology of strategies used to cope with language anxiety in English language classroom at two universities in Central Japan. 209 students between the age from 18 to 37 are the samples of this study. Participants are required to complete the measure of language anxiety, English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS) and open ended questionnaire. They were asked to describe the specific tactics that used to cope with language anxiety. Through the mix method approach, 5 strategies are identified for reducing the language anxiety: preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. Considering the impact of anxiety on language learning, most of the students try to reduce their anxiety irrespective of their anxiety level. Furthermore, preparation was reported as the most preferred strategy than any other strategies. It is found to be used by the high language-anxious students than the students with low anxiety. In addition to that, learning strategies such as maximizing the use of dictionary, modelling, note taking and word referencing were used by the participants to make necessary preparation and organizing self.

In Trifoni and Shahini' study (2011), 109 students of the Elementary Education, Experts in the Processes of Formation and English Language are the subjects of this study. Data was collected from Test Anxiety Scale and the open-ended questions were designed to investigate their attribution of the effect of test anxiety. The findings found their

respondents are mostly affected by test anxiety. It results that some of the factors that cause test anxiety are related to inappropriate test preparation or lack of preparation for the tests, time limitation and pressure, and the difficulty of course content. Therefore, the respondents suggested that teachers should inform the students on the content of tests and number of the questions before the administration. Besides, they also point out that adequate time should be given by the lecturers. Other than that, they admit that they would become less anxious when they have systematic preparation before the test.

Next, Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015) revealed that instructor-students' interaction is the main factor contributing to anxiety. This survey research design was employed utilizing a mixed-methods approach to measure the level of anxiety among university students in the Malaysian context using a self-developed questionnaire constructed primarily based on Young's (1991) and Oxford's (1999) theory of potential sources of language anxiety. Factors of Language Anxiety Questionnaire (FLAQ) was distributed to 125 undergraduate students. They were purposely sampled from faculties where English is not major courses in their program of study. Based on their responses to FLAQ, 11 out of 125 respondents were identified as high anxiety and 8 of the 11 highly anxious students were later selected to be interviewed to probe the extent of their anxiety. They have observed highly anxious students prefer relaxation and preparation as coping strategies. However, other than positive strategies, they also used the negative coping strategies whereby they purposely not attending class and avoiding eye contact with lecturer.

2.5 Summary

Overall, majority of the research included Sadiq, Chao, as well as Miskam and Saidalvi demonstrate the same results, where the findings show that university students

experience moderate level of English speaking anxiety in the classroom. Besides, studies conducted on the interrelationships of gender with language anxiety such as Ozturk and Gurbuz and Park and French show that female students have higher level of language anxiety than male students. However, there are studies with different findings, such as the study by Rafek, Ramly and Hasni (2018) which show that male students are more anxious than female students because they are trying to maintain their image by not making mistakes in front of the opposite gender. Furthermore, there are different data resulted from the studies related language anxiety and English proficiency levels. For instance, a study by Onat reveals that anxiety level decrease when the proficiency level of English increase whilst there has been controversy in other study by Linas and Garau which reported that advanced students were the most language-anxious as they are preparing themselves for employability. Some studies therefore are carried out to determine the factors (communication comprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety) that contributing language anxiety among the students which are Hashemi, Suleimenove and McCroskey. Their findings show that communication apprehension is the most provoking anxiety factor among other factors. Lastly, a study of language anxiety coping strategies carried out by Kondo and Ling which show that preparation is the most preferred strategy which is similar to the study done by Trifoni and Shahini.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research design

For the purpose of this study, survey research design was employed. It was a quantitative method research which aims to investigate the English speaking anxiety level among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels in a Malaysian public university.

Quantitative study basically based on the fact and it has high accuracy of the data. The data collected from the participants was in a numerical form which can be measured, calculated, and categorized. Therefore, quantitative method can eliminate or minimize the judgement. It is also proven to be valid and reduce bias because the results can be generalized to participants who belong to the same groups (Alvi, 2016).

According to McLeod (2018), the application of survey enables the data of research to be reliable. Numerical data were collected because quantitative researchers generally want to get objective, conclusive answer. Thus, questionnaires was used in this study as it is a common way to measure the behaviour and attitudes. Thus, it is found to fit the objective of study which aims to measure anxiety level among the students.

3.1 Selection of sample

The participants in this study were selected by using purposive sampling because researcher want to determine the anxiety level of each different proficiency groups (elementary, intermediate and advanced). There were 120 tertiary students from University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) who aged between 18-25. The participants students were Malaysians whose mother tongue are not English. They have registered for Preparatory English 1 and 2, Academic English 1 (AE1) as well as Academic English 2 (AE2) only. In order to compare the speaking anxiety level among the students of three

different English proficiency levels, researcher decided to have the same ratio of students for each proficiency level (40:40:40). All of the students have taken the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) before entering university. The participants below MUET band 3 taking Preparatory English 1 and 2 were at elementary level, AE1 students with MUET band 3 were at intermediate level whilst AE2 students with MUET band 3 above were at advanced level.

3.2 Instrument

The instruments in this study were online questionnaire for the sake of collecting data. The questionnaire was used to measure English speaking anxiety level of students and its factors. According to Mcleod (2018), a questionnaire consists of series questions which gather information from a large group of people. Besides, the questionnaire enables the data to be collected in a quick and efficient way. In this research, there are three sections in the questionnaire.

