

## Exploring Speaking Anxiety Among Sixth Semester English Education Students at Tadulako University

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 2026-01-14  
Revised 2026-02-06  
Accepted 2026-02-07

#### Keywords:

Coping Strategies  
EFL students  
English Education  
Internal and External factors  
Linguistics Barriers  
Speaking Anxiety

### ABSTRACT

This study examines speech anxiety among sixth-semester English Education students at Tadulako University, highlighting the ongoing challenges that hinder students' ability to communicate confidently despite having taken various speaking courses. This study aims to identify the main factors contributing to speaking anxiety and analyze the coping strategies used by students to overcome these psychological barriers in the classroom context. Using a mixed-methods design that sequentially combined qualitative and quantitative methods, this study first collected quantitative data through a questionnaire administered to sixth-semester students to measure anxiety levels and identify contributing factors, followed by semi-structured interviews with selected participants to gain deeper insights into their personal experiences and management strategies. Findings indicate that speaking anxiety primarily stems from two interrelated domains: psychological factors, including fear of negative evaluation, lack of confidence, and perfectionism; and linguistic factors, such as limited vocabulary, grammatical uncertainty, and pronunciation difficulties. Students reported using various coping mechanisms, ranging from thorough preparation and collaboration with peers to relaxation techniques and talking. This study emphasizes that speaking anxiety is not merely temporary nervousness, but rather a complex phenomenon that affects student participation in class, learning motivation, and their perception of themselves as future English language educators. This highlights the need for a more supportive learning environment and targeted interventions to address the emotional and linguistic dimensions of this challenge.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking ability is an important component for students learning English as a foreign language. Learning a language is not only about mastering grammar and vocabulary; it also requires confidence to communicate orally in various social contexts using that language. However, speaking in front of an audience remains one of the biggest challenges for many students of English as a foreign language, as it requires both confidence and thorough preparation. One of the main obstacles faced by students is anxiety, which refers to feelings of tension, worry, or apprehension triggered by the anticipation of negative outcomes (Oxford University Press, 2022) [1]. This psychological condition is often observed in foreign language classrooms, where learners experience increased anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation and performance pressure.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, speaking anxiety has been widely recognized as a common psychological factor that affects students' oral language performance. According to Syafryadin and Yulianawati (2023), speaking anxiety is a serious problem in language learning because it significantly affects how well students can perform during speaking tasks [2]. This form of anxiety often inhibits students' willingness to participate in oral communication, even when they have adequate linguistic knowledge. Anxiety can be defined as a psychological state characterized by feelings of discomfort during task performance and associated with cognitive disturbances and physiological responses, such as trembling, rapid heartbeat, difficulty concentrating, excessive sweating, and nausea. These symptoms not only cause emotional distress but also interfere with students' ability to access vocabulary, maintain fluency, and produce language effectively in real-life situations.

Tadulako University is a higher education institution in Indonesia that offers an English Language Education Study Program to prepare prospective English teachers. Despite being exposed to English intensively throughout the program, many students still experience anxiety when participating in speaking activities. This phenomenon shows that exposure to an English-speaking environment alone may not be sufficient to reduce speaking anxiety among learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). Research shows that speaking anxiety stems from two main dimensions: psychological factors, which include fear of negative judgment, decreased self-confidence, and detrimental social comparisons with more proficient peers, and linguistic factors, which include inadequate vocabulary, limited grammar, and pronunciation difficulties (Mulyono, 2019; Perez-Castillejo, 2019; Sugiarto & Sitohang, 2022) [3]. When this anxiety persists and is not properly addressed, it can have detrimental consequences, inhibiting classroom participation, hindering collaborative discussions, and undermining performance in authentic communication situations such as job interviews, even though students have adequate linguistic competence.

Understanding and addressing the underlying causes of speaking anxiety remains crucial to improving language learning outcomes. Empirical evidence shows that when educators and students systematically identify these factors and implement appropriate interventions, including creating a low-anxiety practice environment and applying anxiety

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management strategies, students show improvement in speaking performance outcomes (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2021) [4]. Furthermore, students who learn to manage their anxiety effectively tend to show greater willingness to participate in speaking activities and develop more positive attitudes toward oral communication. Therefore, identifying specific anxiety triggers and exploring effective coping mechanisms are important steps in creating a supportive learning environment to enhance students' confidence and speaking competence.

