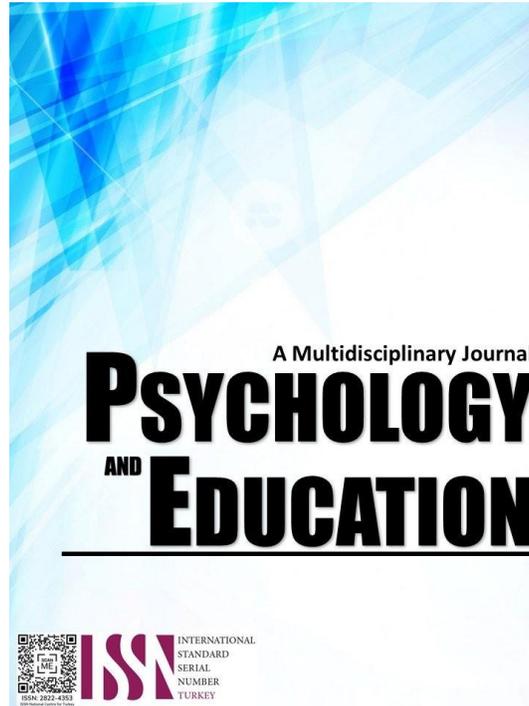


**SPEAKING ANXIETY LEVELS, CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, AND THEIR
EFFECTS ON THE ENGLISH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
GRADE-10 STUDENTS OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

Volume: 53

Issue 9

Pages: 990-1000

Document ID: 2026PEMJ5219

DOI: 10.70838/pemj.530903

Manuscript Accepted: 03-03-2026

Speaking Anxiety Levels, Contributing Factors, and Their Effects on the English Academic Performance of Grade-10 Students of Saint Mary's University Junior High School

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Abstract

In today's interconnected world, effective speaking skills are essential for academic success and personal development, especially in English as a global lingua franca. However, many students experience speaking anxiety, which can hinder their ability to communicate confidently in academic settings. This study investigates the levels of speaking anxiety, contributing factors, and their effects on the English academic performance of Grade-10 students at Saint Mary's University Junior High School. Utilizing a mixed-methods descriptive-comparative design, data were collected through adapted questionnaires, the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) and the Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS), from a quota sample of 80 students. The results reveal a high level of speaking anxiety among respondents, particularly during oral presentations and recitations, triggered mainly by fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, communication apprehension, and challenges in comfortable speaking English. No significant differences in anxiety were found based on students' sex or English grades, indicating that speaking anxiety is a broadly experienced issue regardless of demographic factors. Coping strategies frequently employed include thorough practice and preparation, relaxation techniques, and positive self-talk. The findings underscore the need for educators to create supportive learning environments and implement targeted strategies to help students manage speaking anxiety, thereby enhancing their oral communication skills and academic outcomes. The study recommends further research into additional factors affecting speaking anxiety and developing comprehensive anxiety mitigation programs within the curriculum.

Keywords: *speaking anxiety, English subject, coping strategies, oral communication, communication apprehension*

Introduction

In the 21st century, communication skills have become an indispensable asset in both personal and academic spheres. Among the various communication skills, speaking stands out as one of the most crucial. Speaking is an inseparable part of daily life. It cannot be underestimated (Clampitt, 2016) that confident individuals have the ability to effectively communicate with individuals to collaborate, empathize, and think critically. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to deliver ideas clearly and persuasively has become essential for success in almost every field.

P. Rao (2019) highlights that speaking, as a key component of language skills, plays a central role in achieving success in today's globalized world. With English serving as a dominant global lingua franca, mastering spoken communication in English has become vital for learners aiming to excel in their academic and professional endeavors in the Philippines. In this context, classrooms serve as the ideal platform for developing these essential skills, with speaking activities offering invaluable opportunities for students to practice and refine their communication abilities.

The importance of the English Language extends to schools and the classroom, where English is a Subject that is part of the core curriculum. It aims to improve grammar and students' ability to understand and respond to spoken or written text, specifically, world literature, which is applied in the Junior High School Curriculum (DepEd, 2019, pp. 46–47). This provides learners with the skills for critical thinking, effective self-expression, and confidence, which are crucial not just for academic success, but for their overall communication and interpersonal skills, which can be used in real-world scenarios, aiding in future professional endeavors.

It is worth taking note that there is a changing process underway in the educational curriculum in the Philippines, which is the MATATAG Curriculum, also known as "Bansang Makabata, Batang Makabansa", introduced on January 30, 2023, where "MATATAG or K to 10 curricula will focus on five important skills: language, reading and literacy, mathematics, makabansa, and good manners and right conduct. This flexible curriculum will create modifications on educational activities and will create a higher demand for the fundamental skills, such as linguistics, that will be seen in classrooms. During this stage, students are expected to take on more responsibilities and engage in various activities that will challenge them to develop these 21st-century skills, such as communication skills, which are essential and used across all sectors of education. One challenge that students could encounter, however, is public speaking or presenting in front of peers and teachers, which is often integrated across subjects.