In the first section, the questionnaire was about the background information of the participants. This questionnaire was developed by the researcher who want to gather their personal information such as their age, gender, mother tongue, MUET band score and the English courses currently taken in Unimas (refer to Appendix 1). This was mainly for their English education background in order for the reseacher to determine their proficiency levels.

The second part of the questionnaire was Foreign Langauge Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS), developed by Huang (2004) was adapted in order in order to achieve the objectives of this study: (1) measure the English speaking anxiety levels and (2) determine the factors of speaking anxiety among tertiary students based on three

subscales which are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The participants were required to rate the statements based on 5-point Likert scale accordingly from Strongly Disagree (scale point 1) until Strongly Agree (scale point 5).

The adapted scale included 28 items (refer to Appendix 2), of which 11 items are related to communication apprehension (item number 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 24, 25, 28), 10 items for fear of negative evaluation (item number 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 22, 23) and test anxiety has 7 items (item number 5, 12, 16, 19, 21, 26, 27). In the original scale, some items were not related to speaking anxiety therefore they were partly changed to get more data on the sources of anxiety in speaking. Besides, some items were negatively worded and therefore were reversed scored to ensure those negative items are directly related to the anxiety in speaking.

The last section of the questionnaire related to the strategies of overcoming the anxiety (refer to Appendix 3) developed by Hauck and Hurd (2005). There are eleven strategies of coping language anxiety (*using positive self-talk, encourage own self actively take risks in language learning, imagine friendly informal chat when speaking in front of others, tell own self speaking won't take long, give own self a reward, be aware of physical signs of stress, writing down feelings in a day, share worries with other students, let tutor know I am anxious, use relaxation techniques*), and the participants were asked to label each statement of anxiety coping strategies by using Likert Scale. Number 1 represented inapplicable, 2 indicated least applicable, 3 for no comment, 4 referred to applicable and lastly 5 was most applicable.

3.3 Data collection procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to the selected participants by using an online survey app which is Google Forms. At the beginning, the researcher asked the permissions from the English lecturers before collecting the data from the students. Although the use of online questionnaire enabled easy accessibility of data, the researcher also met the students face-to-face in the classrooms. This ensure participants to know the purpose of the research and understand the contents in the questionnaire given. To collect the data in a short time, a QR code was created so that all the selected students were able to access the questionnaire using their own electronic gadget. First, using QR code generator via online, researcher inserted the link of the questionnaire and code will be generated automatically on the screen. After that, students could utilize UnimasNow, which is basically an app for the Unimas students for the record of their class attendance. Other than UnimasNow, other scanner apps were also able to access the questionnaire prepared. The participants were only allowed to choose single answer based on the 5 scales.



Figure 1: Online questionnaire in Google Form

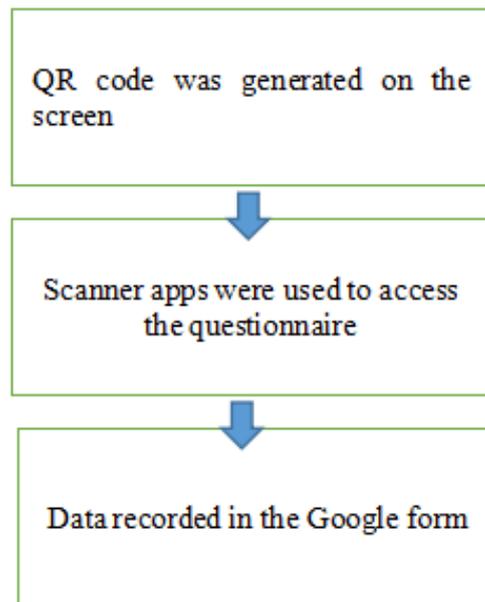


Figure 2: Data collection procedures

3.4 Data analysis procedure

After the data collection from the language anxiety, all the responses were computed in the Microsoft Excel and Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS) Software was used to do statistics analysis later.

There were 139 Malaysian undergraduates who registered English courses were involved in this study (39 students from preparatory 1&2, 50 students from AE1 and 50 students from AE2). However, there were 12 students with the incomplete questionnaire considered as unqualified participants. They had such criteria where they did not take MUET exam and their native language are English. Therefore, those unqualified participants were eliminated. To ensure the same ratio of students from each class, extra 7 students from AE2 class were not calculated in this study. (40 completed questionnaires collected from Preparatory 1&2, AE1 and AE2 classes respectively).

All the data was then analyzed in the form of tables. To achieve objective 1 which is to determine the English speaking anxiety level among tertiary students of different proficiency levels, the students' anxiety level based on the total scores of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale developed by Huang (2004) were categorized into three anxiety levels. High anxious participants have a total scores of 28-69, participants with moderate anxiety level scored between 70 and 97 whereas high anxious participants scored between 98 and 140 (Miskam & Saldalvi, 2018). The data were in frequency and percentage to compare the level of speaking anxiety between three different groups of participants (elementary, intermediate and advanced).