Previous studies have collectively highlighted the prevalence and impact of speaking anxiety in various educational contexts. However, there is a significant gap in understanding how undergraduate students in formal EFL programs at universities, particularly in the Indonesian context, experience and manage speaking anxiety during regular classroom activities. Unlike previous studies that focused on individual cases, analyzed only the causes of anxiety, or examined different levels of education, this study addresses these gaps by comprehensively examining the factors contributing to speaking anxiety and the coping strategies used by sixth-semester students in the English Education Program at Tadulako University. This dual focus provides a more complete understanding of the phenomenon and offers practical implications for improving speaking instruction in similar EFL contexts.

At Tadulako University, sixth-semester students in the English Education program continue to experience significant speaking anxiety despite having taken various speaking courses throughout their academic journey. This persistent anxiety stems from psychological factors and linguistic limitations, creating complex barriers to effective oral communication. This issue is particularly concerning because such anxiety not only hinders students' participation in class and their academic performance but also threatens their future professional competence. As prospective English teachers, their inability to speak confidently in English could significantly limit their effectiveness in the classroom and their success in critical real-world situations such as job interviews and oral exams. Although speaking anxiety is recognized as a common problem in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), understanding of the specific internal and external factors contributing to this phenomenon among Indonesian university students is still limited. This study documents the coping strategies they use to manage their anxiety.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the main factors that trigger speaking anxiety among sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University, and to explore the strategies these students use to reduce or overcome their anxiety in the classroom. By addressing this issue, this study aims to provide insights that can support more effective pedagogical approaches and support mechanisms to reduce speaking anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning environments. These findings are expected to benefit various stakeholders: students will gain a better understanding of their anxiety and practical strategies for managing it; educators will obtain evidence-based information to develop more supportive instructional approaches; and institutions can use these research results to design curricula and support systems that specifically address speaking anxiety. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader goal of developing confident and competent English speakers who can fulfill their roles as

future English teachers and communicate effectively in various professional and academic contexts.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a mixed-methods approach with a Sequential Explanatory Design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of speech anxiety among students. This design allows the researcher first to identify general patterns in numerical data and then explain the findings in greater depth using qualitative data, making it appropriate for achieving the objectives of this study [9].

The research began with the collection of quantitative data through questionnaires distributed to sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University to identify the main factors contributing to speaking anxiety and to measure students' anxiety levels. After the quantitative data were analyzed, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with selected students to explore more deeply their personal experiences and coping strategies in dealing with speaking anxiety.

The population in this study consisted of all sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. These students were chosen because they had completed several speaking courses and were expected to have sufficient experience using English in academic settings. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling enables the selection of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon being studied [10]. In this case, participants who had experienced speaking anxiety and had applied strategies to overcome it were prioritized to ensure the data is rich and meaningful.

To obtain the necessary data, this study used two main techniques, namely questionnaires and interviews. A questionnaire was distributed to collect general data from various participants. This tool was designed to analyze psychological and linguistic factors related to speaking anxiety, as well as to identify strategies often used by students to overcome this condition. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow students to express their personal experiences and feelings related to speaking anxiety. This method provided flexibility and enabled the researcher to delve deeper into the information by asking follow-up questions when needed. Both methods were intended to complement each other and ensure the richness and credibility of the data collected.

Questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative techniques in SPSS, including calculating frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations to identify patterns of speech anxiety and coping strategies. Meanwhile, interview data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods, including transcribing recordings, coding key responses, and grouping them into relevant themes. The integration of these two techniques enabled researchers to obtain numerical trends and in-depth insights into students' experiences with speech anxiety.

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### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To systematically identify the factors contributing to speaking anxiety among sixth-semester English Education students at Tadulako University, a comprehensive questionnaire was administered to 32 participants. The questionnaire comprised 30 items divided into two main categories: 15 items assessing internal psychological factors (items 1–15) and 15 items examining external environmental factors (items 16–30). Participants rated each statement using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). Table 1 presents the complete distribution of student responses across all questionnaire items, revealing both the prevalence and intensity of various anxiety-inducing factors in the speaking classroom.