Research Questions

Generally, this research sought to examine the factors that affect the level of speaking anxiety among Junior High School students. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the levels of speaking anxiety among the respondents?
2. What are the factors affecting the speaking anxiety of the respondents?
3. Is there a significant difference that affects the speaking anxiety of the respondents when grouped according to:
 - 3.1 sex;
 - 3.2 grade in English?
4. What strategies can be implemented to overcome the speaking anxiety of the respondents?

Literature Review

Speaking Activities

Speaking activity is a situation where people communicate with each other physically and psychologically. In Philippine schools, speaking activities are referred to as well-organized tasks that help to develop students' verbal communication skills, allowing them to become more confident and better express their own ideas. Furthermore, these activities play an essential role in the curriculum, specifically in subjects such as English, where communication and critical thinking are emphasized. One of the most common speaking activities done in schools is class discussions, wherein students engage in conversations on different topics, freely express their ideas, and debate on different viewpoints and perspectives. In doing this activity, students will be able to enhance their ability to think critically, respect different perspectives, and defend arguments. Another activity that is being practiced in schools is oral presentations, wherein the students are delivering a speech or a report presentation in front of the class. These would help students improve their public speaking skills, organize their thoughts properly, and develop the ability to engage an audience effectively. The Department of Education's K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum includes a core subject titled "Oral Communication in Context", which focuses on developing listening and speaking skills for effective and efficient communication in real-life situations.

In addition, the DepEd Learning Portal offers modules designed to help students in organizing, planning, and preparing for delivering effective oral presentations. Inputting these speaking activities not only enhances language accuracy but also prepares students for real-life situations where effective communication is considered to be crucial. As highlighted in the *International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies*, speaking plays an essential role in effective speaker-listening relationships, and organized activities can help improve these skills (Wahidiyati et al., 2024). Reporting helps students organize and express information, enhancing clarity and confidence in oral delivery. Role-playing can also help engage students in simulated real-life situations, promoting spontaneous language use and practice of different communicative functions, achieving fluency and flexibility in oral communication. This enables fluency and flexibility to be achieved in oral communication. Both strategies cater to various aspects of speaking ability, which overall leads to the comprehensive development of students' oral skills. Speaking activities in Philippine schools play an essential role in shaping the students' confidence, character, communication skills, and critical thinking. These activities not only enhance language accuracy but also prepare students for real-world situations where effective communication is crucial. While public speaking skills are necessary, there is an underlying issue that hinders the acquisition and development of this competency among students.

Speaking Anxiety

Speech anxiety or public speaking anxiety is a type of social anxiety disorder (SAD) that refers to the fear of speaking in public, which can range from mildly nervous to terrified and in a panic (Cuncic, 2023). Some of those who experience this may choose not to speak in front of others or may do so with trembling hands and a shaky voice. According to Dwyer and Davidson (2021), a poll showed that 74% of Gen Z reported a fear of public speaking (Motavalli, 2015), while a higher percentage of public speaking fear is reported in college students (Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). "Speech anxiety is an issue in school in general and language classes in particular," as said by Zetterkvist (2021). This is a concerning issue for students when seizing communicative opportunities is proven difficult to initiate and take part in, which can impact their academic performance and well-being.

In educational contexts, students may avoid speaking or display visible signs of anxiety such as trembling or a shaky voice, which can significantly impede classroom participation and learning outcomes, as explained by Cuncic (2023). Recent surveys also indicate a high prevalence of public-speaking fear among young people, with substantial anxiety reported across age groups and educational levels; findings consistently show that fear is particularly pronounced in settings where oral participation is central to language learning (Dwyer & Davidson, 2021; Motavalli, 2015; Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). Scholarly commentary across diverse contexts notes that speech anxiety is a pervasive issue in schools, with language classes in particular showing heightened sensitivity because classroom discourse and oral assessments foreground speaking performance (Zetterkvist, 2021). This anxiety can dampen motivation, reduce language proficiency over time, and limit involvement in classroom activities, contributing to broader declines in academic engagement and language development. Emotional distress associated with speaking anxiety—ranging from unease to panic during oral tasks, further compounds cognitive load, hindering task execution and overall learning efficiency in language subjects (Mehdi & Kumar, 2019; Horwitz et al., 1986). Speech anxiety has a substantial effect on students. It can result in a decline in motivation, an overall decline in language skills, and a lack of involvement in class activities, where "One of the major problems with learning a language subject like English is the negative correlation between speaking anxiety and proficiency" (Altun, 2023). An emotional experience that every language student may experience is mental distress or unease brought on by worry. Speaking anxiety, however, prevents language learners from completing their tasks efficiently.

