

The Effects of Language Speaking Anxiety in Second Language Acquisition

by

Hao Nguyen

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Philip V. Allingham, Faculty Supervisor
Faculty of Education
Vancouver Island University

David Paterson, Dean
Faculty of Education
Vancouver Island University

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that lead to the cause of language speaking anxiety. English is a compulsory subject for students from Grade 3 to 12 in Vietnam's public schools. However, even after such a long period of learning, most university students are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. The study investigated factors that lead to their anxieties about speaking English. The secondary goal was to discover methods that can help mitigate the effect of speaking anxiety. The data collection process of this research was conducted in Ho Chi Minh City. The sample population of the study was consisting of university professors and students from different post-secondary institutions. The total number of participants of the survey was 26 students. For the interview, there were 3 students and 2 teachers participated.

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Chapter 1: Problem to be Investigated

The Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the existing problems regarding the spoken English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is now a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnamese public schools, even after such a long period of learning, most university students in Vietnam still feel incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. According to Nguyen (2013), students between 16 to 18 years of age who have studied English for approximately 900 hours at an upper-secondary level still struggled to communicate in oral English effectively. Teaching and learning English in Vietnam are often exam-oriented, and still tend to focus on such matters as vocabulary acquisition, correct grammar, and idiomatic translation rather than effective communication (as cited in Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015, p. 44). The current Vietnamese English curriculum focusses only on teaching student's vocabulary and grammar. It does not place much emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills, even though these are very important for communication. These linguistic skills, moreover, are crucial in The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which foreign universities use as part of their admission process for international students, particularly students from Asia. Inevitably, then, Vietnamese students often find themselves losing confidence when they try to communicate with foreigners via spoken English.

English as a language of education and commerce was first brought to South East Asia through colonization by the British (Stroupe & Kimura, 2015, p. 5). However, in recent decades the main spread of English has been through the forces of globalization. Economic activities such as tourism, international trade, and international education have pushed the demand for learning and teaching English in the region (Ao & Low, 2018, p. 132). In 2015, the ASEAN Economic

Community (AEC) was created with the aim of pushing economic reform and collaboration between South East Asian countries. All members of AEC have agreed to choose English as the main language of communication within this international community (Dudzik & Nguyen, 2015, p. 41). In 2018, an agreement was made on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) with 12 countries from across Asia and the Americas. “The aim of this trade agreement is to create a fully integrated economic area and establish consistent rules for global investment” (Mcbride & Chatzky, 2019). Once again, English plays a key role in inter-continental communication among the countries of the AEC.

As a member of ASEAN, Vietnam has recognized the importance of English in developing its economy. In Vietnam, “the history of the English language and English education has a direct bearing on politics, economy, and society” (Wright, 2002, as cited in Nguyen, 2017, p. 33). The economic reform known as *Doi Moi*¹ in 1986 had re-established the English teaching curriculum in Vietnam. During and immediately after the Vietnam War, English was deemed the language of the enemy; hence, it was banned from public schools (Ao & Low, 2018, p. 140). Currently, however, English is a compulsory subject for all Vietnamese students from elementary school to university. Recently, the government has proposed the *2020 Project*, in which all school-leavers are expected to have attained a minimum level of B2 in English under series of ambitious education reforms. Project 2020 will affect 20 million students and 85% of the 450 million USD² budget will be spent on teacher training, according to the education ministry (Parks, 2011).

¹ Doi moi: To renovate, renew

² USD: United States Dollar

Unfortunately, the lack of English proficiency among Vietnamese students is still causing many problems, one of which is the lack of confidence when a student is trying to communicate orally in English. Students who have graduated from university in Vietnam usually struggle to communicate with foreigners even in short and simple conversations. This situation can best be described as a language apprehension. According to Spielberger (1983), language apprehension is the hesitating behaviour related to the feeling of tension, anxiety, nervousness, and worry among subjects (as cited in Tu, 2015, p. 1). Therefore, students with these feelings will not be able to learn English effectively. The term ‘language apprehension’ usually addresses the fear of communicating orally in another language (Gardner, 1989, as cited in Tu, 2015, p. 16). This study hopes to develop a deeper understanding of factors that lead to the hesitation among Vietnamese university students when attempting to communicate orally in English.

Justification of the Study

Individual benefits of learning English. In a globalized economy, English has become the international language (Le, 2017). The reason for its popularity in this era is that it has become the language of business; however, another important reason is that it grants access to popular American cultures such as movies, music, and fast-food chains such as McDonald’s which has quickly spread throughout the world. This popular culture has its own language: American English. According to Le (2017), the English language “has become a global language in a variety of fields such as technology, business, medicine, literature, etc.” (p. 140). Preparing students with the necessary language skills in English is necessary for a nation’s participation in a globalized economy. English plays a crucial role along with Vietnam’s integration with the international community such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). Therefore, learning to communicate in English would

bring several benefits to Vietnamese students. From the observations of the author of the present study, the country is expecting a high number of foreign workers immigrating in the next five years. Therefore, it is imperative for the local workforce to improve its oral English and to be able to communicate effectively with these newcomers in the language of commerce: English.

Learning English as a second language also helps students in socializing. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) have explained that the term “language socialization” refers to a two-way relationship between language and socialization. Researchers propose that either one may use language to socialize or that one socializes in order to use language (as cited in Şen, Kuleli, Uğurlu & Öztürk, 2014, p. 875). With the trend of globalization, it is essential for people around the world to be able to socialize with each other. Studying English as a second language will prepare Vietnamese students with the social skills necessary to interact with people from around the world.

Economical aids and globalization. English plays a key role in the process of globalization that is currently driving economic growth in developing countries such as Vietnam and other developing countries in South East Asia. In recent decades, the dynamic changes occurring in Asia generally and the South East Asia region in particular have been well documented. The region has experienced rapid economic growth, sweeping political changes, and numerous educational challenges. To unite all countries in the region under a common economic and educational platform, “The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established with the goals of furthering economic development, providing a forum for collaboration and cooperation, maintaining stability, and providing assistance in the region.” The community had chosen English as the official language for communication between members (Stroupe & Kimura, 2015, p. 2). And although the contexts of the ASEAN Member States are varied, programs in the region have been established with the aim of developing the English language capacity of

government officials, teacher-trainers, teachers, and students (Stroupe & Kimura, 2015). English is seen as an essential tool for integration, along with other ASEAN languages. Besides the focus on the teaching and learning of the local languages of each member state, English has been chosen as the language of administration for ASEAN (ASEAN Secretariat, 2008). English is often the chosen language that people use to communicate among ASEAN countries, even though they are not native speakers.

ASEAN governments had acknowledged the importance of English in spurring economic growth. They have actively encouraged university students to learn English. Nunan (2003) pointed out that “students also recognize this reality and often view English proficiency as a means to gain economic and social advancement. “Proficiency in English represents wealth, power, and opportunity” (as cited in Stroupe & Kimura, 2015, p. 5). The educational systems in ASEAN countries are striving to adapt to this paradigm shift that has elevated English as a subject for formal examination as well as a basic professional skill for successful communication (Choomthong 2014, as cited in Stroupe & Kimura, 2015, p. 7). The ASEAN community has issued many policies with the aim of improving English proficiency for the population:

Improving the English language proficiency of government officials, business professionals, teacher trainers, teachers, and local students, has taken on new importance. As a result, English language proficiency and the ability to utilize English to develop and make use of technical, business, and negotiation skills are areas in which capacity is being enhanced for the successful implementation of the AEC. (Barbin & Nicholls, p. 21)

Effective English language education is crucial in creating a sense of ASEAN identity and community and increasing knowledge about what regional integration involves.

Language speaking anxiety. As a member of ASEAN, Vietnam has big plans to develop a bilingual workforce in the near future. However, many Vietnamese students still having problems with their English communication skills, especially speaking and listening. They usually lose their confidence whenever they try to communicate orally with foreigners. Gardner (1989) found that communication apprehension is the fear of socializing in a language that is not the mother tongue of the speaker (as cited in Tu, 2015, p. 3). Students will tend to lose their interest in learning a second language if they experience such apprehension in attempting to communicate. From their research (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986) found that “anxious students may avoid studying and try to skip class entirely in an effort to alleviate their anxiety and frustration” (as cited in Tu, 2015, p. 70). Vietnamese foreign-language curriculum has experienced many changes through the 2020 project. However, it seems that there are many existing problems that prevent students from achieving the English proficiency that they want.

Research Question and Hypothesis

The research question for this study is “Which are psychological factors influence students’ confidence when communicating in English as reported by university English teachers and students in Vietnam?”

The hypothesis is that most Vietnamese students see English only as a subject rather than as an international language for people to communicate around the world. Also, public schools and universities in Vietnam do not support cross-language studies. Therefore, Vietnamese remains the main language of communication between students and teachers, and the principal language of instruction, K-12. This mindset prevents students from actively engaging in learning English, as they just want to bypass language exams.

Definition of Terms

'Language speaking anxiety' is the feeling of anxiety that students experience as they try to learn a new language. Students often lose their confidence and are unable to communicate orally to foreigners using a different language.

'Globalization' is the process of interaction and integration among people, nations, and governments worldwide. Usually, globalization is deemed as a business-related activity that combines local and international economies.

Brief Overview of the Study

The main research goal of the present study was to identify factors that lead to the cause of language speaking anxiety. English is a compulsory subject for students from Grade 3 to 12 in Vietnam's public schools. However, even after such a long period of learning, most university students are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. The study investigated factors that lead to their anxieties about speaking English. The secondary goal was to discover methods that can help mitigate the effect of speaking anxiety. The data collection process of this research was conducted in Ho Chi Minh City. The sample population of the study was consisting of university professors and students from different post-secondary institutions. The total number of participants of the survey was 26 students. For the interview, there were 3 students and 2 teachers participated.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter, the main focus was on exploring and analysing the theoretical information that was gathered from different sources. The literature or secondary data were taken from previous studies, journals, books, and research papers, including published conference papers.

Factors That Causes Language Speaking Anxiety.

Chen (2015) conducted research on the effects of language apprehension on communication skills of English as Second Language (ESL) students at Marshall University, West Virginia, USA. The purpose of Chen's research was to discover the psychological factors that affect ESL students' willingness to communicate orally as they acquired a second language. Chen concluded that the loss of confidence when speaking in a foreign language could be described as "language anxiety" (p. 13). Chen also investigated the connection between students' speaking skills and their ability to do presentations in English. Chen found that, for Asian students, there were five factors that caused speaking-anxiety that affected their speaking performance: (i) speech anxiety, (ii) the fear of negative evaluation, (iii) the fear of failing the class, (iv) negative attitudes, and (v) a degree of discomfort when conversing with native speakers of English. Chen found that students who had speaking anxiety reported that they were afraid of speaking English because it was not their first language. Chen found that students lost their confidence because they usually tried to think about using correct grammar and vocabulary before starting to speak. A teacher-centered class environment also negatively affected students' ability to speak. Finally, Chen found that in China and other Asian countries teachers were the ones who spoke first and then the students would repeat what the instructor had said.

Chen's (2015) findings offered an informative overview of ESL learning and the behaviour of ESL students. The findings also pointed out ways in which instructors could help students to improve their confidence in speaking such as creating a student-centered environment where each student would have a chance to speak to others or the teacher. Also, Chen indicated that students would feel more confident if they were to be prepared before speaking or doing a presentation. The drawback of Chen's research is that the sample size was small. Only five students were interviewed; therefore, it is impossible to make any generalizations from this sample. In addition, Chen did not fully explain all terms used in the paper. For example, the paper's definition of L2 learners was unclear; by context, L2 would seem to mean "the second language."

Woodrow (2006) from the University of Sydney, Australia, conducted a research study about the effect of anxiety on the English-speaking skills of ESL students. Woodrow described the conceptualization of second language speaking anxiety, the relationship between anxiety and second language performance, and the major reported causes of second language anxiety. In the literature review, Woodrow discovered the common finding from previous studies, namely that "anxiety is negatively related to language performance" (p. 312).