Table 1. Distribution of Student Responses to Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire Items (N=32)

| No. | Statement  | Internal Factors  |          |         |       |                |
|-----|--|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
|     |  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1   | I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking English in front of the class.                  | 2                 | 2        | 3       | 19    | 6              |
| 2   | I feel nervous even when I am well prepared to speak English.                                | 1                 | 4        | 11      | 13    | 3              |
| 3   | I lose confidence when I compare my English skills with those of other students.             | 4                 | 4        | 11      | 13    | 0              |
| 4   | I find it difficult to concentrate when I have to speak English in front of others.          | 1                 | 2        | 11      | 14    | 4              |
| 5   | I often worry that others will laugh if I make a pronunciation mistake.                      | 4                 | 7        | 9       | 9     | 3              |
| 6   | I feel that my vocabulary is too limited to express my ideas clearly.                        | 1                 | 3        | 3       | 15    | 10             |
| 7   | I feel anxious when I cannot remember the right word while speaking English.                 | 2                 | 1        | 6       | 22    | 1              |
| 8   | I get tense and forget what I want to say when speaking English.                             | 1                 | 2        | 14      | 14    | 1              |
| 9   | I often think negatively about my speaking ability before presenting in class.               | 5                 | 3        | 11      | 9     | 4              |
| 10  | I feel that I must speak perfectly when using English.                                       | 3                 | 2        | 7       | 13    | 7              |
| 11  | I experience physical symptoms (e.g., trembling, sweating, heartbeat) when speaking English. | 3                 | 2        | 11      | 12    | 4              |
| 12  | I feel nervous because I worry about getting a low score in speaking tests.                  | 3                 | 1        | 6       | 17    | 5              |
| 13  | I lose motivation to speak when I feel that my English is not good enough.                   | 5                 | 5        | 8       | 9     | 5              |
| 14  | I often overthink how others will evaluate my speaking performance.                          | 3                 | 14       | 10      | 14    | 3              |

|                  |   |   |    |    |    |    |
|------------------|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 15               | I prefer to stay silent rather than make mistakes in English                            | 3 | 6  | 9  | 11 | 3  |
| External Factors |   |   |    |    |    |    |
| 16               | I feel nervous because my lecturer expects me to speak English fluently.                | 2 | 7  | 6  | 14 | 3  |
| 17               | I feel pressured when my lecturer corrects my mistakes in front of the class.           | 4 | 8  | 9  | 8  | 3  |
| 18               | The classroom atmosphere makes me nervous when speaking English.                        | 1 | 10 | 12 | 8  | 1  |
| 19               | I feel uncomfortable speaking English when my classmates laugh or react to my mistakes. | 2 | 9  | 6  | 10 | 5  |
| 20               | I feel anxious when the audience looks serious or uninterested during my presentation.  | 2 | 4  | 5  | 17 | 4  |
| 21               | I feel nervous when the lecturer asks me unexpected questions in English.               | 2 | 3  | 6  | 16 | 7  |
| 22               | I feel more relaxed when my lecturer uses encouraging words before I speak.             | 1 | 1  | 5  | 16 | 9  |
| 23               | I feel anxious when speaking in a big class with many students watching me.             | 2 | 2  | 5  | 15 | 7  |
| 24               | I feel uncomfortable when classmates who are fluent in English dominate the class.      | 2 | 9  | 8  | 9  | 4  |
| 25               | I feel anxious when my presentation is being graded.                                    | 2 | 5  | 12 | 10 | 3  |
| 26               | I feel more comfortable speaking when my lecturer gives me time to prepare.             | 1 | 2  | 2  | 12 | 15 |
| 27               | I feel nervous when I speak English at a formal event (e.g., a seminar or exam).        | 1 | 5  | 2  | 15 | 9  |
| 28               | I find it easier to speak English in small groups than in front of the whole class.     | 1 | 2  | 5  | 10 | 14 |
| 29               | I feel pressure when the lecturer compares students' speaking performances.             | 1 | 4  | 9  | 12 | 6  |
| 30               | The use of strict classroom rules (e.g., only English allowed) increases my anxiety.    | 3 | 5  | 11 | 8  | 5  |

According to the questionnaire's overall findings, sixth-semester students have moderate to severe speaking anxiety. The mean scores for both internal and external elements, which typically range from 3.0 to 4.0, corroborate this conclusion. Students' anxiety was largely shaped by psychological pressure, as seen by the relatively high averages of internal characteristics, including perfectionism, restricted vocabulary, fear of making mistakes, and forgetting concepts when speaking. Students' discomfort is also greatly influenced by external factors, such as the classroom environment, teacher

expectations, peer reactions, and speaking in front of large crowds, particularly when they are expected to speak without preparation. Items pertaining to the need for preparation time and the desire for small-group speaking had the highest mean values, suggesting that students felt more comfortable in less formal, encouraging settings. Overall, these results demonstrated that students' speaking anxiety is caused by a mix of external classroom circumstances and internal self-perceptions, resulting in a generally higher level of anxiety when completing speaking activities in English.