Empirical work and meta-analytic reviews indicate that targeted interventions and classroom strategies can mitigate speaking anxiety, create more welcoming speaking opportunities, and support more positive language-learning trajectories across diverse educational contexts (The Journal of Pedagogical Research, 2025; Kayhan S., 2023) These findings underscore the importance of integrating anxiety-reducing practices into language curricula, particularly in settings that emphasize communicative competence and frequent oral participation.

Factors in Speaking Anxiety

According to Yaikhong and Usaha (2012), the Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) identifies four major factors that influence speaking anxiety: Fear of Negative Evaluation, Comfort in Speaking English, Test Anxiety, and Comprehension Apprehension. These dimensions explain how various emotional, cognitive, and linguistic elements contribute to students' anxiety when communicating in English.

The Fear of Negative Evaluation Factor refers to students' apprehension about being judged or criticized by others when speaking in public. Learners often fear making mistakes, being laughed at, or receiving disapproval from peers or teachers (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012; Ul Huda et al., 2024). This concern about others' perceptions can lower self-confidence and discourage students from participating in class discussions or presentations. Studies have shown that fear of judgment is one of the strongest predictors of speaking anxiety, as it affects motivation and willingness to communicate (Okyar, 2023; Bodie, 2010).

The Comfort in Speaking English Factor reflects how at ease and confident a student feels when using English during communication tasks. Students with limited language exposure or self-assessed weaknesses in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary often experience discomfort and nervousness when speaking (K & Alamelu, 2020). This lack of comfort may stem from limited practice opportunities or fear of making linguistic errors in front of others (Rahmat et al., 2021). When learners feel more comfortable expressing themselves, they are more likely to engage actively and demonstrate better oral performance (El Sakka, 2025).

The Test Anxiety Factor pertains to the tension and worry students experience in evaluative or graded speaking situations. This includes oral recitations, speech performances, or interviews, where the fear of failure can disrupt focus and memory recall (Bodie, 2010; Chou, 2018). Even well-prepared students may experience heightened anxiety during these assessments due to the perceived high stakes involved (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Test anxiety is particularly relevant in language classrooms, where oral performance is frequently graded and serves as a visible indicator of proficiency (Dwyer & Davidson, 2021).

The Comprehension Apprehension Factor refers to the anxiety caused by difficulty in understanding or responding to spoken English during spontaneous interactions (Yaikhong & Usaha, 2012; Gallego et al., 2022). This often occurs when students are asked to speak without preparation or struggle to comprehend complex questions. The cognitive pressure to process and produce language simultaneously can lead to hesitation, confusion, and self-doubt (Qin & Poopatwiboon, 2023). Enhancing comprehension skills and providing low-pressure speaking opportunities can help lessen this form of anxiety.

Other studies mainly aimed to see the effects of public speaking anxiety on the performance of students in speech activities, but further studies are yet to be conducted about the effects of speaking anxiety, which will measure its effects in the general field of their performance within the language subject English. Moreover, related studies have conducted similar research in the Senior High School (SHS) students. Still, this study will be conducted with the Junior High School students, where the ongoing transitional phase to SHS is a factor that needs to be considered. Through this, the study tried to identify ways to counteract speech anxiety among Junior High School students by knowing how these factors and their impacts can be mitigated.

Methodology

Research Design

This Qualitative-Quantitative study is investigated using a Descriptive-Comparative approach between speaking anxiety and the academic performance among junior high students of Saint Mary's University. Quantitatively, a descriptive comparative design is done between the speaking anxiety levels with the use of a validated scale, and the academic performance to explore their comparison and differences by sex, general average, grade in English, and level of speaking anxiety. This approach comprehended how the students' degree of speaking anxiety affects their academic success in the English subject, and whether there is a difference in its level and effects. Qualitatively, a thematic analysis is explored to identify common and recurring themes of the student's perceived factors that influenced their speaking anxiety and to consider their most sought-after strategies in managing this problem. Lastly, the students are asked to provide suggestions on what services their school can use to combat this issue. The integrated findings then provided a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between speaking anxiety and academic performance.

Respondents

In this study, all students from each section in Grade 10 at Saint Mary's University were selected as respondents. However, a quota sampling is used where the student sample size is made to 80 as opposed to the original population size of 198 junior high school students. This is done to have a substantial number of respondents while making up for the time constraints that occurred during the data gathering at Saint Mary's University Junior High School. The researchers encountered time limitations, class scheduling conflicts,

and difficulty in accessing all students across sections, which made it challenging to conduct a full random sampling. To address these constraints, the sampling method is switched to quota sampling, which ensures that each section still has students included in the study while also making the process more efficient within the limited time frame.