English proficiency level	Anxiety level	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	Low		
	Moderate		
	High		
Intermediate	Low		
	Moderate		
	High		
Advanced	Low		
	Moderate		
	High		

Table 1: Level of English speaking anxiety among tertiary students

For the second objective which is to examine the relationship between students' speaking anxiety level and their language proficiency level, the data were calculated in terms of mean and standard deviations. Pearson correlation coefficient was carried out to examine the relationship between students' speaking anxiety level and their language proficiency. The value of mean represented their anxiety level. Thus, the highest anxiety level had the highest mean value.

English proficiency levels	Mean	Standard Deviation
Elementary		
Intermediate		
Advanced		

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for English proficiency levels

To achieve the third objective which is identify the main factors of English speaking anxiety, data from the highly and moderately anxious participants were only chosen. Since non significant anxiety generated among low anxious students, their responses are not calculated in this part. The responses from high and moderate anxiety level of participants were calculated in mean and percentage. Each item in the FLSAS questionnaire was analyzed to determine the major sources of anxiety in speaking. Thus, item no with the highest median and percentage indicated the dominant factors of anxiety perceived by most of the participants.

Moderately anxious			Highly anxious		
Item No	Median	%	Item No	Median	%
1					
2					
3					

Table 3: Identification of sources of English speaking anxiety among university students

Last objective of the study is to identify the coping strategies used by the students in reducing their speaking anxiety. Data collected were then calculated in frequency and percentage. The highest frequency of most applicable strategies and the most

frequently used strategies were only calculated because the researcher want to find out the most preferred strategies chosen by the participants.

Strategies	Most applicable		Applicable		Total (Most applicable + applicable)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Using positive talk						
Encourage own self actively to take risks in language learning						
Imagine that it is a friendly informal chat when speaking in front of others						

Table 4: Examples of the strategies used to deal with English speaking anxiety

3.5 Limitations of study

There are several limitations in the study. Firstly, the research only took the tertiary students from Unimas. Besides, researcher only looked for the students who have registered Preparatory English 1 and 2, AE1 and AE2 offered in this university. Other English courses such as English Professional Communication and English Occupational Purpose didn't take into account. This study also suggested that other variables such as grades, gender, cultural and occupational background could be taken

into consideration. This was to ensure the results concerning the level and sources of language anxiety level can be generalized to other settings.

Secondly, questionnaire items were quite limited for the students to express their perspectives. The items in the questionnaire were generally fixed thus, it is difficult to obtain more detailed information. According to Dörnyei (2007), questionnaire is an useful instrument to collect data from a large number of groups but it does not provide the participants with large perspectives. Therefore, there was no additional details to be added in by the respondents.

Lastly, the study was only conducted in a Malaysian Public University. Therefore, the obtained results might be different if the study was conducted in different learning environment. The results of the language speaking anxiety level might also be different when they are taught by different lecturers.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Demographic Information

A total number of 120 public university students were participated in the study. They are 86 female participants and 34 male participants from Unimas. Their age ranged between 18 and 25 years old. They were selected with the criteria that have been decided beforehand by the researcher. All of them are non English native speakers who are currently taking Preparatory English 1 or 2, AE1 and AE2 in the first and second year. These courses were only taken for two hours per week. To analyze the differences between the speaking anxiety and proficiency levels, three different groups were classified in a same ratio which is 40 students for each group. Regarding their mother tongue, 74% of the participants speak Malay, 17% of them speak Mandarin, 25% of them speak other language and only 4% speak Tamil as their first language. Moreover, out of 120 participants, 47 of them watched English movie a few time in a month, 44 of them more time one time for a week, 14 of them once in a month, 13 of them once in a week and 2 of them never watched English movie.

4.1 English speaking anxiety level

The first objective of the present study was determine the English speaking anxiety level among tertiary students of different proficiency levels. In accordance with the objective 1, the responses received were analyzed regarding the level of anxiety as perceived by the respondents in English learning environment. The students' level of

anxiety in their current language learning process was categorized into low, moderate and high level.

English proficiency level	Anxiety level	Frequency	Percentage
Elementary	Low	1	2.5
	Moderate	30	75
	High	9	22.5
Intermediate	Low	5	12.5
	Moderate	24	60
	High	11	27.5
Advanced	Low	7	17.5
	Moderate	28	70
	High	5	12.5

Table 1: Level of English speaking anxiety among tertiary students

Table 1 showed the descriptive statistics for the FLSAS scores of the low, moderate and high anxious participants. The participants were divided into different anxiety levels according to the total scale of FLSAS obtained from the questionnaire given. In this scale, the participants who scored between 28 - 69 were considered as low anxious, those who scored between 70 - 97 were considered to be moderately anxious and participants with the score of 98 - 140 were considered to be highly anxious. Overall, most of the students which is total 82 out of 120 fall into the moderate anxious level. As seen from the table above, 30 participants at elementary level (75%), 24 participants at intermediate level (60%) and 28 participants at advanced level (70%) are belong to moderately anxious group. The results indicated that most of the students from different proficiency levels perceived a moderate level of anxiety. On the other hand, minority students which are the beginners and intermediate learners experienced low level of anxiety. Only 1 participant (2.5%) from the beginner level and 5 participants

(12.5%) from the intermediate level are considered to be low-anxiety students. Besides, the least number of participants which are 5 students in advanced group are perceived high degree of anxiety.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the largest number of students were in the medium-anxiety range. Among the 120 participants, 68 of the them experienced high level of anxiety while only 13 of them experienced low level of anxiety while speaking English in their lessons.