Woodrow (2006) gathered data through the administration of a questionnaire. The participants from Woodrow's research were all studying in an English teaching institute in Australia. They were all in their final months before taking the International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examination. Woodrow had a total of 275 participants, with 50.5% male and 49.5% female. The participants were asked to describe their English-speaking skills in class and out of class. Woodrow found that the students usually felt more confident and spoke more fluently with their peers. The students could communicate with their native-speaker teachers more clearly than when speaking to a native-speaker who was a stranger. Woodrow discovered that the

students would perform better when they had proper preparation, which was why they felt less anxious about speaking English in class. Woodrow found that students from East Asian countries faced more difficulties when speaking in English, since their alphabets were not Latin-based. Woodrow also mentioned the effect of ‘losing face’ from a Confucian culture such as that of China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, where students tend to feel humiliated if they make mistakes in grammar or pronunciation when speaking English. Woodrow suggested several ways that could reduce English-speaking anxiety for such students by encouraging them to do more practice by self-speaking and communicating with their peers in English outside the formal context of the classroom. Some unclear aspects of Woodrow’s article require clarification; for example, definitions of the second-language speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS) and of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The suggestions from Woodrow’s study also lacked many explanations and were somewhat vague.

Tu (2014) investigated the students’ anxiety about the process of second language acquisition. However, instead of focusing on analyzing the effect of speaking anxiety, Tu focused on the external factors such as the learning environment and the circumstances of communication. Tu’s study was conducted in South-eastern University in Florida, in the United States. Tu used a questionnaire to gather data from the students. Fourteen questions were used to gather the data on each participant’s culture, education, and linguistic background. Although the sample size was small, with sixteen participants, Tu’s study effectively represented the cultural diversity of second-language learners.

Tu (2014) used the second-language speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS). However, Tu provided a clear definition to the scale, and pointed out its role in measuring the effects of speaking anxiety on students. The participants were asked to compare their levels of anxiety when speaking

with native and with non-native speakers. Tu found that the students would feel anxious when talking with a native speaker under any circumstances, no matter the social role of the interlocutor. However, Tu did not discover the reasons that caused the feeling of discomfort. Tu discovered that, even with proper preparation, students would still have difficulty speaking with a non-native teacher because of the factors such as the accent and the teaching method. Tu stated that the accent of non-native speakers could cause confusion for ESL students. Therefore, it was difficult for them to generate suitable dialogue in the conversation. Tu asserted that teaching methods can play an important role in reducing the students' language anxieties. Tu gave suggestions for ESL teachers to reduce the level of anxiety of the students in their classroom. Tu promoted the notion that it could be better to have a student-centered environment where students had more opportunities to speak to their teacher and friends. Tu suggested that teachers should also be friendly with students and should avoid being judgmental when the students make mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. Tu mentioned speaking ability as a significant personal variable in the literature review since cultural factors could also affect students' speaking ability. However, in the data analysis and discussion, Tu did not cover this aspect in any detail.

A well-received book about English language teaching written by Ur (2012), *A Course in English Language Teaching*, has some interesting points about the concept of teaching English as a second language and the factors that are related to speaking anxiety. Ur stated that among four skills (listening, speaking, writing, and reading), speaking is intuitively the most important as the language learner's main purpose of learning a new language is to be able to communicate orally. However, Ur noticed that it is very challenging for teachers to engage students to converse in a formal setting compared to other classroom tasks such as listening, reading, and writing.

Ur (2012) described psychological and external factors that affect a student's ability to speak a different language. According to Ur, shyness and inhibitions are psychological factors that cause anxiety for ESL students. Speaking requires students to be exposed to a real-time event or audience. Therefore, ESL students with limited vocabulary and flawed grammar would find it difficult to form a sentence when trying to speak using a foreign language. Students are usually worried about making mistakes, about a teacher's criticism, and about losing face in front of their peers in some cultures. Some students feel shy about speaking in front of an audience because they are afraid that their mistakes will attract undue attention from classmates and the teacher. Anxiety will also cause 'blank-mind' as students struggle to find anything to say. External factors can also affect students' willingness to speak such as low participation of individuals. Since there are many different personality types in a class, some students may tend to be more dynamic and self-confident than others anyway, regardless of second-language speaking skills. Some students tend to be more dominant, and therefore are more willing to speak all the time, which leaves the quieter students no chance to speak at all. Next, Ur considered students' use of their first language in class. In a classroom in which most or all students share the same first language, they may fall back into using it whenever they can because they find it much easier and more natural to converse in their own language. This lapse, however, will negate the use of English in the class; hence, students who fall back into using their first language will have less practice time to improve their English and to overcome their speaking anxiety. Ur suggested methods to overcome or minimize the effect of language anxiety such as encouraging students to speak because inaccuracies in language are natural, and such minor errors rarely produce misunderstandings. Making such mistakes may, in fact, be a good opportunity to learn from errors and avoid fossilizing (becoming excessively formal in usage). A teacher's giving positive and constructive feedback will reduce the anxiety level in

students. A teacher should let students work in pairs in order to reduce language anxiety since all members of the class will have a chance to speak. In general, Ur (2012) has articulated some highly useful points about the causes of anxiety in second language acquisition. The only downside is that the book's being more teacher-focused than student-focussed in its instructional suggestions.

In a research article, Kelsen (2018) has articulated the relationship between public speaking anxiety and personality traits in English as a foreign language (EFL) settings. Kelsen acknowledged the role of personality characteristics in determining a student's reaction towards feeling anxious about speaking a foreign language in public. Kelsen determined that foreign language anxiety is an apprehension arising from a situation in which learners are expected to perform some tasks in a second or foreign language.

Kelsen conducted his research at National Taipei University (Taiwan), with the participation of 268 students. There were 154 students (74%) who took their Test of English for international communication (TOEIC), on which they scored between 505 and 980. These numbers mean that most of the students in this research study were in the intermediate to advanced level of English language acquisition. Kelsen had proven the hypothesis that extraverted students were associated with lower anxiety during speaking and presentation, especially compared to students who are more neurotic or self-conscious. Extraverted students tend to have a positive attitude towards presenting in class since they are more confident, outgoing, and diligent. Kelson found that extraverted students were more likely to have an advantage in situations that require oral communication. Kelsen also stated that extraverted students tend to display lower levels of speaking anxiety during their classroom presentation as they were able to deal with stress better; thus, they were less prone to disfluency, thereby allowing them to access short-term memory. Extraverted students usually have higher intellect thinking, analytical ability, and creativity, all of

which reduced their anxiety level during presentations. Kelsen suggested methods that teachers/instructors should try to help students overcome their anxiety during presentations. Methods such as relaxation, cognitive therapies, modeling exposure, social skills, assertiveness training, hope-based intervention, problem-solving, humour, optimism, and realistic goal setting can all boost a student's morale and mitigate the effect of speaking anxiety. Kelsen suggested that students try to develop skills related to analyzing, planning, and managing projects related directly to the assigned presentation. In short, it was better to prepare the presentation before hand in order to achieve maximum performance and avoid speaking anxiety. Practicing speech pitch and rhythm along with body language may boost confidence and thereby help to reduce anxiety. In this research, Kelsen was mostly focusing on analyzing the extraverted personality more than the introverted personality type. The sample size was small, and most participants were Taiwanese. Therefore, some findings and suggestions might not be applicable to ESL or ELL students of other nationalities.

A study conducted by Cheng (1999) discovered that language anxiety has a significant relationship with students' self-esteem. Language anxiety does not only consist of second-language speaking anxiety. Cheng also reported second language writing anxiety, reading anxiety, and listening anxiety. However, the anxiety associated with speaking appeared to be the most common type of anxiety that students encounter. Cheng stated that most students were prone to suffer from anxiety in a language class, although some students also experience anxiety in real-life situations in which a certain language skill is required.

Cheng conducted this study in four Taiwanese universities. The research sample consisted of 433 students whose major was English. Among 433 participants, there were 226 (52.5%) freshmen, 155 (35.8%) sophomores, and 54 (21.5%) seniors. Their ages ranged from 17 to 30,

with an average age of 20. To survey the students, Cheng applied the Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Second Language Writing Apprehension test (SLWAT). Cheng asserted that there is a correlation between anxiety and a student's achievement in class. However, the data showed that the relationship between these factors is not particularly significant statistically. The fear of evaluation and lack of self-confidence has a greater impact on a student's anxiety compared to worries about academic achievement. Cheng stated that students with low self-confidence experienced more anxiety in class. These students tend to doubt their ability which in turn leads to their easily giving up, and their feeling vulnerable plus anxious. Students with low self-confidence usually underestimate their ability to learn a second language and have negative expectations about their performance. Thus, poor self-confidence will affect their attitudes therefore they tend to feel more insecurity or anxiety while attempting to complete language-learning tasks. Students who experienced language anxiety would likely have their second language acquisition progress slow down or even postponed. Such a delay will result in students' losing even more of their self-confidence. Thus, the so-called "circle of language apprehension" is formed. The limitation in Cheng's study was that it consisted of Taiwanese university students only. Some findings, therefore, might not be applicable to second-language students outside of Taiwan. Furthermore, Chen's research was mostly focused on the anxieties associated with second-language writing. However, Chen did discover that language anxiety applies to all four language performance skills: speaking, listening, reading, and representing (writing).

Having to take exams, especially oral exams, will also cause students some anxiety, as Hewitt (2012) proved in research on language anxiety and oral exam performance. Hewitt's research was a replication of a previous study which was conducted in 1992 by another author. Hewitt not only conducted a recapitulation of the earlier study, but also enhanced the data-

gathering methodology of the previous study. Hewitt stated that language anxiety is made up of just three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Also, however, this study found that the relationship between students and their teachers is connected with students' language anxiety levels.

Hewitt's research involved 40 students, with the majority of participants being female (28); there were only 12 male participants. All participants were university students who were enrolled in an English course. The mother tongue of most of the students was Spanish. This research also applied the foreign language anxiety scale to measure students' anxiety levels during an exam. Hewitt discovered that most students that took the test experienced language anxiety. However, students with a lower level of oral performance experienced a greater degree of apprehension during the test. Students with low average oral exam grades experienced far greater anxiety compared to their high-performing classmates. Low performing students tend to prepare for the exam beforehand by simply memorizing notes. According to Hewitt, low-performing students felt that there was nothing they could have done to reduce their anxiety, even with more preparation. On the other hand, high-performing students while also experiencing anxiety tend to have more confidence and try to prevent negative thoughts about their performance. Some high-performing students thought that some benefit might come from having an oral examination. Their opinion was that facing the pressure of exams would improve their speaking skills. As they would try to be as accurate as possible in terms of grammar, diction, and pronunciation while speaking to the examiner. In short, Hewitt's research proved that students that perform better during an exam tend to deem their foreign language anxiety as a challenge that they can overcome. On the other hand, low-performing students tend to consider that their low performance is caused by their anxiety, but they tend to do nothing about either their anxiety or their language skills. The drawback of this

research is that it was conducted in a Spanish university in which most of the participants were of the same nationality. Some findings might not be applicable to situations involving international students from a number of different countries. While focusing on oral apprehension, the research did not focus on the factors that cause language anxiety. The findings were mostly about the performance of students under the pressure of exams.

Kralova and Tirpakova (2019) accomplished a study on the effect of language anxiety on non-native English as a second language (EFL) teacher in the context of a post-Communist country. Both authors stated that foreign language anxiety is usually related to speaking as it is the most stressful skill for a learner to master. Worrying about making mistakes also causes anxiety to EFL teachers since students can sense their teachers' discomfort in speaking and are sometimes even able to spot the mistake. The concept of 'losing face' affects teachers' anxiety more than it does students, in fact.

Kralova and Tirpakova conducted the research in Slovakia, with a total of 175 EFL teachers. The method of data collection was stratified random sampling, combining both surveys and direct interviews. Both authors also applied the English anxiety scale, however, with adjustments. Their findings showed that age was a factor that correlates with speaking anxiety. The older the participant the more that the speaker suffered from apprehension in speaking. Many teachers lack the motivation to learn as they grow older. Kralova and Tirpakova found that speaking anxiety was likely make teachers lose the confidence necessary to speak to their students. While experiencing speaking anxiety, many teachers would likely avoid speaking English as much as possible. Hence, they would thereby worsen their ability to speak, and in turn would increase their anxiety levels. According to Kralova and Tirpakova, a teacher's ego was also a factor contributing to language anxiety. Teachers were afraid of making mistakes which could affect their

authority position in the classroom. The limitation of this study is that it was conducted in a specific environment (Slovak teachers and schools). Therefore, some of their findings may not be applicable to other international audiences. The sample size was small, although there was a variety in age. Lastly, this study was only focusing on EFL teachers. Therefore, some factors that cause speaking anxiety could be different compared to those which affect students.

Research hypothesis

All information from previous studies has provided an overview of the factors that cause language anxiety. By combining these findings, the researcher has developed a hypothesis for this study that can be illustrated by the following figure.