Instrument

This research used survey questionnaires for data gathering. The questions were adapted from the study of Salvador et al. (2023) entitled "Speech Performance and Speech Anxiety of Senior High School Students and their correlates," which includes the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) used as the primary tool in assessing the study. The researchers made minor modifications of the questionnaire to meet the objectives of the study by changing the words "speech anxiety" into "speaking anxiety" since determining speaking anxiety is a broader term than specifically only assessing speech anxiety, and situations including recitation and oral speaking activities were added in place of only speech activities. Additionally, to determine the factors affecting the students, the researchers used the Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) questionnaire developed by Yaikhong and Usaha (2012) which considers four specific factors: The Fear of Negative Evaluation Factor from questions 1-6, The second factor is the Comfort in Speaking English Factor from questions 7-10, the third factor is The Test Anxiety from questions 11- 13, and the Fourth factor which is Communication Apprehension from questions 14-17.

The instrument that the researchers used is the four-part questionnaire. The first part is the Personal Demographic of the respondent that contains the sex, general average, grade in English, and the name (optional). The second part of the questionnaire consists of 40 quantitative questions that came from the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA). In comparison, the third part is also quantitative, consisting of 17 closed-ended questions that came from the Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) questionnaire to evaluate the level of speech anxiety and the factors that affect the respondents' speaking anxiety, respectively. The fourth part of the questionnaire consisted of an open-ended question for specifying their perceived factors and to determine the respondents' suggestions for overcoming this.

After encoding the incorporated adapted questionnaires of the PRPSA and PSCAS with minor modifications, the gathered data is encoded to the SPSS application for the statistical analysis of the pilot test data's reliability. The result of the Cronbach's alpha with the total 59 number of items, garnering an internal consistency of .99, which is equivalent to Excellent ($\alpha \geq 0.9$). This indicated that the questionnaire is reliable and ready for the final data gathering.

Procedure

The data gathering process began with checking the face validity of the questionnaire with the sample group of 30 grade 10 students, which was used to measure the Cronbach's alpha to ensure that all items were reliable and appropriate for the final Questionnaire. Afterward, a pilot test was conducted to verify the reliability of the instrument. Once validated, the researchers sought formal approval from the principal of Saint Mary's University Junior High School to administer the survey. Upon approval, the questionnaires were distributed to the Grade 10 students and collected after completion. The data were encoded and prepared for analysis.

Data Analysis

The descriptive-comparative research design was utilized in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather and analyze data. The following tools and techniques were employed in processing the collected information:

Descriptive statistics, specifically frequency count and percentage distribution, were used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents, who were grouped according to sex, general average, and quarter average in English. The mean and standard deviation were computed to determine the levels of speaking anxiety and the factors contributing to speaking anxiety among the respondents, as measured through the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) and the Public Speaking Classroom Anxiety Scale (PSCAS). Tables 3 and 4 present the mean range and its qualitative interpretation. Inferential statistics were applied to determine whether there were significant differences in the level of speaking anxiety of the respondents when grouped according to their sex, general average, and quarter average in English. An unpaired t-test was used to analyze the data based on the demographic variables.

Thematic analysis was conducted on the responses to the open-ended questions. These responses provided qualitative insights into the students' coping strategies and suggested interventions to overcome speaking anxiety. The gathered responses were categorized and summarized into recurring themes.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the Levels of Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents, indicating an overall mean score of 2.735, which corresponds to a high level of anxiety. The highest mean score is 3.15, for the item "While preparing for recitation, I feel tense and nervous," while the lowest mean score is 2.05, associated with " I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech." This data highlights the significant anxiety respondents feel, especially during preparation for oral presentations.

These findings imply that speaking anxiety predominantly arises from the anticipation and preparation phases of oral communication activities, leading to psychological and physiological symptoms such as nervousness, rapid heartbeat, and tension. The elevated anxiety



may cause cognitive interference, such as memory lapses and difficulty concentrating during speeches. Variability in anxiety levels among respondents suggests that individual factors such as confidence and familiarity with speaking tasks influence how anxiety is experienced.

Table 1. *The Levels of Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents*