To complement the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' experiences of speaking anxiety. The analysis revealed three interrelated dimensions: internal psychological factors, external environmental influences, and coping strategies. Internally, students faced a fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, and low self-confidence, often accompanied by physical symptoms such as trembling and mental blocks. One participant noted, "I usually feel nervous and shake a little. Sometimes my mind goes blank, especially when everyone is looking at me." Externally, classroom atmosphere and peer reactions significantly influenced anxiety levels—formal or judgmental environments increased discomfort, while supportive feedback and adequate preparation time boosted confidence. Despite these challenges, students demonstrate resilience through strategies such as careful practice, positive self-talk, and relaxation techniques, with most finding that preparation is most effective: "When I practice repeatedly, I feel calmer and more confident." These findings emphasize that speaking anxiety goes beyond linguistic deficiencies, representing a complex interaction between psychological, social, and pedagogical factors that require multifaceted intervention.

### 3.1. Results

#### 3.1.1 The Result From the Questionnaire

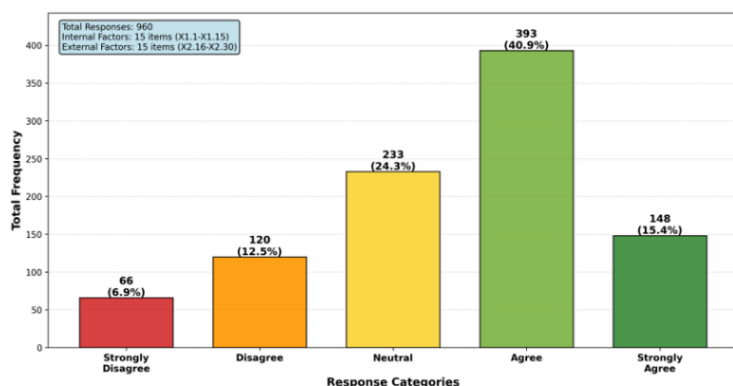


Figure 1. Consolidated Frequency Distribution of Speaking Anxiety Across All Questionnaire Items (N = 30; n = 32)

The consolidated bar chart provides a comprehensive overview of participants' speaking anxiety patterns. By aggregating responses across all 30 questionnaire items comprising 15 internal factors (X1.1-X1.15) and 15 external factors (X2.16-X2.30), the chart reveals the overall distribution of students' experiences with speaking anxiety. Out of 960 total responses collected across all items, the data shows that 393 responses (40.9%) indicated agreement and 148 responses (15.4%) indicated strong agreement, suggesting that speaking anxiety is a prevalent concern among the student population. Meanwhile, 233 responses (24.3%) were neutral, 120 (12.5%) disagreed, and 66 (6.9%) strongly disagreed with experiencing anxiety. This consolidated visualization effectively captures the multifaceted nature of speaking anxiety by synthesizing both psychological and environmental factors that influence students' speaking performance.

### 3.1.2 The Result from The Interview

The interview data provide important context for interpreting quantitative patterns, revealing how students' internal struggles align with survey findings about fear of making mistakes (78.2%) and perceptions of limited vocabulary (78.1%). Participants described deep personal anxiety with physical manifestations of trembling, sweating, rapid heartbeat, and cognitive impairment. One student explained, "I usually feel nervous and shake a little. Sometimes my mind goes blank, especially when everyone is looking at me." This fear often stems from comparisons with peers and perfectionist expectations, suggesting that speaking anxiety is closely related to social evaluation and self-image, not just linguistic competence. External classroom dynamics also play an important role; a formal atmosphere, strict teacher attitudes, and negative peer reactions exacerbate discomfort, consistent with quantitative data showing that 68.8% experience anxiety in large classes and 65.6% feel nervous when the audience appears uninterested. Conversely, a supportive environment with gentle feedback, sufficient preparation time, and supportive peers significantly reduces anxiety: "I feel more comfortable when lecturers give feedback gently, don't interrupt rudely, and give me time to think." Despite widespread anxiety, students actively apply coping strategies, especially practice and preparation, positive self-talk, and deep breathing, to manage their discomfort. As several participants emphasized, "When I have practiced many times, I feel calmer and more confident," demonstrating that providing students with clear anxiety management tools and creating a supportive learning environment can significantly improve their speaking experience.