4.2 Relationship between English proficiency levels and speaking anxiety

The second objective examined the relationship between students' speaking anxiety and their language proficiency level. In accordance with the results of the MUET, the participants were divided into three proficiency levels: elementary, intermediate and advanced. The students who take the preparatory 1 and 2 English are at elementary level, those who take AE1 are considered at intermediate level and those who take AE2 are considered at advanced level.

English proficiency levels	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Elementary	86.38	85.50	11.71
Intermediate	86.38	87.00	14.25
Advanced	84.13	85.50	13.08

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for English proficiency levels.

From the table above, the mean score of each proficiency level appear to be almost the same. The results suggest that English speaking anxiety level does not vary significantly by the proficiency level. Elementary and intermediate students share the same findings, which showed the same mean scores, 86.38 whereas advanced students are 84.13. It was found that overall level of English speaking was moderate.

A Pearson bivariate correlation run with total FLSAS score and English proficiency level was conducted to prove the data. The results highlight a non-significant negative correlation between anxiety level and English proficiency level, $r = -.071$, $p > .441$. This is because advanced students showed lower anxiety level compared to elementary and intermediate students. The results indicated that the higher the English proficiency level, the lower the anxiety level.

It can concluded that advanced students revealed the lowest anxiety level compared to the elementary and intermediate students with higher anxiety level.

4.3 Main factors of English speaking anxiety

In order to identify the main factors of English speaking anxiety among tertiary students of different English proficiency levels, items in FLSAS were adapted from the questionnaire which was developed by Huang (2002). The adapted FLSAS scale included 28 item which are categorized into three type of anxiety factors (refer to Appendix 2). That are, 11 items are related to communication apprehension (Item number 1, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 24, 25, 28), 10 items for fear of negative evaluation (Item number 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 13, 15, 18, 22, 23) and test anxiety has 7 items (Item number 5, 12, 16, 19, 21, 26, 27). To find out the major factors of English speaking anxiety, each item in the FLSAS was analyzed and calculated based on the 5-point Likert Scale

ranging (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- undecided, 4- agree 5- strongly agree). Nevertheless, some items were negatively worded and therefore were reversed scored to ensure the statement directly toward the speaking anxiety. Total of the scores for each item were later analyzed using median and percentage.

Moderately anxious			Highly anxious		
Item No	Median	%	Item No	Median	%
13	4.0	59.7	14	5.0	92
14	4.0	57.3	11	4.0	88
20	4.0	54.9	12	5.0	84
21	4.0	53.6	1	4.0	76
			28	4.0	76
			6	4.0	72
			8	4.0	72
			19	4.0	72
			27	4.0	72
			13	4.0	68
			2	4.0	64
			10	4.0	60
			22	4.0	60
			24	4.0	60
			25	4.0	60

Table 3: Median scores and the percentages of the responses among moderately and high anxious students.

Since responses from students with low anxiety level were not relevant to this research objective, therefore their responses were not analyzed. The questionnaire items

with the median scores of 4.00 or above, indicating the agreement of participants to those statements (*agree or strongly agree*). In addition to median scores, the frequency percentage responses of the moderate and high anxiety levels were also sorted in a descending order where the responses are listed from the highest to lowest.

From the table 3 above, the moderately anxious students considered four of the questionnaire items as sources of anxiety, with the median scores of 4.00 (item 13- *speaking in a bigger classes*; item 14- *unable to express thoughts*; item 20- *the boredom of discussion topic*; item 21- *oral presentation in class*). On the other hand, the highly anxious students considered more questionnaire items as sources of anxiety. Fifteen of the questionnaire items for the highly anxious students have the median scores of 4.00 or above (item 14- *unable to express their thoughts*; item 11- *low English proficiency than others*; item 12- *oral presentation in English class*; item 1- *speaking English in class*; item 28- *speaking English although well prepared*; item 6- *giving wrong answers*; item 8- *speaking in front of others*; item 19- *volunteer answers in class*; item 27- *oral presentation*, item 13- *speak English in a bigger classes* , item 2- *speaking English in front of friends*, item 10- *take part in group discussion*; item 22- *corrections from other students*, item 24- *going to English conversation*; item 25- *answering questions in English*).

Besides the median scores, frequency of the responses for each items were also calculated. As seen from the table above, the median scores appeared almost to be the same. However, the percentage of responses are much different. Both median scores and frequency of the responses were then analyzed in order to identify the major speaking anxiety perceived by students. For the moderately anxious students, the major factor is fear of evaluation which is identified by item 13 (*speaking in a bigger class*). 59.7% of

the students are afraid of being judged by their friends, thus they are more comfortable if they learn English in a less crowded class. Another situation that the moderately anxious students found to be anxious is the communication apprehension which is identified by item 14 (*unable to express their thoughts*) and 20 (*the boredom of discussion topic*). 57.3% of the students feel anxious when they cannot speak English fluently and 54.9% of the students afraid to speak when they are assigned to present their unfamiliar topic. The final factor for the moderately anxious students is the test anxiety, which is stated in item 21 regarding the oral presentation. Compared to other two factors, the percentage of responses for test anxiety is much lower, which is 53.6%.