Items	Mean	SD	Qualitative Interpretation
1.) While preparing for recitation, I feel tense and nervous.	3.15	0.70	High level of anxiety
2.) I feel tense when I see the words “Oral Presentation” and “Oral Speech” on a course outline when studying.	3.02	0.81	High level of anxiety
3.) My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving my own opinion during recitation.	2.99	0.74	High level of anxiety
4.) I get anxious when I think about an oral recitation and public speaking activities coming up.	3.14	0.78	High level of anxiety
5.) When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.	2.88	0.77	High level of anxiety
6.) My hands tremble when I am giving a speech.	2.86	0.90	High level of anxiety
7.) I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.	3.11	0.82	High level of anxiety
8.) I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I don’t know.	3.01	0.89	High level of anxiety
9.) My heart beats very fast just as I start a speaking activity.	3.11	0.76	High level of anxiety
10.) I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my speaking activity starts.	2.98	0.76	High level of anxiety
11.) Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while talking to somebody.	2.48	0.89	Low level of anxiety
12.) Realizing that only a little time remains in a speaking activity makes me very tense and anxious.	3.01	0.80	High level of anxiety
13.) I breathe faster just before starting a speaking activity.	2.66	0.87	High level of anxiety
14.) I do poorly on speeches because I am anxious.	2.38	0.97	Low level of anxiety
15.) I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.	2.55	0.95	High level of anxiety
16.) When I make a mistake while giving a speech, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.	2.84	0.88	High level of anxiety
17.) During an important speech, I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.	2.63	0.80	High level of anxiety
18.) I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speech.	2.05	0.84	Low level of anxiety
19.) My heart beats very fast while I present a speech.	3.05	0.86	High level of anxiety
20.) I feel anxious while waiting to give my speech.	3.11	0.78	High level of anxiety
21.) While giving a speech, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.	2.76	0.90	High level of anxiety
22.) During group speech in class, I feel a knot of helplessness tightening when it's my turn to contribute.	2.48	0.93	Low level of anxiety
23.) While reciting answers aloud in class, my heart starts to beat faster.	2.52	0.89	High level of anxiety
24.) When the teacher randomly calls on me, I get so anxious that my mind blanks even Though I know the answer well.	2.75	0.95	High level of anxiety
27.) I have no fear of giving a speech.	3.05	0.79	High level of anxiety
28.) Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.	2.11	0.81	Low level of anxiety
29.) I look forward to giving a speech	2.75	0.82	High level of anxiety
30.) I feel relaxed while giving a speech.	3.01	0.80	High level of anxiety
31.) I enjoy preparing for a speech	2.86	0.71	High level of anxiety
32.) I face the prospect of giving a speech with confidence.	2.51	0.81	High level of anxiety
33.) My mind is clear when giving a speech.	2.73	0.69	High level of anxiety
34.) I do not dread giving a speech.	2.84	0.65	High level of anxiety
35.) Right after giving an opinion, I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.	2.46	0.75	Low level of anxiety
36.) While giving a speech, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.	2.54	0.78	High level of anxiety
37.) I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving a speech.	2.7	0.95	High level of anxiety
38.) I am able to share my thoughts freely among my classmates during group activities.	2.41	0.76	Low level of anxiety
39.) While giving a speech, I feel confident, and I can clearly recall all the facts I’ve prepared.	2.69	0.79	High level of anxiety
40.) I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving a speech.	2.63	0.72	High level of anxiety
Overall	2.735	0.821	High Level of Anxiety

Legend: 1.00 - 1.75 (Very low level of anxiety); 1.76 - 2.50 (low level of anxiety); 2.51 - 3.25 (high level of anxiety); 3.26 – 4.00 (Very high level of anxiety)

The high overall level of speech anxiety found in the respondents aligns with existing research showing that public speaking is a major source of stress, especially in oral academic tasks. A study by Nul Huda (2024) highlights that public speaking anxiety often includes both psychological symptoms, like fear of being judged, and physical symptoms such as trembling and increased heart rate. This corresponds directly with the reported feelings of tension, nervousness, and rapid heartbeat seen in the responses. Similarly, the cognitive aspect of anxiety or worrying about forgetting prepared content during speeches reflects findings from Bodie (2010), who notes that negative self-talk and fear of embarrassment lead to increased anxiety and poorer speech performance. Moreover, the observation that anxiety tends to lessen after completing the speech, as respondents reported feeling calm and comfortable after giving



an opinion, finds support in the literature on exposure and habituation. García-Monge et al. (2023) show how anxiety is often highest before and during the speech and decreases afterward, indicating a relief phase. This dynamic fluctuation in anxiety is an important consideration for understanding the full experience of speech anxiety. However, some studies point out that self-reported anxiety may not always align with physiological measures, suggesting individual variability in how anxiety manifests and is perceived (Gallego et al., 2021). This nuance is reflected in the reported variation in anxiety levels among respondents, with the moderate standard deviation.

Table 2. *Factors Affecting the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents*

<i>Items</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>QD</i>
<i>Fear of Negative Evaluation Factor</i>			
1. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me while I am speaking English.	2.62	0.27	Common
2. I can feel my heart pounding when I am	2.92	0.99	Common
3. I feel anxious while I am waiting to speak English.	3.11	0.81	Common
4. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while I am speaking English.	2.98	0.83	Common
5. I have trouble coordinating my movements while I am speaking English.	2.86	0.88	Common
6. It embarrasses me to volunteer to go out first to speak English.	3.54	0.81	Common
Total Average	2.84	0.77	Common
<i>Comfort of Speaking English Factor</i>			
1. I feel confident while I am speaking English.	2.77	0.90	Common
2. I have no fear of speaking English.	2.65	0.90	Common
3. I feel relaxed while I am speaking English.	2.55	0.98	Common
4. I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence.	2.49	0.93	Least Common
Total Average	2.62	0.93	Common
<i>Test Anxiety Factor</i>			
1. I never feel quite sure of myself while speaking English.	2.58	0.81	Common
2. I get nervous when the English teacher asks me to speak English, which I have prepared in advance.	2.65	0.86	Common
3. Even if I am very well prepared, I feel anxious about speaking English.	2.45	0.91	Common
Total Average	2.56	0.86	Common
<i>Comprehension Apprehension Factor</i>			
1. I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation in advance.	2.74	0.87	Common
2. In a speaking class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.	2.70	0.95	Common
3. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English.	2.84	0.83	Common
4. I dislike using my voice and body expressively while I am speaking English.	2.56	1.02	Common
Total Average	2.71	0.92	Common