### 3.2. Discussion

Findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses indicate that speaking anxiety among sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University is a complex phenomenon, influenced by the interaction between internal psychological factors and external environmental conditions. This discussion interprets these findings in relation to existing literature and explores their pedagogical implications.

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#### a. Dominance of Internal Psychological Factors

Quantitative data show that internal factors consistently produce higher average scores than external factors, indicating that students' speaking anxiety mainly stems from their internal psychological conditions. The high level of agreement regarding fear of making mistakes (78.2%) and perceptions of limited vocabulary (78.1%) is in line with previous studies by Mulyono (2019) and Sugiarto and Sitohang (2022), which identified these factors as major contributors to language anxiety [11]. Further interview data illustrate this pattern, as participants described experiencing not only emotional distress but also physical manifestations such as trembling, sweating, and rapid heartbeat when asked to speak, with one student describing the experience of "losing words" when everyone was watching. This phenomenon reflects the cognitive impairment documented by Hashemi and Abbasi (2021), in which anxiety interferes with access to linguistic resources, even though students have adequate knowledge [12], [13], leading to hesitation. These findings indicate that speaking anxiety is closely related to students' self-concept and fear of social evaluation, as many participants revealed that their anxiety stemmed from comparing themselves to more fluent peers and maintaining unrealistic expectations of perfection. This pattern is consistent with self-determination theory, as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which states that beliefs about competence significantly influence motivation and performance [13]. When students feel linguistically inferior to others, their self-efficacy decreases, leading to increased anxiety and avoidance behavior.

#### b. The Critical Role of External Environmental Factors

Although internal factors appear to be more dominant, external environmental conditions play a crucial moderating role in either reinforcing or alleviating student anxiety. Quantitative data show that 68.8% of students experience increased anxiety in large classes, and 65.6% feel nervous when the audience appears uninterested or when students hesitate during speaking tasks. The tendency of students to be reluctant to speak in speaking activities often serves as a protective mechanism against anxiety and fear of negative judgment they experience in class [24]. Interview data provides additional context, as participants consistently emphasized the importance of a supportive environment, characterized by gentle teacher feedback, adequate preparation time, and inspiring peer reactions, with one student noting, "I feel more comfortable when the lecturer gives gentle feedback, doesn't interrupt rudely, and gives me time to think. This pattern aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of language learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in the learning process [14]. When teachers create a low-anxiety learning environment by providing constructive feedback, allowing time for processing, and demonstrating patience, they facilitate students' willingness to take communicative risks. Conversely, a formal or judgmental atmosphere exacerbates anxiety and reinforces students' fear of negative evaluation. These findings align with Syafryadin and Yulianawati (2023), who argue that classroom climate is a critical determinant of students' speaking performance and emotional well-being [15].

### c. Student Coping Strategies and Resilience

Despite facing significant anxiety, students are not passive victims but active agents who use various coping strategies to manage their discomfort. Both questionnaire data and interviews show that preparation and practice are the most frequently mentioned and effective approaches, with many participants emphasizing that repeated practice increases their confidence and reduces nervousness, as reflected in the statement, "When I have practiced many times, I feel calmer and more confident." These findings support Mahmudi and Anugerahwati's (2021) assertion that preparation reduces uncertainty and increases confidence by allowing students to anticipate potential challenges and practice their responses. In addition to practice, students use emotional regulation strategies such as positive self-talk and deep breathing exercises to manage the physical symptoms of anxiety, reflecting their efforts to regain control of their emotional and physiological responses and demonstrating resilience and self-awareness [16], [17]. However, the effectiveness of these strategies varies among individuals, and many students still find it difficult to apply them consistently in stressful situations, suggesting that although students are aware of anxiety management techniques, they may need more explicit instruction and targeted practice.