For the highly anxious students, the major cause of anxiety is revealed by the results of item 14, which is about communication apprehension. This findings is revealed by 92% of the students who are anxious when they cannot express themselves. The second ranked item is revealed by the result of the responses to item 11, which is also related to the communication apprehension. 88% of the students are agree and strongly agree that they are nervous about speaking in oral activities. In addition to that, the responses to item 1 confirm that high anxious students who suffer English speaking anxiety, which is related to another 3 responses: item 8 (*feeling embarrassed when speaking in front of the class*), item 24 (*scared of conversation class*) and item 25 (*stumbling when answering in English*). The second factor, test anxiety is also found to be sources of anxiety. 84% of the students can relate to the item 12, which is oral tests in the class. Besides, item 19 and 27 have the similar results where 72% of the students fear of tests. For the last factor, which is fear of negative evaluation has the least percentage of responses. For instance, only 60% of the students agree or strongly agree with the item 10 (*feeling anxious when involving in a group discussion*) and item 22

(*avoid negative evaluation from their friends*). Other than that, the responses regarding fear of giving a wrong answer and avoid making mistakes in front of their friends are stated in the items 2, 6, 13, and 28.

In conclusion, the dominant contributory factor for moderately anxious students is fear of evaluation whereas communication apprehension is the major cause for highly anxious students.

4.4 English speaking coping anxiety

The final objective of the study was identify the strategies used by the students in reducing their speaking anxiety. To answer the questions, the two alternatives of ‘most applicable’ and ‘applicable’ were combined to indicate the percentage of students who are preferred to each strategy. Then the total scores of each strategy is computed and compared.

Strategies	Most applicable		Applicable		Total (Most applicable + applicable)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
S1	30	25	47	39.2	77	64.2
S2	40	33.3	48	40.0	88	73.3
S3	25	20.8	48	40.0	73	60.8
S4	22	18.3	39	32.5	61	50.8
S5	36	30.0	40	33.3	76	63.3
S6	15	12.5	42	35.0	57	47.5
S7	19	15.8	19	15.8	38	31.6
S8	21	17.5	32	26.7	53	44.2
S9	14	11.7	19	15.8	33	27.5

S10	42	35	36	30.0	78	65
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Table 4: Frequency and percentage of each strategy.

From the table above, the data revealed that S2 is the most frequently strategy used in coping speaking anxiety. There were, 73.3% of the participants (88 out of 120) encourage themselves to take risk in language learning. S10 (*relaxation techniques*) was ranked as the second highest frequently strategy used by the participants (65%), with a total of 78 responses which had nearer results to S1 (*positive self-talk*), S5 (*giving themselves a reward*) and S3 (*imagine a informal chat*) with a total of 77, 76 and 73 responses respectively. The third highest frequently used strategy is recorded to be among S4. 50.8% of the students tell themselves speaking won't take long. S9 (*let tutor know their anxious*) indicated the least frequently used in coping anxiety which was 27.5% or 33 out of 120.

Among 10 strategies, the most applicable strategy was the S10 (relaxation techniques), which indicated the highest result (42%) compared to other strategies. In contrary, S9 (*let tutor know their nervousness*) has the lowest result, which was only (11.7%). Next, S2 and S3 indicated the highest percentage of applicable strategies. That are, 40% of the participants encourage themselves to take risk in language learning as well as imagine themselves in a informal setting. On the other hand, strategies that have the least percentage were S7 (*writing down their feelings in a day*) and S9 (*let tutor know their nervousness*), with the same total of 19 responses (15.8%).

A higher number of the students encourage themselves to take risk in language learning (S2) and they also prefer relaxation technique (S10) as the most applicable strategy of reducing anxiety.

4.5 Discussions

The responses of 120 participants in Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) questionnaire revealed that overall students had a moderate level of anxiety in English Language classroom. This results was in line with recent studies conducted with Malaysian EFL learners such as Chin, Ting and Yeo (2016) and Miskam and Saidalvi (2018). Chin, Ting and Yeo (2016) who investigated anxiety level among 149 students in a Malaysian Public University. Based on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), majority of participants perceive themselves as having moderate level of anxiety. Miskam and Saidalvi (2018) examined English speaking anxiety among undergraduates, and the result of percentage indicated the highest percentage of participants who are at the moderate level of anxiety. On the other hand, a study of foreign language speaking anxiety conducted in a Taiwanese context by Huang (2004), who found a higher level of speaking anxiety among the English learners. There are possible reasons that cause students' speaking anxiety since studies were conducted in different countries and settings. Thus, the study of speaking anxiety could be varied, depending on the context of situation as Rita and Dalila (2008) mentioned that “language anxiety is multi-dimensional where it affects students differently depending on the context of the situation (cited in Chin, Ting and Yeo, 2016). It could seem that English is the second language for Malaysian undergraduates in the study, whereas Taiwanese undergraduates learn English as their foreign language.

Regarding the relationship between the degree of anxiety and English proficiency level, the findings highlighted a non-significant negative correlation between anxiety level and English proficiency level. A study carried by Gardner, Smythe and Brunet (1977) found that proficiency level did not have any effect on the

level of participants' anxiety. In other words, there was no correlation between anxiety level and English proficiency level among French learners.

However, this study was in contrast with Llinas and Garau's (2009) finding, which conducted in Spanish context. It was found that advanced learners had higher level of anxiety compared to beginner and intermediate level learners. There was a positive correlation between anxiety level and proficiency level. One possible reason for the contradictory results on anxiety levels and proficiency levels could be due to learners' different intentions and expectations of learning a second or foreign language. With regards to their study, advanced learners in investigation were reported to require the use of Spanish to work with Spanish native speakers in their future workplace. In the context of the researcher's study, however, there was no such obligation or pressure.