Legend: 1.00 - 1.75 (not common at all); 1.76 - 2.50 (less common); 2.51 - 3.25 (common); 3.26 - 4.00 (most common)

Table 2 presents the Factors Affecting the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents, showing that all four identified factors are common concerns among students, as evidenced by total average means ranging from 2.56 to 2.84. The Fear of Negative Evaluation Factor stands out as the highest with an average mean of 2.84, while the Test Anxiety Factor records the lowest with an average mean of 2.56. Notably, the highest individual mean is 3.11 for "I feel anxious while I am waiting to speak English," and the lowest is 2.45 for "Even if I am very well prepared, I feel anxious about speaking English." These results highlight that anticipation and lack of confidence are critical sources of anxiety among the respondents.

The implications of these findings indicate that students' speaking anxiety is primarily rooted in concerns about being judged and evaluated by others. The prevalence of anxiety related to negative evaluation suggests that peer perception and social factors are dominant triggers. At the same time, lower confidence in speaking reflects the need for interventions to foster self-assurance. The relatively wide standard deviations across factors reveal that students experience speaking anxiety with varying intensity, which could be attributed to differences in language proficiency, previous experiences, or personal coping mechanisms.

The finding that the Fear of Negative Evaluation factor (FNE) registers as the most prominent factor affecting the speaking anxiety among respondents aligns with previous research emphasizing FNE as a central trigger of public speaking anxiety. Studies show that fear of peer judgment and negative assessment significantly amplify anxiety in speaking contexts, especially in academic environments where performance is scrutinized (N ul Huda, 2024). The study notes a significant positive correlation between speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, which often leads to various anxiety symptoms such as trembling, speech disruptions, and avoidance behaviors, confirming the current study's observation that anticipation and judgment are major anxiety triggers. Furthermore, Busch (2023) highlights that FNE disproportionately impacts student anxiety in active learning, reinforcing the idea that social evaluative concerns critically influence speaking confidence and anxiety intensity. The current study's observation that the Test Anxiety Factor shows a lower mean points to relatively better, yet still common, comfort levels, which are consistent with studies noting that while some students develop basic coping and habituation to speaking tasks, confidence in speaking English remains lacking (Rahmat, 2021). The reported lowest mean for "I face the prospect of speaking English with confidence" underscores a widespread self-assurance deficit among English learners, a known contributor to ongoing verbal anxiety as students confront language barriers and fear of mistakes. This aligns with prior findings that low self-confidence in language skills exacerbates anxiety during oral communication tasks.

Regarding the Test Anxiety and Comprehension Apprehension factors, the results reflect the recognized impact of performance



pressure and comprehension difficulties on speech anxiety. Preparedness and recall pressure heighten anxiety, as noted in studies where cognitive load and instant memory retrieval challenges intensify stress responses (Gallego, 2021). This effect is generally weaker than FNE but remains significant in prompting anxiety, as students struggle to manage real-time language processing demands and test situations.

Table 3. Comparison of the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents when Grouped According to Sex

Groups	f (n=80)	Mean	SD	QD	t-value	p-value
Male	51	2.73	0.47	High Anxiety	-0.04	0.971
Female	29	2.74	0.51	High Anxiety		

Legend: P-value: p-value>0.05: there is no significant difference; p-value<0.05: there is a significant difference.

Table 3 shows the Comparison of the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents when Grouped According to Sex. Both male and female respondents exhibit high levels of speaking anxiety, with means of 2.73 for males and 2.74 for females. The p-value of 0.971, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicates that the difference in speaking anxiety between sexes is not statistically significant. This highlights that both males and females experience comparable levels of anxiety during speaking activities.

The implication of this finding suggests that speaking anxiety is not influenced by sex, meaning that male and female students both encounter similar challenges and nervousness in speaking situations. Consequently, interventions to reduce speaking anxiety should be inclusive and target all students rather than focusing on gender-specific strategies. Other factors, such as individual confidence, preparation, or learning environment, might play a more important role in influencing speaking anxiety than sex.