### d. Anxiety in Speaking as a Complex Interaction

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings shows that anxiety in speaking is not merely a linguistic deficiency, but rather a complex interaction between psychological, social, and pedagogical factors. Students' internal struggles related to self-confidence, fear of judgment, and perceived linguistic limitations are continually shaped by external classroom dynamics, including teacher behavior, peer reactions, and task characteristics, creating a reciprocal relationship that means interventions to reduce speaking anxiety must target both internal psychological processes and external environmental conditions. While building students' vocabulary and grammatical knowledge is important, creating a supportive classroom environment that minimizes social pressure and encourages risk-taking is equally important. In addition, these findings highlight the need for a shift in pedagogical approach from performance orientation to process orientation, as much of students' anxiety stems from the view that speaking tasks are high-risk performances where mistakes are unacceptable, rather than opportunities to learn and grow. When teachers emphasize fluency over accuracy, provide formative feedback rather than summative evaluation, and encourage collaboration among classmates, students may develop a more positive orientation toward speaking activities and gradually overcome their anxiety.

### e. Pedagogical Implications

These findings have several important implications for English language teaching at Tadulako University and similar EFL contexts. First, teachers should prioritize creating a low-pressure classroom environment by showing empathy, providing supportive feedback, and allowing sufficient preparation time [22]. Small-group activities and pair work can reduce the social pressure associated with speaking in front of a large audience,

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allowing students to practice in a less intimidating context before presenting to the class [25]. Second, explicit instruction on anxiety management strategies should be integrated into speaking courses, because rather than assuming students will naturally develop coping mechanisms, teachers can demonstrate and facilitate practice in techniques such as positive self-talk, visualization, and controlled breathing. Implementing practical classroom learning strategies that reduce student embarrassment and create opportunities for meaningful communication can significantly improve students' confidence in speaking [19], [25]. Mindfulness-based approaches are effective in reducing speech anxiety [20]. Third, fostering a growth mindset in language learning is essential to reducing perfectionism and the fear of making mistakes, as teachers can encourage students to view mistakes as a natural and valuable part of the learning process rather than a sign of failure. This helps them develop resilience and a more positive self-concept as language learners. Research shows that perfectionist tendencies among language learners can increase anxiety, as they set unrealistically high standards for their oral performance and become overly focused on avoiding mistakes [23]. Finally, regular speaking practice in authentic and meaningful contexts is essential for building confidence and reducing anxiety over time, because when students have frequent opportunities to use English in low-risk communicative situations, they gradually become less sensitive to the social pressures associated with speaking and develop greater automation in language production.

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f. **Limitations and Future Research**

Although this study provides valuable insights into speech anxiety among sixth-semester students, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study sample was limited to a single cohort at Tadulako University, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Future research could examine speech anxiety across institutions and student populations to identify broader patterns and context-specific variations. Second, this study used a cross-sectional design, which captures students' experiences at a single point in time. Longitudinal research that tracks students' anxiety levels and coping strategies over several semesters could provide a deeper understanding of how speaking anxiety develops over time and in response to different pedagogical interventions. Third, although this study identifies effective coping strategies based on student reports, it does not experimentally test the effectiveness of specific anxiety reduction interventions. Future experimental or quasi-experimental research could evaluate the impact of targeted interventions such as anxiety management training, peer-supported practice, or task-based instruction on reducing speech anxiety and improving oral performance.

4. **CONCLUSION**

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This study examines speech anxiety among sixth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University, revealing that speech anxiety is a multifaceted phenomenon formed by the dynamic interaction between internal psychological factors and external environmental conditions. The findings indicate that internal factors such as fear of making mistakes, nervousness, limited vocabulary,

difficulty maintaining concentration, and negative self-perception play a dominant role in triggering anxiety during English speaking activities. However, external factors such as lecturer expectations, classmate reactions, and classroom atmosphere significantly modulate the intensity of this anxiety, either reinforcing students' discomfort in high-pressure situations or alleviating it in supportive environments. Qualitative findings from further interviews confirm that students experience higher levels of anxiety, especially in formal speaking situations such as presentations and impromptu questions, while supportive feedback and an inspiring classroom climate help reduce their anxiety. Importantly, students demonstrated independence in managing their anxiety by applying various coping strategies, including preparation before speaking, planning key points in advance, positive self-talk, and peer support, showing that they were actively engaged in self-regulation rather than passively succumbing to anxiety.