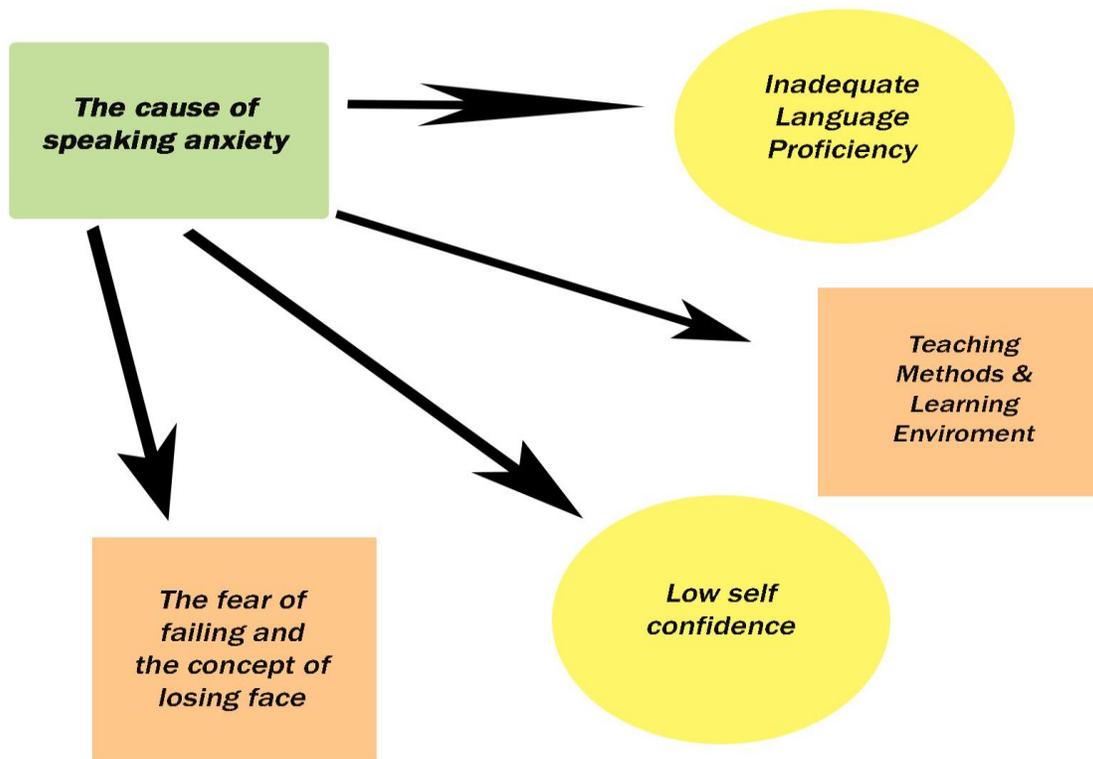


Figure 1: Language speaking anxiety hypothesis model

Based on the above figure, one may conclude that there are four factors that directly cause language-speaking anxiety for students. According to Hewitt, students with low language proficiency will struggle to speak English more. In addition, Cheng (1999) stated that students who are experiencing language-speaking anxiety also have lower self-confidence compare to higher performing ones. The fear of failing and the concept of losing face is another factor that causes speaking anxiety. Students with anxiety usually afraid of making mistakes since they will likely be open to criticism by their teachers or peers (Ur, 2012). The teacher and learning environments play an important role in minimizing the effect of language speaking anxiety. However, they can also be the contributing factor that causes anxiety to students. As Kelsen (2018), suggested that teachers can apply a set of methods that can ease the students' speaking anxiety while they are having a presentation in English.

Conclusion

A variety of research studies are based on the topic of language anxiety. However, most of these covers only the general concept of language anxiety, which included all four language skills rather than just speaking. The causes and effects of each type of language anxiety can be similar yet will not be completely identical. Additionally, previous studies have not emphasized the impact of teachers in mitigating the effect of language-speaking anxiety. The focus of this research was to fill this knowledge gap.

Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

Description of the Research Design

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the existing problems with respect to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for Vietnamese students from Grades 3 to 12 in the country's public schools, even after such a long period of learning, most university students still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. The study has investigated those factors that lead to the English-speaking anxiety. The chief research question for this study is as follows: "Which are psychological factors influence students' confidence when communicating in English, as reported by University English teachers and students in Vietnam?" The study involved the collecting of qualitative and quantitative data. Participants were asked to participate in the interview voluntarily with their confidentially preserved and their identities remaining anonymous. The participants were informed that they could skip any questions that they are not comfortable with answering and that they could choose to withdraw from the study any time. This was the original plan of the study to collect data.

Unfortunately, all schools in Vietnam were shutdown due to the COVID-19³ outbreak in late January 2020. The original plan to collect data from two Universities in Ho Chi Minh City was jeopardized. As a result, the investigator had to make some adjustments to the data-collection process. This chapter, which covers both the original and the adapted plans, shows what changes the researcher made to improvise solutions in the current COVID-19 situation.

The Initial Plan for the Process

Description of the participants. Following the initial plan, the interviewer had intended to conduct surveys and collect data in Ho Chi Minh City in January 2020. The population of the

³ COVID-19: is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.

study consisted of university professors and students from two different universities in Ho Chi Minh City. The total number of anticipated participants for the research was projected to be from 20 to 60 students for the survey, and five for the interview (three students and two teachers).

In order to be a participant of the present study, one had to fulfill certain criteria: (a) teacher participants had to have at least five years of teaching experience, and (b) the courses that they are teaching must be in an English-based program. For student participants, the study required that (a) they have completed twelve years of general education; (b) they are above eighteen years of age; (c) they have at least one year of studying and using English for their studies, and; (d) they are second- or third-year students. The reason for excluding first-year students is that, in the initial year of university, students from these international programs focus only on studying the core subjects such as mathematics, economic foundations, and Ho Chi Minh ideology. Therefore, they tend not to be using English to communicate in class frequently. The teacher participants that would be chosen for the interview are teaching an international curriculum that uses English as the main language of communication with students.

Explanation of the procedures. The initial plan was to get approval from the Vancouver Island University Research Ethics Board in December 2019. The author would then contact the teacher participants via email and social media. The email was to be sent in early January 2020, giving the participants information about the purpose of the research plus the time and location at which the interview section would be conducted. Consent forms were to be sent through email as well. Participants were to be given the choice not to participate or to withdraw from the interview at any time they wished.

For the survey, the investigator had been planning to visit the homeroom of each of the teacher participants and ask for students' participation, ensuring informed consent. The

investigator had intended to read the recruitment script to the students. After that, he would have distributed the consent forms and surveys. At the end of the survey, there is a separate page on which students can provide their personal information (email and phone number) if they decided to participate in the interview. When the students finished, they would have been able to drop the survey paper in a box. For the interview, students were to put the last page in a separate box. Through this method, each respondent for the survey would remain anonymous. Volunteering students would have received an additional consent form for their interviews through email. The investigator intended to give them the time and location at which the interview would take place. The investigator intended to explain the consent form to volunteering students before actually conducting each interview. And then the government of Vietnam closed Ho Chi Minh City's two universities to counteract the spread of the virus.

The interviewer had anticipated being able to conduct data collection in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in January 2020. Therefore, the investigator travelled back to the country in January 2020. To ensure the data collecting process going smoothly, the investigator had considered staying in Vietnam for one month. He had expected that each interview section would last around fifteen to twenty minutes, so that he anticipated fully completing data collection on the ground by the end of the month. The interviews with the student participants were to be conducted in a coffee shop in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to ensure the privacy of the conversation. On the other hand, the interview with the teacher participants was to be conducted in their private offices. The investigator intended to ask for each participant's permission to record each conversation. A laptop was to be used as a recording tool, and the researcher intended to transcribe all participants' orally-delivered answers. After all the necessary data had been gathered, the next step would have been to analyze the data through the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The Adapted Plan for the Process

Explanation of the procedures. Since all schools were closed due to the outbreak, the investigator was not able to commence the initial plan. The investigator did travel to Vietnam on January 19 with the hope that the situation would improve within three weeks, and that the government would reopen schools. However, this did not prove to be the case as the outbreak became worsened, and later became part of a global pandemic. Hence, the data collecting process was changed from face to face into an online survey and paper-recorded interview. Survey links, interview forms, and consent forms were sent to potential participants via email along with social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram. Students who chose to participate in the paper-recorded interview received additional consent forms. For the teacher participants, the recruitment process was unchanged as they were informed about the research a month ahead. They were given consent and interview forms through email as well. Data collection was carried out from February 6 to 17, 2020. The collected data was then analysed and displayed on appropriate charts.

Description of participants. The initial plan was to survey and interview students from two universities in Vietnam. However, since data collection was shifted online, the variety of students increased. Besides students from FPT Greenwich and Hoa Sen Universities, there were also participants from HUFLIT University, HCMC University of Transport, and Hong Bang University. The participant requirements were still valid for all of these students as they (a) needed to have completed twelve years of general education; (b) they were at least eighteen years old, and; (c) they each had at least one year of studying and using English for their studies. However, the last requirement was adjusted as participants no longer had to be second- or third-year students. The requirement for the teacher participants remained unchanged. In the end, there were 26

students who participated in the online survey. For the paper-recorded interview, the total number of participants was five: 3 students and 2 teachers.

Description of the Instruments

The method of collecting data was mixed, with both survey and face to face interviews. The interview questionnaires were designed by the author of the present study (see Appendix A and B). The interview questions are different for students and teachers.

For students, the questions were designed to measure the level of language anxiety they were having in class. Therefore, the language speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS) was implemented. The scale was previously applied by Tu (2014) in relevant research. A new scale was developed by the investigator based on Tu's scale. The scale was tweaked to fit the learning environment in Vietnam. The scale has a ranking from one to five in which the higher number represents a higher degree of anxiety. The students were asked to rate their anxiety level based on different situations. A total of thirteen scenarios were based on real-life situations. For more information, please refer to Appendix F, G and H. For the interview form, the students were asked several questions related to their language proficiency. The first question asked the student to identify their personality type, whether introvert or extrovert. The second question asked them to share their English learning experience and their current proficiency. The third question required the students to describe the anxiety level when they try to speak English. From questions four to six, the students were asked to give their opinion and feedback about the courses and strategies that they felt could help them to overcome their anxiety.

For teacher participants, the interview questions were different. The language-speaking anxiety scale was not applied. Teacher participants were asked to give their opinions about their students' language performance in their classes for the first question. The second question asked

teacher participants about the students' anxiety level within their class generally. The third question asked them to describe the methods that they use to encourage their students to overcome their anxiety. The last question asked the teachers to give feedback and recommendation (generally) to the students to improve their language speaking proficiency.

Discussion of Validity

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher developed a plan to interview both teachers and students. Students sometimes gave invalid answers or inaccurate responses since their knowledge of English was deficient compared to that of their teachers. With the use of the mixed method, the researcher strengthened the validity of the study. Student participants were able to ask for advice from the investigator whenever they apprehended with any issues or components that they did not understand. The same method was applied to the teacher participants.

Data Analysis

Because this research was conducted by using a mixed method procedure, the author collected both qualitative and quantitative data. The data were stored in the author's personal laptop with a security password. The data were presented to the study's audiences through charts and other graphic tools. Quantitative data were gathered through the SLSAS scale, and mainly expressed the students' level of speaking anxiety. Qualitative data were gathered from both teacher and student' participants. Both parties were asked to answer a set of questions about the topic of language-speaking anxiety.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

Introduction

The main purpose of the present study has been to discover those factors that cause English-speaking anxiety for Vietnamese university students who are currently studying in Ho Chi Minh City. To collect the necessary data, the researcher created an online survey, and distributed interview forms to potential candidates. The qualitative and quantitative data derived from surveys and interviews were then analysed in order to answer the research question: “Which are psychological factors that influence students’ confidence when communicating in English as reported by university English teachers and students in Vietnam?”

This chapter mainly focusses on the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data were gathered through the method of an online survey, for which the researcher received a total of 26 responses. The period for data collection was from February 6 to 17. For the quantitative data, there were four participants who took part in completing the interview forms.

Quantitative Data

The focus of this section is to analyse the collected quantitative data. The current research applied the language-speaking anxiety scale (SLASS) to measure the anxiety level that students reported experiencing in class. The scale has a ranking from one to five, with a higher number representing a higher anxiety level.

In the first question of the survey, students were asked to describe their anxiety level when a teacher (whether a Vietnamese or English-speaking) asks them questions in English.