This finding aligns with existing research showing the lack of statistically significant gender differences in speaking anxiety. Though in contrast, studies by Rif'atul Karima (2023) and Fauziyah (2022) found females often report slightly higher anxiety levels, but these differences were not significant. Piniel (2022), in a meta-review, also confirms that gender does not consistently predict speaking anxiety levels across contexts. Such research supports the present results that speaking anxiety is multifactorial and not strongly determined by gender, advocating inclusive approaches to anxiety management.

Table 4. Comparison of the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents when Grouped According to their Grade in English

Groups	f (n=80)	Mean	SD	QD	t-value	p-value
Below 90	42	2.78	0.54	High Anxiety	0.92	0.361
90 and Above	38	2.68	0.41	High Anxiety		

Legend: P-value: p-value>0.05: there is no significant difference; p-value<0.05: there is a significant difference.

Table 4 shows the Comparison of the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents when Grouped According to their Grade in English. The group with grades below 90 has a mean speaking anxiety score of 2.78, while the group with grades 90 and above has a mean of 2.68. Both groups fall within the "High Anxiety" category. The t-value of 0.92 and p-value of 0.361 indicate no statistically significant difference between the groups. This shows that speaking anxiety levels are comparably high regardless of academic performance in English.

The implications of this finding suggest that students experience high speaking anxiety irrespective of their English grades, indicating that academic achievement does not significantly influence anxiety levels related to speaking tasks. This points to the idea that other factors such as personality traits, prior experiences, emotional states, or classroom environment may play a more important role in shaping speaking anxiety than grades alone. Interventions aiming to reduce speaking anxiety should thus address broader emotional and psychological influences rather than focusing solely on academic performance.

The finding that speaking anxiety levels do not significantly differ based on English grades is consistent with existing research indicating that academic performance, while important, does not solely dictate an individual's experience of speaking anxiety. A study from Nul Huda (2024) supports that public speaking anxiety negatively impacts academic performance, indicating that anxiety can interfere with oral academic tasks despite students' cognitive abilities and grades. A contrast with the present finding is that strong academic performance does not always equate to confidence in speaking. Another contrast is studies where English-speaking anxiety affects learners with moderate to high anxiety levels, where they tend to perform poorly in oral presentations compared to low-anxiety peers (Darmi, 2014; Chou, 2018). This reinforces the conclusion that speaking anxiety is a pervasive issue, irrespective of academic achievement in English, suggesting that factors beyond grades significantly contribute to students' apprehension during oral tasks.

Table 5 shows the Coping Strategies for the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents, revealing that Practice and Preparation is the most frequently used strategy, selected by 33 respondents or 41.25% of the total. This is followed by Breathing and Relaxation Techniques at 30%, and Positive Thinking, Visualization & Self-Talk at 13.75%. The least used strategies are Stress-Relief & Physical Techniques (7.5%), Spiritual & Emotional Support (3.75%), and Distraction or Confidence-Boosting Activities (2.5%). These results highlight a strong preference for active, self-directed coping methods focused on preparation and mental regulation over more passive or external approaches.

The implications of these findings suggest that respondents rely primarily on behavioral and cognitive techniques such as thorough preparation and positive mental framing to manage speaking anxiety, underlining the importance of mastery and confidence- building



in anxiety reduction. The prominence of mental regulation strategies like visualization and self-talk indicates that emotional and psychological control is also critical. Less commonly used methods, such as physical stress-relief, spiritual support, and distraction, highlight areas where anxiety management programs could expand to offer a wider range of effective techniques, recognizing individual differences in coping.

Table 5. Coping Strategies for the Speaking Anxiety of the Respondents

Coping Strategies	Sample Statements	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
1. Practice and Preparation	“I prepare very well and practice it in front of my family.” (21) “Practice and rehearse multiple times” (70)	33	41.25%
2. Breathing and Relaxation Techniques	“Breathing exercises to calm myself just before the speech” (14) “Sometimes I do breathing techniques” (27)	24	30%
3. Positive Thinking, Visualization & Self-Talk	“Getting prepared telling myself that I’ll shine, and imagining that my audience are just potatoes.” (10) “Having a positive thought— ‘we are all going to speak in front anyway.’” (31)	11	13.75%
4. Stress-Relief & Physical Techniques	“I fidget with my hands/fingers or anything I get a hold of until I am calm.” (36) “I put a coin in my shoes in order to trick my mind...” (60)	6	7.5%
5. Spiritual & Emotional Support	“I always pray to God because I know that He would guide me to it lessens my stress.” (46) “I pray before my speech and I do inhale exhale.” (52)	3	3.75%
6. Distraction or Confidence- Boosting Activities	“Reading novels, fictions, and other books that I know I can gain knowledge from and watch movies.” (16) “To practicing before the performance and to watch people who’s good at speaking and try to adopt to them.” (17)	2	2.5%
Total		79	98.75%