The implications of this study encompass pedagogical, institutional, and practical dimensions in the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). For educators, these findings emphasize the importance of adopting a holistic teaching approach that simultaneously addresses learners' internal emotional states and the external classroom environment in which speaking activities take place. Specifically, instructors should create a low-anxiety learning environment by providing constructive feedback, minimizing evaluative pressure during practice sessions, integrating collaborative speaking activities such as pair work and group discussions, and explicitly teaching anxiety management strategies alongside language skills. For institutions, the research results suggest that curriculum design should integrate psychological support mechanisms and provide professional development opportunities for instructors to recognize and respond effectively to students' speaking anxiety. In addition, this research offers practical value for students themselves, as understanding the sources of their anxiety and learning evidence-based coping strategies can empower them to take greater control of their learning process and develop resilience in oral communication.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study to contextualize the findings appropriately. This study was conducted exclusively with sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other levels of education, institutions, or geographical contexts with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This study focuses specifically on speaking anxiety in the classroom and does not explore anxiety in other communicative contexts such as informal conversations, online communication, or professional environments outside of academia. Furthermore, although a mixed approach provides comprehensive insights, the qualitative component relies on self-reported data through interviews, which may be influenced by social desirability bias or incomplete memories of anxiety experiences. This study also analyzes existing anxiety and coping strategies without implementing or testing specific interventions, so the effectiveness of teaching methods or anxiety-reduction programs is not empirically evaluated within its scope.

Future research should address these limitations and expand on current findings in important directions. Longitudinal studies that monitor students over several semesters will provide valuable insights into how speaking anxiety develops over time and whether

certain stages of development are more susceptible to increases or decreases in anxiety. Intervention-based research testing the effectiveness of targeted anxiety-reduction programs, such as mindfulness training, systematic desensitization techniques, or technology-supported practice environments, will provide empirical evidence on best practices for managing speech anxiety. Comparative studies analyzing speech anxiety across different universities, cultural contexts, or educational systems may reveal whether the patterns identified in this study are context-specific or represent broader trends. English as a foreign language (EFL) learning. Furthermore, research investigating the relationship between speaking anxiety and other variables such as personality traits, learning styles, motivation levels, or prior language learning experiences could deepen our theoretical understanding of this phenomenon. For the general public and the educational community, this research provides practical knowledge that speaking anxiety is a legitimate and manageable challenge, not an insurmountable personal flaw. By demonstrating that anxiety stems from identifiable factors that can be addressed through systematic strategies and a supportive environment, this study promotes a more empathetic and effective approach to language education. Ultimately, these findings encourage educational practices that prioritize not only linguistic competence but also learners' emotional well-being and psychological safety, recognizing that confident speakers are developed in environments that balance academic rigor with empathetic support and view mistakes as essential learning opportunities rather than failures to be feared.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this research would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of numerous individuals to whom the author is deeply grateful. First and foremost, the author would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Dermawan, S.Pd., M.Phil., as the supervisor, for his invaluable guidance, constructive feedback, and unwavering support throughout the research process. Special appreciation is also extended to Mafulah, S.Pd., M.Pd., as the co-supervisor, for her insightful suggestions, continuous encouragement, and dedication in ensuring the quality of this work. The author is profoundly grateful to Drs. Mochtar Marhum, M.Ed., Ph.D., as the reviewer, for his thoughtful critiques, expert recommendations, and meticulous revisions that significantly contributed to the refinement of this research. Sincere gratitude is extended to Tadulako University, particularly the Faculty of Education and Culture, for providing the academic environment and resources necessary to conduct this research. Gratitude is also extended to the sixth-semester students of the English Education Study Program class of 2023 for their active participation and cooperation during data collection. The author would like to express sincere gratitude to my parents, Mr. Ramli and Mrs. Neli, for their unconditional love, constant prayers, and continuous encouragement throughout my academic journey. Warm thanks are also extended to M. Yahya Syihabuddin, my siblings, and friends for their moral support, understanding, and motivation during the completion of this research. Finally, the author acknowledges that this work, although supported by many parties, remains his own responsibility, and any shortcomings are entirely his own.

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