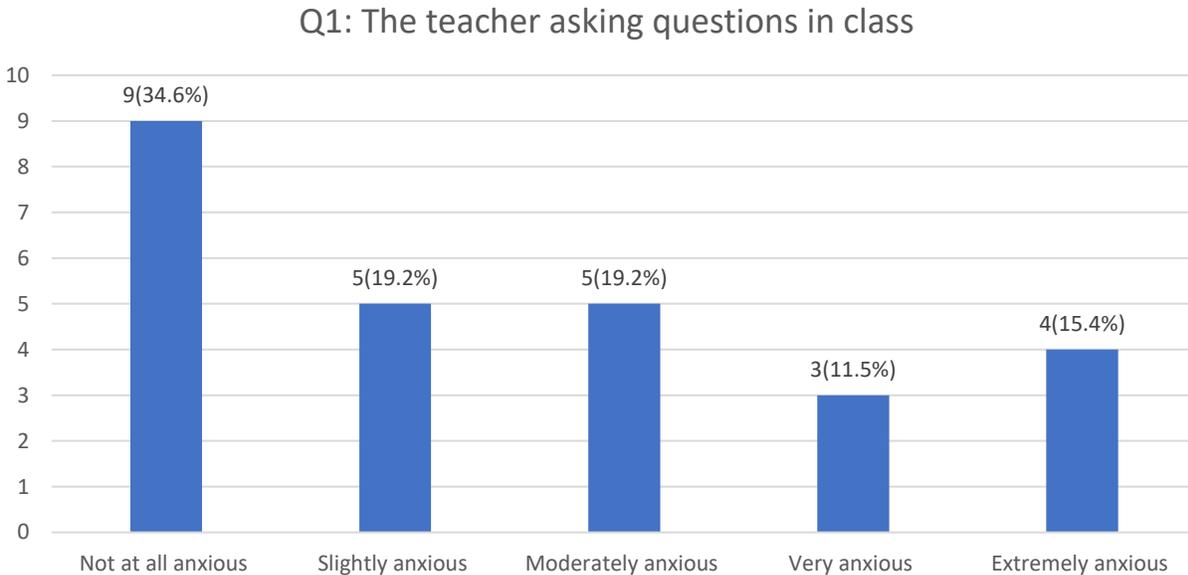


Figure 2. Student's anxiety level when asked questions by teachers in English

Most students felt that they experienced a very low level of anxiety when a teacher asks them a question using English. Nine students reported not experiencing any speaking anxiety (34.6%). Ten students reported having experienced a slight or moderate feeling of anxiety, with 5 in each category (19.2%). Next, three students reported having a very anxious feeling (11.5%). Four students reported having an extreme degree of anxiety when asked questions in English by their teachers (15.4%).

The reason for most students not having any anxiety could be linked to the fact that most of them are in their second or third year of international programs. By this time, most students have had plenty of exposure to using English in their classes. It is also easier for the students to interact with their teachers compare to a stranger (Woodrow, 2006).

The figure 3 below shows the anxiety level of students when they were asked questions by a native speaker of English.

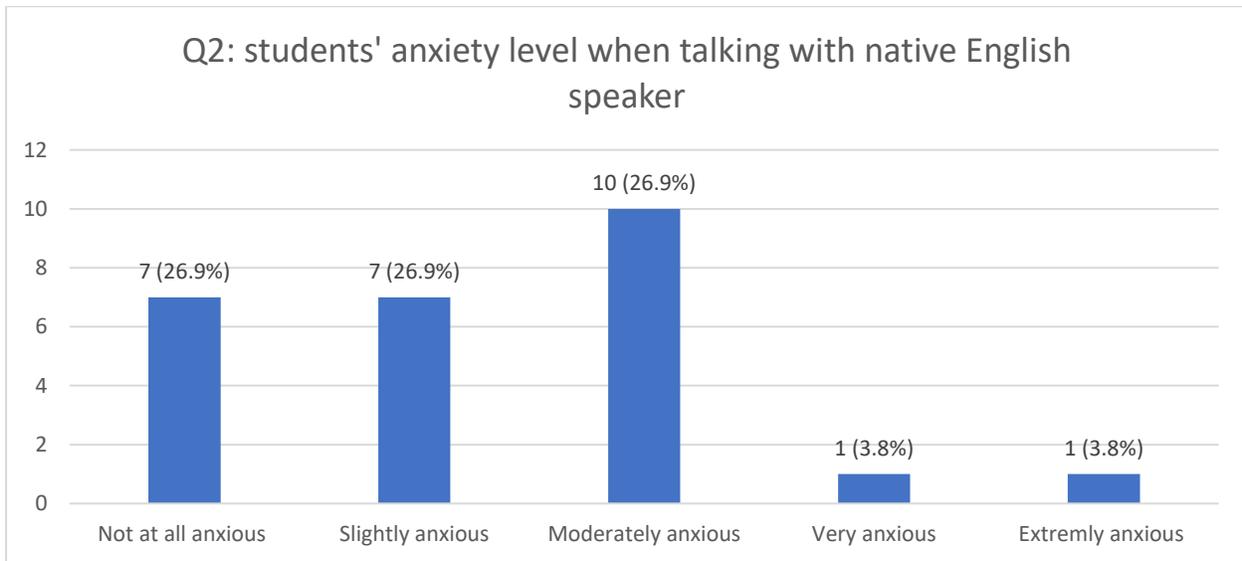


Figure 3. Students' speaking anxiety levels when interacting with a native English speaker

Ten students reported having experienced a moderate level of anxiety when an English speaker whom they don't know asks them questions in English (38.5%). Next, an equal number of students reported not having any anxiety or having just a slight feeling of anxiety, with 7 students in each category (26.9%). Only one student reported feeling very anxious, and one reported having experienced extreme anxiety while speaking to a native English speaker (3.8%).

The figure shows that most students experienced a moderate level of anxiety when speaking with an English speaker. This result seems to be a consequence of the students' being unfamiliar with the native speaker. In addition, the speaker might have asked the students questions for which they might not have had an answer or which they simply did not know how to answer. According to Chen (2015), students usually feel uncomfortable and anxious when conversing with native speakers. The students would lose their confidence as they try to use the correct grammar and vocabulary before starting to speak. Shyness and inhibitions can prevent students from

speaking. Students have to listen, process and generate the conversation. As speaking requires real-time exposure to audience. (Ur, 2012).

In the next question, the students were asked to rate their speaking anxiety level when they are taking part in a group discussion in class. The data are displayed in figure 3 below.

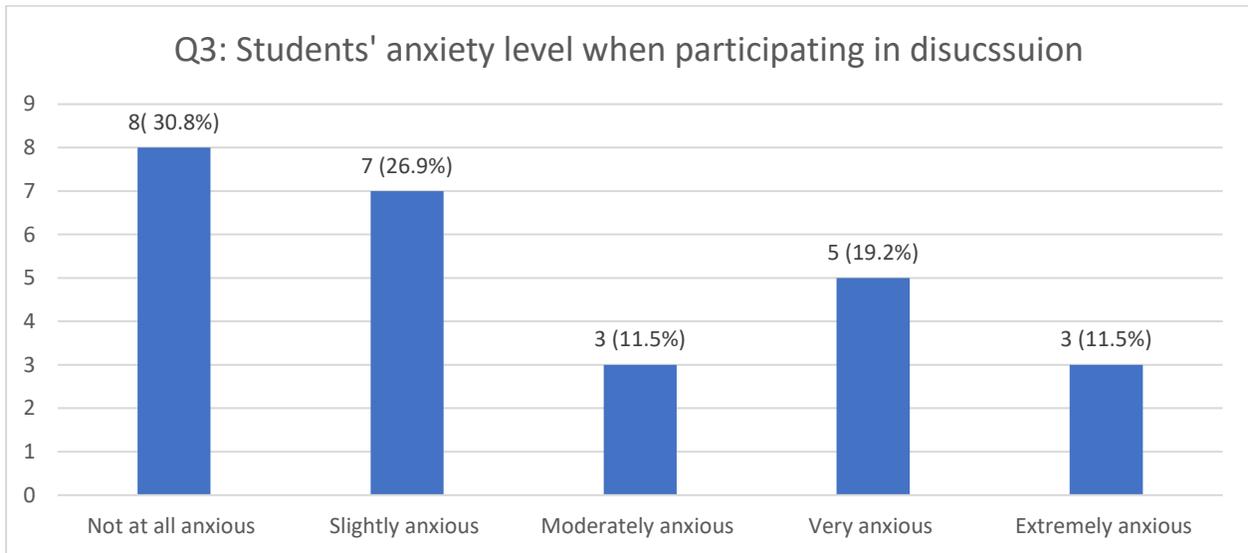


Figure 4. Students' speaking anxiety levels when participating in a group discussion

In answering this question, most students reported that they did not experience that great level of speaking anxiety. Eight students reported that they did not experience any speaking anxiety while working in a group (30.8%). Next, the slightly anxious option was chosen by 7 students (26.9%). Five students reported having a very anxious feeling while participating in a class discussion in English (19.2%). The “moderately anxious” and “extremely anxious” options both had the same number of student responses, with three each (11.5%).

Most students felt comfortable speaking English while working as a group since it is easier to communicate with their peers as compared to talking to teachers. According to Ur (2012), group working is the best method to encourage students to speak and practice their

English. This method provides an equal chance for all students in a group to take turns and speak (p. 118).

Questions 4 and 5 required students to asset their anxiety level while doing a role-play scenario or a formal presentation in front of the class. Since both of these activities are very similar (the students have to give a speech). The data have been grouped into figure 5 below.

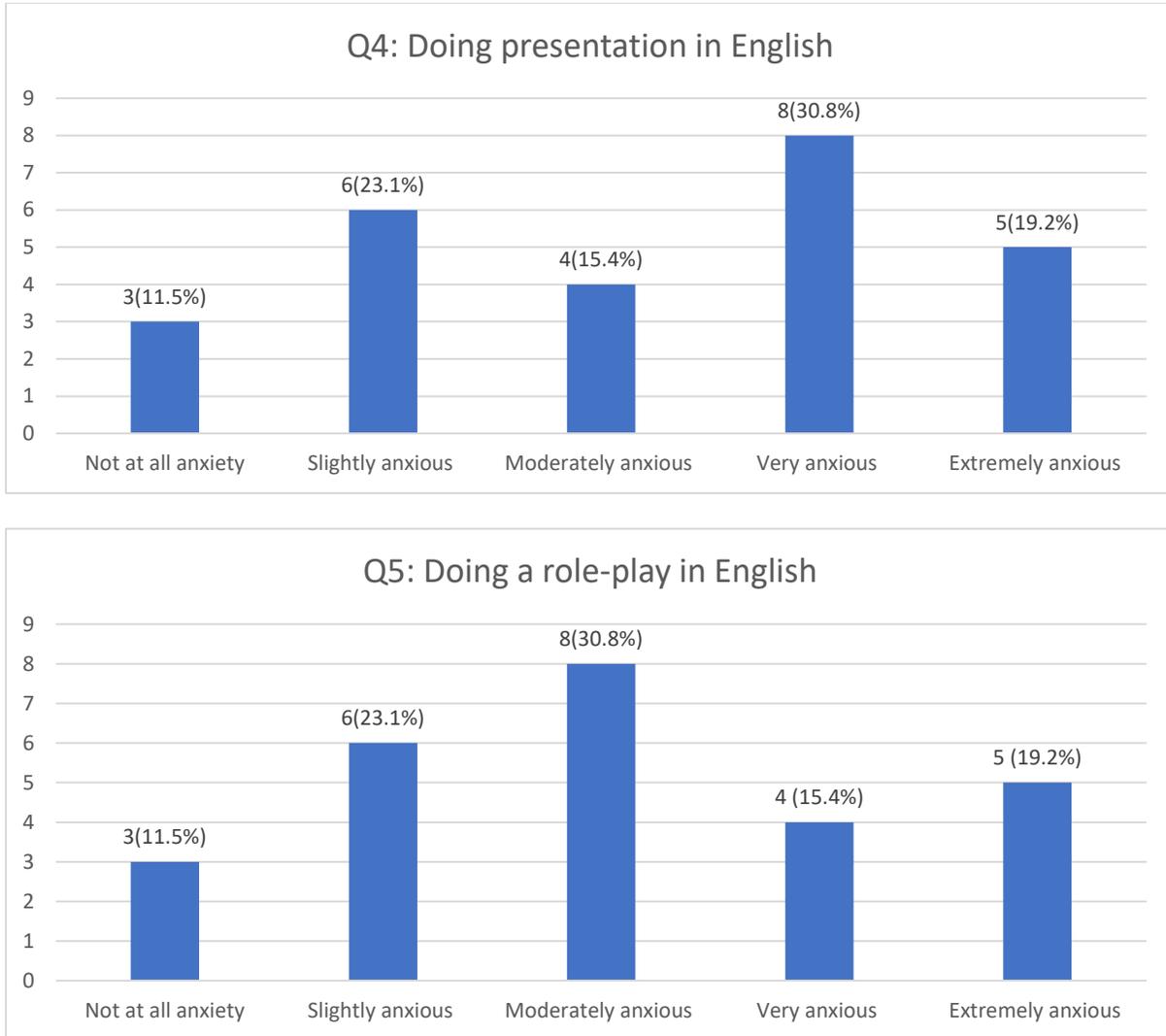


Figure 5. Students' speaking anxiety when giving or doing a presentation and role-play scenarios

This figure shows that students reported having a moderate to a very high level of anxiety when they have to speak English in front of an audience. It appears that students are more anxious when doing a presentation, with 8 students choosing “very anxious” (30.8%). On the other hand, most students only felt moderately anxious when doing a role-play scenario (8 students, 30.8%). A similar number of students responded not feeling at all anxious for both questions, with three responses from the students (11.5%). The same results were obtained for the slightly anxious option with six responses (23.1%). Lastly, there was a similar number of responses for the ‘extremely anxious’ option as well, with five student responses for each question (19.2%).