The responses of moderately and highly students revealed the three factors that cause them to feel anxious. Among three factors, fear of evaluation was found as one of the major factor that generate anxiety among students with moderate level of anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation refers to fear of speaking in a bigger class, which was revealed by the present study. Therefore, moderately anxious learners scared of being judged by their friends. Contrarily, communication apprehension was the dominant factor that contributed to English speaking anxiety among high anxiety students. Miskam and Saidalvi (2018) in their study depicted that the dominant factor of English speaking anxiety among the moderate and high anxiety students is communication apprehension. This corroborates the finding by Suleimenova (2013), which found that anxiety has taken over the capability of the learners although they have ideas to say in the target language. This interferes with their performance and leads to communication apprehension. In this study, fear of evaluation is the major factor that contribute anxiety

among moderately anxious students as they are afraid of being judged by their friends. In contrast to highly anxious students, communication apprehension can be related to the learners in the Malaysian tertiary-level which is similar to the observation made in the previous studies (Chan, Ain Nadzimah & Nurkarimah, 2012). The study explains that learners start to feel anxious when they cannot express their thoughts effectively. Due to cultural factors, Asians students are typically afraid of speaking (communication apprehension) in front of other people in classroom because they want to minimize the possibility of making mistakes (Ohata, 2005; Zhao, 2007; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Liu, 2007 cited in Chin, Ting and Yeo, 2016)

When analyzed the strategies of overcoming speaking anxiety, it was found that S2 (*Actively encourage themselves to take risks in language learning*) is the most popular strategy among the students to reduce their nervousness. This present study indicated that majority of the students selected S2 as the strategy to deal with speaking anxiety. The result was almost similar to the findings by Hauck, Stella and Mirjam and Hurd (2005), where the highest percentage of students used positive coping strategies such as trying to speak even though they might make some mistakes. However, it is important to note that S10 (*relaxation technique*) was rated as the most applicable strategy whereas S2 (*Actively encourage themselves to take risks in language learning*) and S3 (*imagine themselves in an informal setting*) as the applicable strategy to deal with English speaking anxiety. There is a similarity in both studies where the students tend to employ positive strategies rather than the negative ways to reduce their anxiety. It is also supported by Tanveer (2007) who mentioned that students' confidence should be developed to make mistakes while using English. Other positive strategies such as relaxation technique, preparation and employing language learning strategies also

indicated by Kamaruddin and Abdullah (2015). Their study stated that highly anxious students would take a deep breath and trying to calm down when they started to feel anxious. They also make necessary readings or preparation and used other language learning strategies such as maximising the use of dictionaries, modelling, note taking and word referencing. This is similar to the study by Trifoni and Shahini (2011) which also mentioned that systematic preparation and employing varying learning strategies can help students become less anxious.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.0 Summary

The aim of this research is to examine second language anxiety among tertiary students of different proficiency levels in a Malaysian Public University. There are 4 objectives in this study namely: 1) determine the English speaking anxiety level 2) examine the relationship between speaking anxiety and English proficiency levels 3) identify the main factor of speaking anxiety 4) identify the coping strategies of reducing anxiety. This study employed a quantitative research design. The research data were collected through questionnaires adapted from Huang's (2004) Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS). The participants were selected based on certain criteria: 1) undergraduate students of a Malaysian public university 2) their mother tongue was not English 3) different proficiency levels: advanced, intermediate and beginner levels).

The findings concluded that English speaking anxiety was generally perceived by the participants. Based on the FLSAS scores, majority of the participants have moderate level of speaking anxiety. In conjunction to that, the dominant factor that contribute to this issue is fear of negative evaluation. As shown in the data collection, moderately anxious students prefer a small learning classroom as they are afraid of being judged by their friend. Besides, the results also showed that English proficiency levels have negative relationship with their speaking anxiety level. Therefore, students with higher proficiency level show the lower anxiety level they have experienced. In order to combat their language anxiety, a large number of the students encouraged

themselves to take risk in language learning and relaxation technique also ranked as the most applicable strategy to reduce this issue.

5.1 Implications of study

The findings of the study concluded that the level of anxiety among undergraduates English learners are generally at moderate level. They were found to be mainly anxious of negative evaluative from others. Therefore, to combat such anxiety among students with moderate level of anxiety, language instructors could give more support in reducing students' fear of evaluation. Examples of such support are to have more mini tests with weightage of evaluation spread across the tests rather than to have so much weightage placed in one major test. Besides, the learners could be positively encouraged in participation of class oral activities. Indirect praises such as nodding would motivate their students as well as alleviate the negative feeling in English learning classroom.

Since some sources (fear of oral presentation) also seem to be associated with fear of negative evaluation, some rehearsing sessions can be arranged. Students can participate in this session and lecturers could provide the written feedback to emphasize the positive aspects of the students performance to reduce anxiety. Furthermore, fun and creative ways of instruction such as language games and the employment of pop songs in lessons could be utilized to increase their interest toward English speaking sessions.