The predominance of Practice and Preparation as the leading coping strategy correlates strongly with extensive research affirming the effectiveness of structured rehearsal in lowering speaking anxiety. Empirical studies consistently highlight practice as foundational to building confidence and reducing uncertainty, which directly alleviates anticipatory and performance anxiety (Pabro-Maquidato, 2021). Preparation fosters familiarity with content and environment, enhancing perceived competence, which is key to mitigating public speaking fears. Breathing and Relaxation Techniques, chosen by respondents, address the acute physiological symptoms of anxiety, such as increased heart rate and muscle tension. Research supports breathing exercises, mindfulness, and progressive muscle relaxation as accessible, immediate interventions that effectively reduce sympathetic nervous system arousal, thereby calming speakers in real-time (García-Monge et al., 2023). Such techniques enable speakers to regain composure and focus, confirming their popularity in anxiety management (Zeidan et al., 2010; Galantino et al., 2005). The utilization of Positive Thinking, Visualization, and Self-Talk reflects acknowledgment of cognitive-behavioral strategies that reshape negative thought patterns and promote mental rehearsal of success. These interventions contribute significantly to emotional regulation and confidence enhancement, though their effectiveness depends on individuals' ability to sustain disciplined cognitive control (Warna, 2024). Studies demonstrate that cognitive reframing is essential for long-term anxiety reduction by altering the mindset from threat perception to challenge appraisal (McEvoy et al., 2015; Morina et al., 2017). Less-utilized strategies, including Stress-Relief & Physical Techniques, Spiritual & Emotional Support, and Distraction or Confidence-Boosting Activities, though beneficial, may lack integration in respondents' coping repertoires due to limited awareness or accessibility. This underscores the importance of expanding anxiety management programs to incorporate a wide array of personalized techniques suitable for diverse anxiety profiles.

Conclusions

Speaking anxiety remains a significant challenge among Junior High School students, as demonstrated by this study conducted at Saint Mary's University. The results reveal that a majority of students have a consistently high level of speaking anxiety, particularly during oral presentations and recitations, where these anxiety manifestations are strongest in the anticipation phase before speaking activities and tend to diminish after completion. The primary factors influencing speaking anxiety include Fear of Negative Evaluation, Test Anxiety, Communication Apprehension, and Comfort in Speaking English, with Fear of Negative Evaluation being particularly prominent. These factors underscore students' concerns about peer judgment, fear of failure, and difficulties understanding or expressing themselves in English. Interestingly, the study found no significant differences in anxiety levels based on sex, indicating that both male and female students face similar challenges.

The research also shows that speaking anxiety levels do not significantly differ by sex or English grades. This suggests that speaking anxiety is a widespread issue affecting all students irrespective of these demographic factors, highlighting the need for inclusive intervention. In coping with speaking anxiety, students often resort to strategies such as relaxation and breathing exercises, repeated practice, physical expressiveness, concentration on the task, and fostering self-confidence. These insights contribute valuable understanding to educators and policymakers seeking to address speaking anxiety in the academic environment.

However, the study acknowledges limitations, including its focus on a single school and limited sample size, which suggest the need for further research across different contexts and broader populations. Recommendations emerging from this research emphasize

creating supportive classroom climates, conducting activities that build confidence, and incorporating anxiety management techniques to enhance students' oral communication competencies and academic success.

Given the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Junior High School students appear to experience a relatively high level of speaking anxiety, particularly during oral presentations and recitations. Therefore, it may be beneficial for teachers to conduct diverse speaking activities that align with students' interests and aim to create a safe, open, and supportive learning environment where students can feel more comfortable expressing themselves. Additionally, teachers might consider encouraging thorough preparation before oral presentations by providing detailed rubrics that outline expectations related to content, delivery, and confidence.

Since students' speaking anxiety levels seem to range from moderate to high, it is recommended that students be encouraged to share their anxiety with trusted teachers or peers and seek advice or support to manage their fears better. Administering an anxiety assessment survey, such as the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), at the beginning of each semester could help identify students who may need additional support.

Although no significant difference was observed in speaking anxiety between male and female students, it would be advisable to provide equal opportunities for public speaking exposure and instruction on effective communication to both sexes. Teachers are encouraged to maintain a gender-inclusive approach while continuing to implement activities aimed at reducing speaking anxiety for all students. The relationship between speaking anxiety and academic performance in English appeared variable; thus, teachers are recommended to monitor changes in students' anxiety levels during speaking tasks and to encourage continued practice both inside and outside of school in order to help build speaking confidence and competence.

Future researchers might consider exploring additional factors potentially affecting speaking anxiety, such as age, personality traits, language background, and social environment, beyond sex and academic standing, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. Evaluation rubrics for speaking tasks should ideally cover all critical aspects of oral presentations, including confidence levels, clarity, and audience engagement, and include qualitative feedback to provide constructive guidance for improvement. Teachers may find it helpful to incorporate strategies such as deep breathing, positive thinking, peer support, and mindfulness exercises into lessons to assist students in learning practical ways to manage speaking anxiety.

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