Doing a presentation in front of an audience is a difficult challenge, let alone doing it in another language. According to Hewitt (2012), students with lower language proficiency experience more anxiety while doing an oral examination or presentation. The fear of getting humiliated and losing face also increases the students’ levels of anxiety (Ur, 2012). A good presentation requires considerable linguistic facility and planning on the part of students. They need to prepare the slides, the speech or script, and other materials beforehand. Students usually perform English-speaking tasks better when they have proper preparation (Woodrow, 2006). Therefore, Kelsen (2018) suggested ways that the teacher or instructor can help students relieve anxiety while giving a presentation. A teacher may utilize methods such as relaxation, cognitive therapies, modeling exposure, social skills, assertiveness training, hope-based intervention, problem-solving, humour, optimism, and realistic goal setting.

Questions 6 and 7 asked the students to rate their anxiety levels when speaking in English to their English-speaking and their Vietnamese friends. Both of these questions also have a response pattern. The relevant data are presented in figure 6 below.

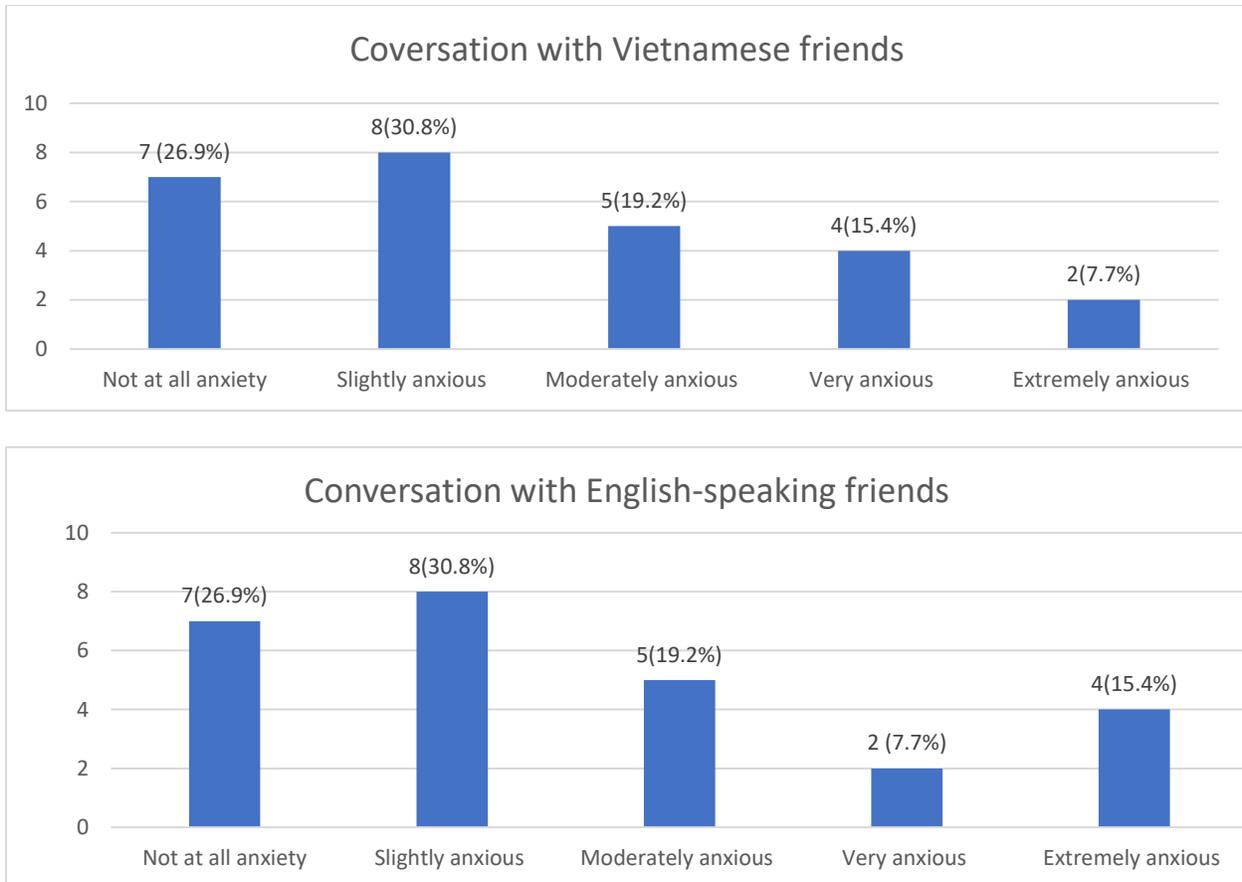


Figure 6. Students' speaking anxiety level when having conversations with Vietnamese and English-speaking friends

The figure shows that the students do not report having much anxiety when speaking with their friends or colleagues even when they are native speakers of English. Both questions had the same responses for 'not at all anxious' with seven students (26.9%), 'slightly anxious' having eight students (30.8%) and moderately anxious. Four students reported having experienced extreme anxiety when speaking with English-speaking friends (15.4%). However, only two students reported having the same experience with their local friends (7.7%). Four students chose 'very anxious' to describe their feelings when talking to their Vietnamese friends (15.4%), and two students reported feeling 'very anxious' when talking to English-speaking friends (7.7%).

It makes sense that students will speak English with their friends without experiencing much language anxiety, compared to the somewhat artificial situation in which they are conversing formally with teachers in a classroom setting. As teachers usually have to present themselves as authority figures (Ur, 2012. p), conversing with them in English is bound to cause many Vietnamese students some anxiety. According to Woodrow (2006), the way to reduce language anxiety is by letting students practice speaking English with their peers through group work since such activities give all students the chance to speak. However, teachers need to avoid letting their students fall back to using their L1 language (Ur, 2012,p). The data show a contradictory result compared to Tu's research. According to Tu (2014), students will tend to feel anxious when talking with a native speaker under *any* circumstances. However, the students involved in this study the students seemed to experience far less language anxiety when speaking to their English-speaking friends.

From questions 9 to 11, the students were asked to rate their anxiety level when having a conversation with or asking questions of their teachers. The summary of these data appears below.

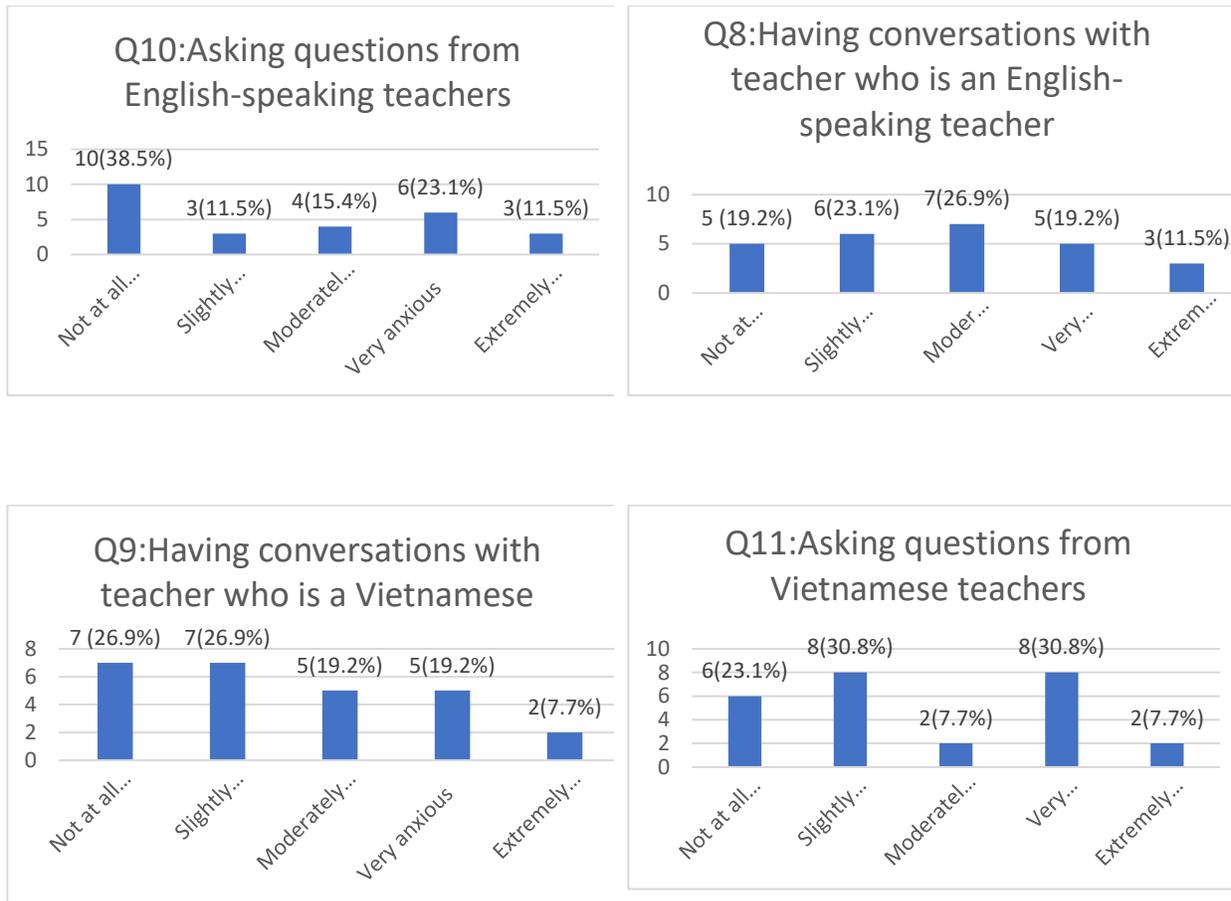


Figure 7. Students' speaking anxiety level when interacting with Vietnamese and English-speaking teachers

The students' anxiety level when having a conversation with their English-speaking teachers is higher compared to their interacting orally with their local Vietnamese teachers. However, the difference is not that great. Seven students chose 'moderately anxious' when talking to their English-speaking teachers (26.9%), whereas with Vietnamese teachers, only five chose the

same option (19.2%). Five students reported that they experienced no anxiety when speaking to their English-speaking associates (19.2%), and seven with their Vietnamese teachers (26.9%). There was a slightly different finding with the ‘slightly anxious’ option, with six students responding to a situation with English-speaking teachers (23.1%) and seven to a situation with Vietnamese teachers (26.9%). Both questions 8 and 9 have the same number of responses for “very anxious” option with five students (19.2%). Three students chose “extreme anxiety” when describing their feelings about speaking to their English-speaking teachers (11.5%). The result is higher when one compares this situation to speaking with Vietnamese teachers (two students, or just 7.7%).

The students’ anxiety levels when asking questions of their teachers are very different. Surprisingly, there were ten students who reported experiencing no anxiety at all when asking questions of or seeking advice from their English-speaking teachers (38.5%). Next, there were three students (11.5%) who reported having felt slightly anxious. The “moderately anxious” option has four responses from the students (15.4%). The last two options come with six students (23.1%) each for “very anxious” and three students for “extremely anxious.” Question 11 shows a different pattern, with more students reporting that they experience more language anxiety when asking questions of their Vietnamese teachers. Both “slightly anxious” and “very anxious” options have the same number of responses with eight students each (30.8%). The options of “moderately anxious” and “extremely anxious” also share the same number of responses with two students each (7.7%).