Although some learners are proficient in English language, but they are still anxious while learning second language in classroom. These can seen from the results of non significant negative relationship between the speaking anxiety and proficiency levels among the students. Therefore, instructor acts as facilitator should treat the

students fairly where they not only notice the stronger students but also the low proficiency students. In the meantime, more cooperative activities are also encouraged to be implemented in the classroom. These would avoid a competitive environment and consequently creates a positive environment for learning process.

Overall, this research has managed to fill a part of the research gap concerned with English speaking anxiety of different proficiency levels in a Malaysia context. The findings from this research would contribute to the literature with more data about relationship between language proficiency levels and students' speaking anxiety since many research have given less focus on this. Aside from that, information about anxiety coping strategies have been leaved out in the previous studies, however, this study has found the most preferred strategies applied by the learners to cope with anxiety.

Finally, it is recommended for future reseachers to focus on several aspects not covered in this study. Such examples are language anxiety in term of occupational, gender or cultural difference. Not only that, anxiety degree for other three language skills which are writing, listening and reading could also take into consideration.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, several suggestions can be made for the further studies. First, the present study was conducted on a total of 120 students who are purposely selected by the researcher. The participants in this study were only registered preparatory English, AE1 and AE2. Other English communicative courses such as English Professional Communication and English Occupational Professional were not considered in this study. It may not be practical to generalize the findings to the whole

population of the undergraduates in Unimas. Thus, this study could be replicated with a large number of students from other different English courses.

Furthermore, the students participating in this study were only undergraduate in particular public university. The variable undergraduate and other variables such as grades, occupational and cultural background do not seem to be on the same. These variables will result in different set of findings because the sources of language anxiety vary to learning environment and their experiences of speaking English.

Besides, the instrument of this study is a questionnaire. The items were listed in the shortest way and this unable for the participants to express their perspectives on other external sources of anxiety as well as the anxiety coping strategies. Thus, it suggests that further studies could conduct a qualitative method research such as interview or observation in order to get more analysis in this study.

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APPENDIX 1

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS)

Personal Information:

1) Name:

2) Age:

3) Gender:

4) Mother tongue:

5) Year of study:

6) Degree program:

7) Muet band score:

8) English course registered for this semester:

Prep 1 or prep 2	
AE1	
AE2	

APPENDIX 2

Part II: The following statements are about English language speaking anxiety. There is no wrong or right answer. Please read the statements carefully and select (√) the choice corresponding to the degree of your agreement or disagreement.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Bahagian II: Pernyataan berikut menjelaskan tentang keresahan bercakap Bahasa Inggeris. Tak ada jawapan yang salah atau betul. Sila baca dengan teliti dan pilih (√) jawapan yang sesuai berdasarkan tahap persetujuan atau tidak.

1 = Sangat tidak setuju, 2 = Tidak setuju, 3 = Tidak pasti, 4 = Setuju, 5 = Sangat setuju

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel anxious while speaking English in class.(+) <i>Saya berasa cemas semasa bertutur Bahasa Inggeris dalam kelas.</i>					
2	I feel less nervous about speaking in English in front of others when I know them. <i>Saya kurang gementar apabila bertutur Bahasa Inggeris di depan orang yang dikenali.</i>					
3	I feel very relaxed about speaking in English class when I study the planned contents before the class. <i>Saya berasa sangat tenang untuk bertutur Bahasa Inggeris sekiranya ada persediaan sebelum kelas.</i>					

4	<p>I am anxious in class when I am the only person answering the question asked by my lecturer in English class.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa cemas apabila hanya saya sahaja yang menjawab soalan yang diberi oleh pensyarah dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris.</i></p>					
5	<p>In English class, I start to panic when I know I will be graded in oral activities.</p> <p><i>Dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris, saya mula panik apabila mengetahui bahawa saya akan dinilai dalam aktiviti lisan.</i></p>					
6	<p>I fear giving a wrong answer while answering questions in English class.</p> <p><i>Saya takut memberi jawapan yang salah semasa dipersoalkan dalam kelas Inggeris.</i></p>					
7	<p>I enjoy English class when I know that we are going to discuss in English.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa seronok apabila mengetahui bahawa terdapat sesi perbincangan dalam kelas Inggeris.</i></p>					
8	<p>I feel very embarrassed when I speak in English at the front of the class.</p> <p><i>Saya sangat malu untuk bercakap Inggeris di depan kelas.</i></p>					

9	<p>Because of being corrected by my lecturer, I am afraid of going to the speaking class.</p> <p><i>Oleh sebab pensyarah memperbetulkan kesalahan penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris saya, saya takut pergi ke kelas.</i></p>					
10	<p>I feel nervous when I take part in a group discussion in class.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa gugup apabila terlibat dalam sesi perbincangan.</i></p>					
11	<p>If I think my classmates speak English better than me, I am nervous about speaking in oral activities.</p> <p><i>Jika saya fikir kawan-kawan fasih berbahasa Bahasa Inggeris berbanding dengan saya, saya berasa gementar untuk bercakap.</i></p>					
12	<p>I worry about the oral presentation in English class.</p> <p><i>Saya bimbang tentang aktiviti pembentangan dalam kelas.</i></p>					
13	<p>I would feel better about speaking in English if the class were smaller.</p> <p><i>Saya lebih selesa untuk berbahasa Inggeris dalam kelas yang kecil.</i></p>					