The data show that students experienced more language anxiety when having a normal conversation with their English-speaking teachers. However, when it comes to asking for advice and posing questions, students prefer to do so with their native-speaker teachers instead. According

to Tu (2014), students usually have difficulty speaking with a non-native teacher because of the factors such as the accent and the teaching method. Tu stated that the accent of non-native speakers could cause confusion for ESL⁴ students. More often than not, native English speakers who are teachers tend to have an advantage with respect to accent and pronunciation. Although the conversation might not be academic in nature, students would still be afraid of receiving criticism from their own teachers (Ur, 2012). Therefore, some students might find it difficult to ask questions or seek advice. In addition, Woodrow (2006) stated that the fear of criticism makes it difficult for students from Confucian-based cultures such as Vietnam's to communicate orally with their teachers. The core values of Confucianism require a person to place heavy emphasis on absolute obedience to a partner, a teacher, an elder, and a supervisor or boss. As children, Vietnamese are taught to behave with respect to other people, especially to their elders (Truong & Hallinger, 2017, p. 544). Hence, this situation could create an invisible wall between students and teachers. Students might prefer to ask for advice from their foreign teachers since their teaching methods and attitude could be more easy-going. However, when it comes to regular conversation the students find it easier to speak with their local teachers as the language barrier is eliminated. According to Ur (2012), students tend to fall back into using their L1⁵ when they are communicating with people from their own country.

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were gathered through the method of interviews recorded on paper. The participants include two university teachers, two current students, and one student who has just graduated recently (in 2019). The participants' responses helped the author to conduct an in-

⁴ ESL: English-as-a-second-language students

⁵ L1: The students' native language

depth analysis of the existing problem of language-speaking anxiety and developing methods of minimizing its effect. For the sake of concealing their identities, the investigator has labelled them using numbers (student 1, teacher 1, etc.).

Students' opinions on language-speaking anxiety. For the first question during the interview, students were asked to describe their personalities. Student 1 classified himself as an introvert; he wrote, "When people talk to me, they usually think that I am an extravert. But actually, I am more of an introverted person." Student 2, on the other hand, stated that she should be classified as an "ambivert" (a person with characteristics of both an introvert and an extravert). She wrote: "I think I am 50% introvert and 50% extravert, as it is very easy for me to make new friends. However, I still feel very shy when interacting with a stranger. I don't like to work independently since I prefer to have my comrades with me. But I still enjoy some 'me' time to relax." The third student described himself as an extravert by stating, "I like the job that relates to organization such as event organization. And to do that job I have to work with many people. I also like to hang out with my friends if I have free time." A student's personality is an indirect factor that can cause language-speaking anxiety. Personality characteristics can determine a student's reaction towards speaking a foreign language in public (Kelsen, 2018).

The second question asked the students to describe their English learning experience and how would they rate their current English proficiency. Student 1 appeared lacking in confidence about his language proficiency when he wrote: "Currently, I am not very confident in my English proficiency. However, if it just some regular conversations with foreigners then I can do it without problems." His method of learning English was not only to focus on learning grammar, but also to learn from the media (movie, songs, and comic books). Student 2 also described her own English proficiency as mediocre and was not feeling very confident about it. She wrote: "My English

proficiency is only at a middle level. Since I didn't have the opportunity to be in a communicative environment. Therefore, my speaking skill is not very great." In her opinion, the better way to learn English is through daily interaction using speaking and listening skills. Student 3 is an extravert; therefore, his response suggests that he is rather more confident than the other two. His answer reveals this attitude: "I started learning English from Grade 6 to the last year of university and I learned at school only. Four years at university made my English better because it's an international university that forced me to use English everyday. And now I'm working for a private company which has a lot of foreigners. All of these things helped me improve my English proficiency from the average to good." Student 3 did not describe his speaking ability specifically. However, it seems that his overall language proficiency in all four skills (listening, writing, speaking, and reading) is better than average. He seems to have had more exposure to English as well in terms of years of practice and familiarity as his company has a great many foreign workers, most of whom know at least some English.

The third question asked the students about their experience with language-speaking anxiety and the reason that causes them to have such apprehension. Student 1 admitted that he usually has to deal with language-speaking anxiety. The cause of anxiety in his case is a lack of experience and a generalized fear of making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation. He wrote: "Sometimes I am worry about my grammar and pronunciation while speaking. It makes me feel rather uncomfortable and anxious while speaking". Student 2 faced similar problems as the first student. She confirmed that she had experienced language-speaking anxiety due to her paucity of vocabulary and knowledge of English grammar. Additionally, she was afraid of pronouncing words incorrectly while speaking. She wrote: "I am afraid of speaking English because I don't have that much vocabulary in my mind. I am afraid that I won't be able to express the full meaning

of what I am trying to say. I also make a lot of pronunciation mistakes; therefore, I don't feel very confident while speaking English." Student 3 once again shows that he is rather capable of dealing with language-speaking anxiety. He wrote: "I neither feel tense or anxious, but I feel less confident when I am speaking English. Sometimes I think the listener can't understand all I want to transfer because my vocabulary and pronunciation." All three students have all experienced language-speaking anxiety, though with differing intensities. They faced identical problems such as the lack of vocabulary and sometimes incomprehensible use of grammar. Chen (2015) acknowledged that students lose their confidence because they usually worry about using correct grammar and vocabulary before even starting to speak. This point is once again emphasized by Ur (2012), who reported that students with limited vocabulary and inadequate grammar tend to experience way more anxiety when speaking.

For the next question, the students were asked to give their suggestions about the kind of encouragement that would make them feel more confident in speaking during lessons. Student 1 would prefer to study in an environment where English is fully utilized. He wrote: "I think studying in an environment where English is applied 100% would be better. Since it would help us to only communicate in English, therefore it would improve our confidence." Student 2, on the other hand, suggested that receiving compliments is the best way to reduce anxiety. She wrote: "There is nothing more morale-boosting than receiving compliments. Even actions like 'high-five' would make us feel way more confident in future conversations." Student 3 had a similar opinion to that of Student 2. They both agreed that some method of complimenting them as speakers would help to reduce speaking anxiety. Additionally, Student 3 said that he would like to receive feedback from people who can correct his mistakes. He wrote: "I really appreciate people who are willing to correct my mistakes, but it should be corrected in a subtle way. The teacher can give me some

encouragements and compliments at that time to let me know I'm not bad at English." Giving compliments is crucial to helping students reduce their speaking anxiety, as has been proven in previous studies. According to Ur (2012), a teacher's giving positive and constructive feedback will reduce the anxiety level in students. They felt that teachers should use humour and positive feedback in order to boost students' morale and confidence, and thereby reduce their apprehensions (Kelsen, 2018).

Question 5 asked the students' advice on how to create an anxiety-free English-speaking environment in their classroom. Student 1 wrote: "I think we should apply the method of working in pairs". He also shared that letting students working in pairs is better than letting them do speeches in front of an audience. Student 2 suggested that there are many ways to create an anxiety-free learning environment. She shared the idea that the lessons should be taught with humour to encourage students to speak. She wrote: "Having games can make the lesson more interesting which makes them easier to learn. Or learning English from songs like many Vietnamese teachers are currently teaching in their class." She also suggested utilizing a YouTube page that teaches English through songs, which in her opinion is very interesting. Student 3 shared the notion that having a comfortable learning environment is important because it will encourage students and teachers to have a 'close' relationship. He wrote: "Teachers should talk more with students about life like friends and teach them more slang to make them more interested in English." Letting students work in pairs can reduce language-speaking anxiety according to previous researchers. Teachers should let students practice speaking with their peers outside the formal context of the classroom to reduce speaking anxiety (Woodrow, 2006). Kelsen (2018) stated that teachers can reduce in-class anxiety by trying to create a friendlier learning environment through injecting humour and encouragement into their lessons.

In the last question, the students were asked to give their opinions about ways in which their program could be improved in order to encourage students to overcome their language apprehension. Student 1 suggested that his program should organize more field trips, on which students can practice their English and have more exposure to talking with foreigners. Student 2 shared a similar opinion as she suggested that more exposure time is needed through speaking exercises. She wrote: “Instead of letting students sit at one place and do written assignment. The program should let them practice their English through activities such as game and group work. Encourage students to talk through short presentations with topics that are close to the student’s ‘life.’” Students 1 and 2 agreed that more interesting activities could be applied in the program to make learning English more interesting. Student 3 had a different idea compared to those of the first two. He stated that the biggest problem with the international program is academic English. He wrote: “Vietnamese students find it difficult and sometimes can’t understand academic English. Teachers should use more simple words that all the students can understand. And the most important is don’t make the student feel English is so difficult to learn. I believe if the teacher makes English sounds easy and cool, there will be more students want to learn it.” Student 3 would prefer that teachers simplify the content of the lessons that they are teaching. Also, he suggested that teachers should make the language more approachable for the students.

Teachers’ responses and suggestions to mitigate language-speaking anxiety. For the first question, the teachers were asked to give their opinion about their students’ overall language speaking performance in their class. Teacher 1 reported that most of her students have problems in English communication as they lack practice and confidence. However, Teacher 1 did not provide a clear answer to her students’ overall performance. Teacher 2, on the other hand, assessed her students’ English competence as decent. She wrote: “It’s a critical question because it depends

on student's level and English competence background. Frankly speaking, it's pretty O.K generally."

Question 2 asked the teachers about their language learning experience, specifically about whether they have encountered any speaking anxiety yet. Both teacher participants admitted that they had experienced language-speaking anxiety even after they became teachers. Teacher 1 shared that "When I was 18 studying in New Zealand, I used to be shy and nervous once communicating with the locals. Then I found out that the most important thing in communication is understanding so be confident in your own ability as long as other people can get what you mean." Teacher 2 wrote that she experiences speaking anxiety once in a while. She would simplify the content of her speech according to the competence of her audience in order to mitigate the effects of anxiety. According to Kralova and Tirpakova (2018), teachers do experience language-speaking anxiety, especially those who are non-native speakers. Anxious teachers would likely avoid speaking English as much as possible, and would prefer to use their native language to explain concepts to their students.

The next question asked the participants if they noticed the feeling of anxiety that their students are facing while speaking English. Both confirmed that they do notice the students' anxious feelings while they are speaking English. Teacher 1 wrote: "Yes, obviously. That's why I advise them to rehearse many times at home to make sure that they can do their best on presentation day." Teacher 2 shared the observation that she does notice her students struggle while delivering a speech in English. However, she did not give any advice as Teacher 1 did.

Question 4 asked the teachers about their methods of encouraging students to overcome their speaking anxiety. Both have different ways to ease their students' fears and boost their confidence. Teacher 1 wrote: "I usually tell them to take a deep breath, just enjoy themselves and

be open, be sharing with others. That's how you can calm down and move on your speech.” Teacher 2 shared the idea that she would give compliments in order to inspire her students. She would also let anxious students perform group or teamwork activities first before letting them do specific individual tasks. She also wrote: “Some more ways based on certain circumstances,” although she did not specify what the “certain circumstances” in this case would be.

The last question asked for the teachers' advice and recommendations that they would give to their students in order to improve their language proficiency and how they would deliver this information without discouraging the students. Teacher 1 suggested that students should have a realistic and achievable goal for their language learning. She wrote: “I always tell them to set up their goals which are achievable and realistic. When they know what they need to do, they will go for it and kill it.” Teacher 2 recommended that her students practice more because English or any other language is a “skill-subject.” She encourages her students to learn English “by any means available with optimal interest.” Teacher 2 does not even mind if the students make mistakes while speaking. She wrote: “Your mistakes are simply like a coal of a steam locomotive, which needs to be burnt off to move the train forward.”

Conclusion

In this chapter, the qualitative and quantitative data gathered from university students and teachers have been summarized and analysed. The language-speaking anxiety scale (SLAA) has been applied to collect quantitative data from the students. The first two bar charts illustrate the language-speaking anxiety level of the students when they have regular interaction with English speakers inside and outside class. The next three charts show the anxiety level when students try to participate in some in-class activities such as group discussion, acting in role-play, and giving a presentation. The following two charts reveal the anxiety level of students when they have a

conversation with local Vietnamese and English-speaking friends. The last four charts show the anxiety level when students interact with their teachers, doing such things as having conversations in English, and asking questions of Vietnamese and English-speaking teachers.

The qualitative data collected from the students can be summarized as follows. From the students' answers, it appears that personality type does affect their confidence and willingness to speak English. This point was also proven in the previous research by Kelsen (2018). Students with inadequate language proficiency experienced more anxiety compared to high-performing students. Additionally, the fear of making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation also causes speaking anxiety. According to the students interviewed, teachers should give feedback in a constructive manner, and should avoid 'harsh' criticism. Students will feel less anxious if teachers create a friendlier learning environment that takes a student-centered approach.

Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusion

Brief Summary of the Study

The main research goal of this study is to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regard to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 through 12 in Vietnam's public schools. However, even after such a long period of learning, most university students are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. The study has investigated factors that lead to their feeling anxious about speaking English. Additionally, the study has tried to uncover ways to mitigate the effects of language speaking anxiety, according to the feedback and suggestions from the participants. The research question of the present study is, "Which are psychological factors influence students' confidence when communicating in English as reported by university English teachers and students in Vietnam?".

The original plan involved collecting data from the two universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The method of data collection was to be face-to-face interviews and a survey distributed directly to participants. However, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak in January 2020 in Vietnam, the main investigator had to change the data-collection to online surveys and paper-recorded interviews. Information about the research was sent to potential participants via email, Facebook, and Instagram. Those who volunteered to participate in the research were given a link to the survey form. The interview participants were contacted months ahead; therefore, it was possible to give them the interview forms through email.

By 17 February 2020, the online survey produced 26 anonymous responses from university students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The interview forms were collected from

three students and two teacher-participants on the same day which ended the data collection period.

Discussion of Data

Scenarios that cause speaking anxiety. The quantitative data showed that most students felt less anxious when speaking English with someone they already knew. The anxiety level of students when speaking English to their friends and teachers is lower compared to the degree of anxiety they feel when communicating with a stranger. Whereas in-class activities are an effective way to improve English proficiency, students seem to struggle with giving presentations and doing role-plays. These public-speaking activities require real-time language exposure to an audience. Additionally, presentations are usually accompanied by teachers' marking and making judgments about students' linguistic performances. Preparation for such activities requires plenty of time and effort. The students usually need to prepare the slides, the speech, and the materials beforehand and then deliver the content using only English. The students showed almost no anxiety when speaking to their friends, even if the interlocutors were foreigners. This finding further emphasized that speaking English to someone familiar will reduce anxiety. When having a normal non-academic conversation with the teachers, most students preferred to speak with their Vietnamese teachers as it could be easier for them to switch back into their L1 language if they could not find the appropriate English sentence to speak. However, when it comes to asking questions, whether these are academic or non-academic related, students felt more comfortable asking their English-speaking teachers questions rather than their local, Vietnamese teachers. This finding could be the result of many factors such as teaching methods, teaching content, and the teaching culture. In Vietnam, classes with foreign teachers are typically communication focused. Therefore, students would have more opportunities to speak and interact with their English-speaking teachers. Hence,

the students could ask more questions. In Vietnam, classes are often very teacher-centered. Thus, there is often little interaction between students and their teachers. The result of this kind of classroom is that, many students have developed a habit of passive learning, listening but not speaking. Additionally, Vietnamese school culture is heavily based on Confucianism, which focusses more on having good manners, and on being orderly and obedient or compliant. Consequently, there is always an ‘invisible wall’ between students and teachers that prevents them from interrelating. The English-speaking teachers have brought a different culture into the class, creating a learning environment where the students have more chances to speak and ask questions. The concept of losing face also affects the students’ willingness to speak as students are afraid of receiving criticism from their teachers.

Factors that cause speaking anxiety. The qualitative data revealed some interesting findings. Among all participants, both students and teachers reported that they all have experienced language-speaking anxiety. This finding indicated language apprehension can affect all ESL learners even after they have graduated and became teachers. Personality type can have a significant impact on the students’ willingness to speak. The teacher participants did express awareness of their students’ anxiety while speaking English. Among the three student participants, there were two introverts and one extravert. The introverted students seemed to have more struggles with their English-speaking skills as they lack the confidence to do any form of oral interactions, even with their L1 language. This point has been proven in the previous research by Kelsen (2018). The extraverted students, however, still reported having experienced speaking anxiety. It is in extraverts’ natures to be outgoing and sociable, and to prefer to engage in verbal communication. Another factor that affects the students’ willingness to speak is their current language proficiency. Inadequate English skills restrained the students’ ability to speak as they

need more processing time to search for suitable vocabulary and grammar. Students with high language proficiency can mitigate the anxiety effect since they can process information faster and more efficiently. Additionally, the participants that have higher exposure time to spoken English tended to report experiencing less anxiety compared to others. The problem with English teaching in Vietnam is that the curriculum is still focusing on correct grammar and vocabulary rather than effective communication. The students usually do not have much practice and exposure time to spoken English. Moreover, language anxiety is also an effect of a teacher-centred learning environment. Many students have become passive learners, which means that they rarely engage themselves in practicing their English unless they are asked to do so. The concept of losing face once again has a negative effect on the students' self-confidence. The students reported that the fear of making mistakes leads them to feel even more anxious while speaking. Harsh criticism from teachers will also demoralize students and hurt their feelings. This embarrassment would further increase the students' anxiety levels, especially with lower-performing students.

Through all these findings in chapter 4, the hypothesis research model is to be adjusted by the following figure.

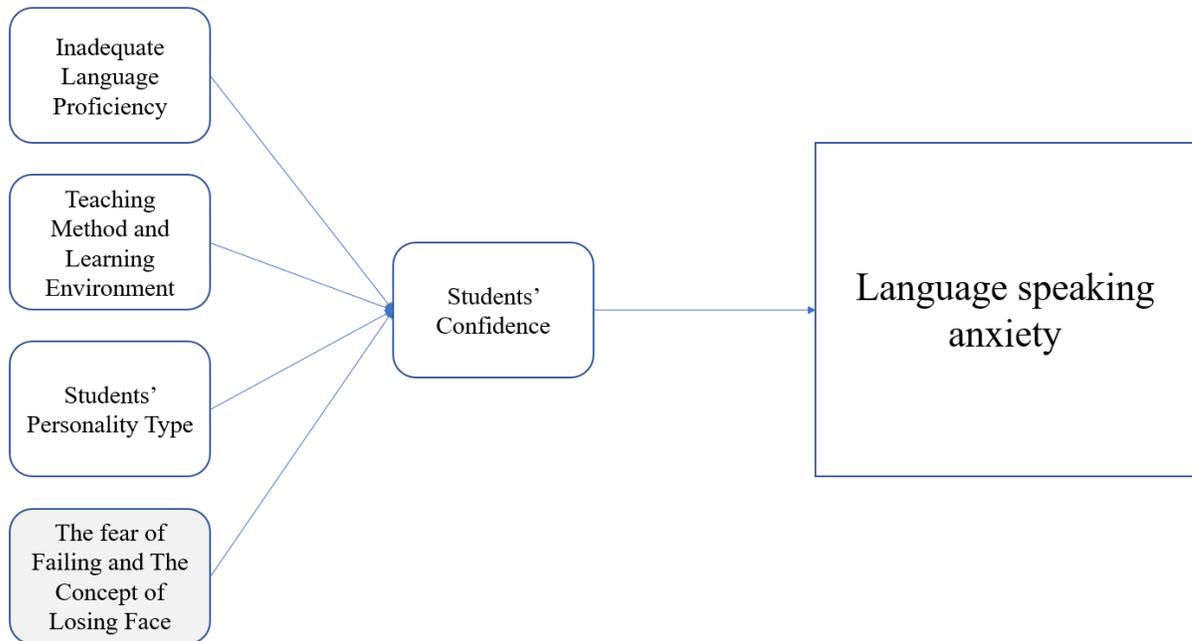


Figure 8. *Final research hypothesis model*

The complete model includes an additional factor, namely each student respondent's personality type. All listed factors above have a direct impact on students' self-confidence when they are speaking a second language. If the students have confidence in their language-speaking skills, they tend not to be experiencing anxiety.

Methods to mitigate the effects of speaking anxiety. Based on the feedback and suggestions from both teacher- and student-participants, the researcher has articulated various strategies that could mitigate the effect of language-speaking anxiety. A method that both sides agreed upon was to give students more constructive feedback and compliments. The students admitted that they feel receiving feedback and suggestions for improvement is essential to improve their language proficiency. However, they preferred having their teachers provide feedback in a pleasant manner and avoid delivering harsh criticism. Doing so will not only reduce the anxiety

level within the students but will also create a friendlier learning environment. The student-participants all agreed that a student-centered learning environment would reduce anxiety. Group participation activities seemed to be a very effective method since they give all students an equal chance to speak and practice their English. The teachers should also try to develop a 'close' relationship with their students. Teachers should treat their students as their friends rather than being authority figures. This is the first step in creating an engaging and friendly learning environment. Lower-performing students should be given special care as they are most affected by speaking anxiety. Teachers should give them more one-on-one practice and counselling to relieve their anxiety.

The main investigator has spent practicum hours teaching and volunteering at Vancouver Island University's English Learning Centre. VIU has interesting models and methods that Vietnamese universities should be applied to their classrooms. A good first step would be establishing a learning centre that can host a variety of activities such as a communication club, tutoring, and counselling. The idea behind these initiatives is that students can have an English-speaking zone within the university and experience a situation where they can practice their speaking skills without being judged. Conversation practices could be held by grouping students together and letting them hold discussions in English. Volunteers for conversation leaders can be recruited from among high-performing students. These students can help generate speaking topics for their friends and engage them in discussions. Tutoring and counselling services should be delivered to students who need help with their language study. Letting students have as much speaking practice as possible would partly ease their anxiety.

Limitation

The major limitation of this study is that the data collecting process was jeopardized by the COVID-19 outbreak in Ho Chi Minh City. The investigator's initial plan was to visit both universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and directly collect the data. However, since all schools were closed, the methods had to be changed into online surveys and paper-recorded interviews. This change has had a significant impact on the quality of both data types (qualitative and quantitative). The investigator was not able to deliver an introductory speech to the participants. And both the survey and interview forms were written in English. Some student participants were having a difficult time understanding the content. The investigator had to contact these confused students to explain the questions to them, a process which cost more time. In consequence, some interview participants gave vague answers to certain questions. This problem could have been avoided if the interviews had been conducted face to face as the investigator would have been able to ask the participants to specify or explain their answers in more detail. Another limitation is that the sample size for the quantitative data was small. The initial plan was to have up to 60 samples through a direct paper survey. As a consequence of the outbreak, the survey method was changed to an online administration, and shifted to participants through social media. As a result, only 26 respondents took part in the survey. Some items from the survey were unclear for the students, particularly those which required participants to give a rating. For example, a number of participants reported that they did not understand what "a native" or a "non-native teacher" is. The investigator had to adjust and tweak the survey language several times; changing the definitions of "native" and "non-native teachers" into "English speakers" and "local Vietnamese teachers" for easier understanding. This change, however, altered the original focus of the investigator, although

the main target of the survey remained unchanged. Once again, all of these issues could have been avoided if the data collection process had not been affected by the outbreak.

Suggestions for Further Research

The sole purpose of this research study was to discover factors that cause language-speaking anxiety in Vietnamese university students. A number of research studies have focused on the subject of language anxiety, but none of these has directly covered speaking anxiety. It would be interesting to see future researchers try to expand the language-speaking anxiety scale to include more speaking circumstances that students tend to encounter. The number of respondents generating the quantitative data should include more students in order to have a greater degree of validity. More research about students' personality types, especially about those leaning towards introversion, would help these quieter students overcoming the restriction of their personality type and enable them to speak English with confidence. Furthermore, the possibilities for mitigating the effect of speaking anxiety are quite limited. Newer methods could definitely help students to overcome their anxiety and further improve the process of secondary language acquisition.

Conclusions

The hypothesis about the cause of language-speaking anxiety has been proven. Four main factors have a direct impact on students' confidence and their willingness to speak: inadequate language proficiency; teaching methodologies, and learning environment; students' personality type; and the fear of failing. Personality traits also apparently have an impact on students' speaking ability. Introverted students are more vulnerable to language-speaking anxiety, as most of them do not prefer oral communication. Different speaking scenarios create different anxiety levels among students. Thus far, practicing English in groups seems the best way to reduce speaking anxiety among the students. Teachers play a crucial role in mitigating the effect of anxiety on their

students. Therefore, teachers should facilitate the creation of a classroom environment which utilizes a student-centered teaching approach. The students would feel more engaged in language acquisition if their study time were to contain more group engagement activities, that is, situations in which they will have more opportunity to practice speaking English.

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Appendix A**Consent Form for Students*****The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition******Consent form for interview (students)*****Principal Investigator**

Hao Nguyen, Student

Master of Education

Vancouver Island University

XXX@email.com**Student Supervisor**

Philip Allingham, PhD.

Faculty of Education

Vancouver Island University

XXX@email.com***Thank you for considering participation in this research study.***

My name is Hao Nguyen; I am a student in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU). My research, entitled “The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition,” aims to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regards to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnam’s public schools, even after such a long period of learning most students entering university are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. My hope is that my research will discover factors that prevent Vietnamese University students from communicating orally in English effectively.