14	<p>I get anxious when I cannot express my thoughts effectively while speaking English.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa bimbang apabila saya tidak dapat menggunakan Bahasa Inggeris untuk menyampaikan idea secara efektif.</i></p>					
15	<p>I am more willing to speak in English class when I know the scheduled oral activities.</p> <p><i>Saya lebih ingin dan bersedia berbahasa Inggeris apabila saya diberitahu lebih awal tentang aktiviti lisan yang telah dijadualkan.</i></p>					
16	<p>I feel relaxed in pair-work activities.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa relax dalam aktiviti berkumpulan.</i></p>					
17	<p>I like going to class when I know that oral tasks are going to be performed.</p> <p><i>Saya suka pergi ke kelas jika ada tugas lisan yang akan dijalankan.</i></p>					
18	<p>I know that everyone makes mistakes while speaking in English, so I am not afraid of being laughed at by others.</p> <p><i>Saya mengetahui semua orang membuat kesalahan semasa bercakap Inggeris, oleh itu saya tidak takut diketawakan oleh orang lain.</i></p>					

19	<p>I like to volunteer answers in English class.</p> <p><i>Saya suka menjawab soalan secara sukarela semasa di dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris.</i></p>					
20	<p>I am more willing to get involved in class when the topics are interesting.</p> <p><i>Saya lebih suka terlibat dalam aktiviti kelas apabila topik tersebut menarik.</i></p>					
21	<p>I don't feel tense in oral presentation if I get more practice speaking in class.</p> <p><i>Saya tidak risau dengan pembentangan lisan jika saya mendapat banyak latihan pertuturan Bahasa Inggeris dalam kelas.</i></p>					
22	<p>I feel uncomfortable when my lecturer asks other students to correct my oral practice in class.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa tidak selesa apabila pensyarah meminta pelajar lain untuk membetulkan saya dalam kelas.</i></p>					
23	<p>I do not feel pressure when my lecturer corrects my oral mistakes in class.</p> <p><i>Saya tidak berasa tertekan apabila pensyarah saya membetulkan kesilapan penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris dalam kelas.</i></p>					

24	<p>Going to English conversation class makes me more nervous than going to other classes.</p> <p><i>Saya lebih takut pergi ke kelas lisan Bahasa Inggris berbanding dengan kelas subjek lain.</i></p>					
25	<p>I stumble when I answer questions in English.</p> <p><i>Saya gugup apabila menjawab dalam Bahasa Inggris.</i></p>					
26	<p>I feel nervous in group work activities.</p> <p><i>Saya berasa gugup dalam aktiviti berkumpulan.</i></p>					
27	<p>During an oral presentation, I do not feel nervous.</p> <p><i>Semasa pembentangan, saya tidak berasa gementar.</i></p>					
28	<p>Even if I am well prepared for the planned contents, I feel anxious about speaking English.</p> <p><i>Walaupun saya sudah ada persediaan berkenaan isi atau kandungan, saya masih berasa gementar tentang bertutur dalam Bahasa Inggris.</i></p>					

APPENDIX 3

Part III: Strategies of coping English language speaking anxiety

The following statements are about the strategies of overcoming speaking anxiety which you think that would work on you. There is no wrong or right answer. Please read the statements carefully and select (✓) the choice according to the scales below:

1 = Inapplicable, 2 = Least applicable, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Applicable, 5 = Most applicable

Bahagian III: Kaedah untuk mengatasi masalah keresahan semasa berbahasa Inggeris. Pernyataan berikut merupakan strategik yang kamu fikir ia adalah efektif. Tiada jawapan yang betul atau salah. Sila baca dengan teliti dan pilih jawapan anda berdasarkan skala berikut:

1 = Tidak sesuai, 2 = Kurang sesuai, 3 = Tidak pasti, 4 = Sesuai, 5 = Paling Sesuai

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Using positive self-talk. <i>Menggunakan percakapan atau motivasi sendiri yang positif.</i>					
2	Encourage own self actively to take risks in language learning, such as trying to speak even though make some mistakes. <i>Menggalakkan diri sendiri supaya aktif melibatkan diri dan mengambil risiko dalam pembelajaran bahasa seperti cuba bertutur walaupun ada kesilapan bahasa.</i>					
3	Imagine that it is a friendly informal chat when speaking in front of others. <i>Apabila bercakap di depan orang lain, bayangkan situasi tersebut adalah mesra dan tidak formal.</i>					
4	Tell own self speaking won't take long. <i>Cakap dengan sendiri bahawa pertuturan tersebut tidak akan</i>					

	<i>mengambil masa yang lama.</i>					
5	Give own self a reward or treat when doing well. <i>Memberi hadiah kepada sendiri apabila berjaya melakukan tugas dengan baik.</i>					
6	Be aware of physical signs of stress that might affect language learning. <i>Memberi perhatian terhadap apa-apa tanda stres yang mungkin mempengaruhi pembelajaran bahasa.</i>					
7	Writing down feelings in a day or notebook. <i>Tulis emosi harian dalam buku nota.</i>					
8	Share worries with other students. <i>Berkongsi masalah atau kebimbangan dengan pelajar lain.</i>					
9	Let tutor know that i am anxious. <i>Beritahu kepada pensyarah tentang kebimbangan sendiri.</i>					
10	Use relaxation techniques. <i>Guna teknik relaksasi.</i>					