Research participants are asked to complete a personal research interview. If you agree to participate, you would be asked questions concerning your personal experiences while using academic English in your classes. As a student participant you will be asked to share what you feel have been your useful teaching strategies that help students to overcome their language apprehension. With your permission, the interview would be audio recorded. Your participation would require approximately 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

Depending on the information you provide, there is a slight possibility that the information might cause you loss of social status and/or embarrassment. Since you will not be identified by name but by a coded sequence of numbers and letters, and since details of your background will not given in the published version of this research project, there is an extremely low probability of your being subsequently identified as a participant in this study. As strategies to manage the risk of other students' perceiving that you are a respondent in this project, the principal researcher will set up the interview in a coffee shop outside the campus, in a private area where we cannot be overheard. We shall consistently approach this interview in an anonymous way, so your identity would not be disclosed in the products of the research. I will make every effort not to disclose your identity; for example, I shall never use your name, initials, or student number. Rather, I shall use a pseudonym if I need to quote your opinions verbatim. If you have any concerns about the potential for disclosing your identity as the interview proceeds, please feel free to raise these concerns as they arise. Every effort will be made to anonymize your answers, and you may review and adjust any of your oral responses by editing a transcript that I shall prepare for your review.

If you choose to participate, all records of your participation will be kept confidential. Only my faculty supervisor and I will have access to the information you provide. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. I will also upload the data to my personal drive from Google. Only I have access to this account with a unique password. The data will be kept on my laptop and Google Drive. Data will be deleted, and paper records shredded at the end of the project, approximately January 2021.

Since the data will be uploaded to Google's server, which is located in the United States. All the information shared would not be protected by Canadian privacy. There is slight chance that Homeland security would be able to identify individuals. However, since the data collected could be construed as sensitive or subversive, CSIS and other security agencies are not at all likely to be interested in what has been collected.

The research findings will be used in my master's thesis, published on VIUSpace, and presented at the VIU Masters Conference as well as at CSSE (Canadian Society Study of Education) Conference. Next year, the results of this study will be available online as part of my final thesis on VIUSpace: see viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/3277. By searching my name on this web page, you will be able to find this research study.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time up to when I begin analysis of the data, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to

three weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to three weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed. After you have accepted the transcript as reviewed, all your records will be anonymized, and it will not be possible for you to withdraw from the study.

By checking the appropriate box and signing below you are indicating that you have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

I consent to the interview being audio recorded. Yes No

I consent to being quoted in the products of the research. Yes No

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

I, Hao Nguyen, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

If you have any concerns about your treatment or experience as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at ###-###-#### or by email at XXX@email.com.

Appendix B**Consent Form for Teachers*****The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition******Consent form for interview (teacher)*****Principal Investigator**

Hao Nguyen, Student

Master of Education

Vancouver Island University

XXX@email.com**Student Supervisor**

Philip Allingham, PhD.

Faculty of Education

Vancouver Island University

XXX@email.com***Thank you for considering participation in this research study.***

My name is Hao Nguyen; I am a student in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU). My research, entitled “The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition,” aims to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regards to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnam’s public schools, even after such a long period of learning most students entering university are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. My hope is that my research will discover factors that prevent Vietnamese University students from communicating orally in English effectively.

Research participants are asked to complete a personal research interview. If you agree, you would be asked questions concerning your personal experiences while using English in your classes. As a teacher participant you will be asked to share your useful teaching strategies that help students to overcome their language apprehension. With your permission, the interview would be audio recorded. Your participation would require approximately 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

The results of this study will be presented in a final report required for completion of my degree and may also be used for conference publications and presentations and published in academic journals.

Depending on the information you provide, there is a slight possibility that the information you provide might cause you loss of social status, job position and/or embarrassment. Since you will not be identified by name and details of your background will not given in the published version of this research project, there is an extremely low probability of your being subsequently identified as a participant in this study. As strategies to manage the risk of your students, colleague or supervisor perceiving that you are a respondent in this project, I suggest that we should conduct the interview in a private space such as your personal office. We shall consistently approach this interview in an anonymous way, so your identity would not be disclosed in the products of the research. I will make every effort not to disclose your identity; for example, I shall never use your name or initial. Rather, I shall use a pseudonym if I need to quote your opinions verbatim. If you have any concerns about the potential for disclosing your identity as the interview proceeds, please feel free to raise these concerns as they arise. Every effort will be made to anonymize your answers, and you may review and adjust any of your oral responses by editing a transcript that I shall prepare for your review.

If you choose to participate, all records of your participation would be confidential. Only my faculty supervisor and I will have access to the information you provide. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home. I will also upload the data to my personal drive from Google. Only I have access to this account with a unique password. The data will be kept on my laptop and Google Drive will be deleted, and paper records shredded at the end of the project, approximately January 2021.

Since the data will be uploaded to Google's server, which is located in the United States. All the information shared would not be protected by Canadian privacy. There is slight chance that Homeland security would be able to identify individuals. However, since the data collected could be construed as sensitive or subversive, CSIS and other security agencies are not at all likely to be interested in what has been collected.

The research findings will be used in my master's thesis, published on VIUSpace, and presented at the VIU Masters Conference as well as at CSSE (Canadian Society Study of Education) Conference. Next year, the results of this study will be available online as part of my final thesis on VIUSpace: see viurrspace.ca/handle/10613/3277. By searching my name on this web page, you will be able to find this research study.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time up to when I begin analysis of the data, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to

review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to three weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to three weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed. After you have accepted the transcript as reviewed, all your records will be anonymized, and it will not be possible for you to withdraw from the study.

By checking the appropriate box and signing below you are indicating that you have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

I consent to the interview being audio recorded.

Yes *No*

I consent to being quoted in the products of the research.

Yes *No*

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

I, Hao Nguyen, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at ###-###-#### or by email at

XXX@email.com.

Appendix C

Notification Letters for Students



Request for conducting research

Hello,

My name is Hao, I am a student in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU). My research, entitled “The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition” aims to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regards to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnam’s public schools, even after such a long period of learning most students entering university are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. My hope is that my research will discover factors that prevent Vietnamese University students from communicating orally in English effectively.

If you be willing to participate in my research. I would like to have you do a survey in regards of your experiences while using English in your study. I am wanting to gather quantitative and qualitative data that help to uncover factors that affect students’ language anxiety.

The method of gathering data is through a survey with students of two classes and an in-depth interview section with 2 teachers and 2 students from Hoa Sen University and FPT University. In order to become a participant of the present study, one must fulfill the following requirements:

(a) teacher-participants must have at least five years of teaching experience, and (b) the programs they are teaching must be in an English-based program. Student participants must (a) have

already completed twelve years of general education, (b) be above eighteen years old, (c) have at least one year of studying and using English for their post-secondary studies, and (d) be second- or third-year university students.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw throughout the course of the survey for any reason, and without explanation from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the survey, you can just return the survey paper to me and I will immediately dispose of it. Once the survey has been submitted in the blue box, it will not be possible to withdraw your responses. If you choose to participate in the follow up interview, please fill in your information at the end of the survey paper and submit it in the red box.

If you have questions, please contact me at XXX@email.com. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at ###-###-#### or by email at XXX@email.com.

Thank you for your time,

Hao Nguyen

Appendix D**Notification Letter for Teachers*****Request for conducting research***

Hello,

My name is Hao, I am a student in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU). My research, entitled “The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition” aims to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regards to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnam’s public schools, even after such a long period of learning most students entering university are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. My hope is that my research will discover factors that prevent Vietnamese University students from communicating orally in English effectively.

I would like to request the participation from the students of your class. I am planning to have them do a survey and interview regarding their experiences while using English in their study. I am wanting to gather quantitative and qualitative data that help to uncover factors that affect students’ language anxiety.

The research will be conduct in Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam. The method of gathering data is through a survey with 20 students and an in-depth interview section with 2 teachers and 2 students from Hoa Sen University and FPT University. In order to become a participant of the

present study, one must fulfill the following requirements: (a) teacher-participants must have at least five years of teaching experience, and (b) the programs they are teaching must be in an English-based program. Student participants must (a) have already completed twelve years of general education, (b) be above eighteen years old, (c) have at least one year of studying and using English for their post-secondary studies, and (d) be second- or third-year university students.

An information letter that gives you detailed information and instructions about this study will be sent before the individual interview and the survey. If you agree to let your students participate, please contact me through my email for the confirmation.

If you have questions, please contact me at XXX@email.com. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at ###-###-#### or by email at XXX@email.com.

Thank you for your time,

Hao Nguyen

Appendix E**Notification Letter for Administrator*****Request for conducting research***

Hello,

My name is Hao, I am a student in the Master of Education in Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU). My research, entitled “The Effects of Speaking Apprehension in Second Language Acquisition” aims to develop an understanding of the existing problem with regards to the English proficiency of Vietnamese students. Although English is a compulsory subject for students from Grades 3 to 12 in Vietnam’s public schools, even after such a long period of learning most students entering university are still incapable of developing fluency in spoken English. My hope is that my research will discover factors that prevent Vietnamese University students from communicating orally in English effectively.

I would like to request the participation from the students and teachers of your institute. I am planning to have them do a survey and interview regarding their experiences while using English in their classes. I am wanting to gather quantitative and qualitative data that help to uncover factors that affect students’ language anxiety.

The research will be conduct in Ho Chi Minh City Vietnam. The method of gathering data is through a survey with 20 students and an in-depth interview section with 2 teachers and 2 students from Hoa Sen University and FPT University. In order to become a participant of the

present study, one must fulfill the following requirements: (a) teacher-participants must have at least five years of teaching experience, and (b) the programs they are teaching must be in an English-based program. Student participants must (a) have already completed twelve years of general education, (b) be above eighteen years old, (c) have at least one year of studying and using English for their post-secondary studies, and (d) be second- or third-year university students.

An information letter that gives you detailed information and instructions about this study will be sent before the individual interview and the survey. If you agree to let your students participate, please contact me through my email for the confirmation.

If you have questions, please contact me at XXX@email.com. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at ###-###-##### or by email at XXX@email.com.

Thank you for your time,

Hao Nguyen

Appendix F

Adapted Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale

Thank you very much for participating in this study. The following is a questionnaire concerning your anxiety while orally communicating in English. In particular when you have to use English in and out of class. I designed this questionnaire based on the Second language Speaking Anxiety Scale from Tu (2014) in a relevant research. Please read each statement carefully and give your rating based on the five-point scale. The result of survey will be used for research purpose.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all anxious	Slightly anxious	Moderately anxious	Very anxious	Extremely anxious

Situation	Anxiety level
1. The teacher asks me questions in English in class.	1 2 3 4 5
2. A native speaker I do not know asks me questions.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Taking part in a group discussion in class using English	1 2 3 4 5
4. Taking part in a role-play or dialogue in front of the class.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Giving an oral presentation in English to the rest of the class.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Having a conversation in English with a friend or colleague who is a non-native speaker	1 2 3 4 5
7. Having a conversation in English with a friend or colleague who is a native speaker.	1 2 3 4 5

8. Having an informal conversation with a teacher/lecturer who is a native speaker of English.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Having an informal conversation with a teacher/lecturer who is a non-native speaker of English.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Attending a class in which the teacher is a non-native speaker of English.	1 2 3 4 5
11. Attending a class in which the teacher is a native speaker of English.	1 2 3 4 5
12. Asking questions or advice in English from a native speaker teacher/lecturer.	1 2 3 4 5
13. Asking questions or advice in English from a non-native speaker teacher/lecturer.	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix G**Language Speaking Anxiety Interview Form for Students**

1. Please briefly explain why you feel that your personality would classify you as an introvert or extrovert.
2. Please you tell me more about your English learning experiences. How would you rate your current English proficiency?
3. Do you feel tense and anxious when trying to speak English? What is the reason?
4. What kinds of encouragement would you be likely to receive which can help you feel more confident in speaking in class?
5. What more do you think that can be done more in the class to create an anxiety-free English-speaking environment?
6. In your opinion, what are the ways that the program could have done better to encourage the students to overcome their language apprehension?

Appendix H**Language Speaking Anxiety Interview Form for Teachers**

1. What do you think about your students' overall performance in English, especially in speaking?
2. What evidence have you received of anxiety or tension among students when they speaking or trying to deliver a presentation in English?
3. What do you usually do to encourage the students? Please explain any specific ways that you employ to ease their anxiety.
4. What kinds of feedback and recommendations would you give to your students to improve their language speaking proficiency? How would you deliver these without discouraging the students?