

## **Speaking Anxiety among English as a Foreign Language Learner in Jordan: Quantitative Research**

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## Abstract

The negative effect speaking anxiety on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' performance and attainment has been acknowledged by language scholars and researchers in different contexts, but in Jordan, little research has been undertaken to investigate this phenomenon. This paper is based on a study aimed at identifying the factors contributing to EFL speaking anxiety in the Jordanian context, including any gender differences pertaining to these factors. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) was administered to 112 freshmen in Jadara University. The exploratory factor analysis using SPSS was run to reveal the underlying structure and identify the relationship between measured variables of FLSAS, and T-test was used to identify differences between male and female groups with regard to these factors. The results revealed that four main factors were responsible for causing learners' speaking anxiety, namely: Fear of Negative Evaluation, Unpreparedness, Fear of Being in Public and Shyness, and General Speaking Class Anxiety. No significant gender differences existed in terms of FL speaking anxiety factors. This research contributes to the literature as it is not only the first to target FL speaking anxiety among Jordanian freshmen EFL learners, but has also added new related factors.

Keywords: FL speaking Anxiety; Jordanian EFL context; FL speaking Anxiety Factors; Exploratory Factor Analyses, T-test.

## 1. Introduction

Studies in the field of Foreign Language Anxiety (henceforth FLA) have repeatedly revealed that of all the language skills speaking is the most anxiety provoking to learners (E. Horwitz, 2001; Melouah, 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). A speaking activity involves more than one interlocutor and failure to communicate the intended message is deemed to cause anxiety. FLA impedes learners' performance in communicating with interlocutors, as anxiety affects their attention and interferes with their ability not only to comprehend what is said in the target language, but also to generate ideas, as well as to retrieve the necessary vocabulary (Tóth, 2006).

Not many studies however have investigated the effects of this anxiety in general and on oral performance in particular (Tóth, 2006). (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009) found that though numerous theoretical studies have shaped the theory of general FL anxiety, there is still a "paucity of empirical studies" to help define the sources of FL speaking anxiety and provide useful strategies and recommendations to address them. (Yahya, 2013) contends that hardly any study on speaking anxiety has been carried out in the Arab world. Other researchers such as Toth (2006) Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) and Yahya (2013) lament the lack of awareness and understanding of FL speaking anxiety as a distinct phenomenon, especially in the Arab EFL context.

Different contexts, ethical and educational backgrounds have an impact on learners' level of anxiety. Horwitz (2001) considers it vital to address this in relation to classroom practice and anxiety. She explains that some classroom practices may be comfortable to one group but stressful to other learners from different cultural backgrounds who habituated to different cultural norms of classroom learning.

(Woodrow, 2006), for example, found English language learners with a Confucian heritage more apprehensive than others. Similarly, (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013) found that Iranians and Algerians (Middle Eastern learners) were anxious when speaking English due to fear of negative evaluation and apprehension, while those from Nigeria did not show such anxiety reactions. These results confirm that different cultural and educational backgrounds affect learners' level of speaking anxiety.

Clearly, different studies would report different anxiety provoking factors. With regard to participant characteristics not enough studies have been conducted involving Jordanian learners

majoring in English studies. However, a number of studies have investigated speaking anxiety in particular (Chan, Abdullah, & Yusof, 2012; Cutrone, 2009; Mak, 2011; Suleimenova, 2013; Tseng, 2012; Woodrow, 2006); some were in the Middle East EFL context (Sadeghi, Mohammadi, & Sedaghatghofar, 2013; Subaşı, 2010) and some about Arab EFL learners' speaking anxiety (Melouah, 2013; Yahya, 2013). While some studies have examined Jordanian school students' general EFL anxiety, none are specifically about English language speaking anxiety (Muhaisen & Al-Haq, 2012). Also, none of those studies specifically examined the phenomenon of FL speaking anxiety among EFL Jordanian undergraduates.

With regard to any gender effect, (Kausar & Tlaiss, 2011) claimed that traditional Islamic teachings in Arab countries are frequently cited "as saying that a women's primary role is taking care of household responsibilities". This might be added as reasons why men and women exhibit different anxiety reactions towards learning a new language; differences are apparent not only between Arab countries and western countries, but even from one Arab country to another. "The nature of Arabic society is one in which the social structure is fully grounded in the Islamic religion" (Kausar & Tlaiss, 2011). In (Ahmed & Alansari, 2004) study that sought to find out gender differences in anxiety among 3,064 undergraduates enlisted from 10 Arab countries, the results indicated that female participants in all Arab countries showed higher levels of anxiety than males, except for participants from Palestine, Jordan and Iraq where gender was found to have no significant difference. As one of the Arab Muslim countries, Jordan has a school system founded on Islamic teachings and cultural traditions. Except for a few private schools, the schools are single-sex means boys' and girls' schools are separated. When these students complete their school education and move to university, their conservative upbringing could affect their performance as this is the first time they are in a more liberal classroom environment, in mixed classes for the first time in their lives. (Ahmed & Alansari, 2004) contended that "As far as the Arab countries are concerned, Arab researchers hypothesized that both child-rearing practices and orthodox Arab traditions have an impact" (p: 653). These students might be more concerned about their appearance in front of their peers of the opposite sex.

The results of such studies may differ slightly from one context to another based on the religion, traditions or even educational background. In the context of Jordan, (Muhaisen & Al-Haq, 2012) observed that secondary school students in Jordan have a low aptitude for learning EFL, and they show different anxiety reactions inside the EFL classroom when interacting with teachers or even with their peers. The results revealed that females in Jordan reported higher levels of reading and writing anxiety than males, but no significant gender difference was found between male and females in terms of Speaking, Listening, and Grammar. However, it is clearly observed that the gender effect may vary based on the context or proficiency level as seen in the previous studies. In addition, none of these studies examined speaking anxiety specifically among undergraduate students in Jordan. The current research aims to address any speaking anxiety experienced by undergraduate learners and to help them have the confidence to interact independently in speaking tasks and to enjoy conversations within the classroom. Effective learning methods will be suggested to reduce the level of anxiety in order to promote better speaking performance.

Since the context of Jordanian freshmen students has not been fully explored, this study is concerned with investigating English language speaking anxiety among Jordanian students, to find out if gender plays a role in foreign language speaking anxiety among them. The following questions are addressed:

1. What are the factors that contribute to EFL speaking anxiety?
2. How do male and female students differ in terms of EFL speaking anxiety factors?

## 2. Methodology

This research was designed to study EFL speaking anxiety specifically among Jordanian undergraduates; hence the participants were freshmen of one of a selected Jordanian university. A typical case sampling, which is considered a strategy of purposive sampling was used because the aim of the research was to study a normal or typical sample, hence the findings of the study can be illustrative and compared to other similar samples but may not be used to generalize to a population (Creswell., 2012; Patton, 1990).

### 2.1 Sample of the Study

This study was conducted in Jadara Private University in Jordan. The sample size was limited because only first year students majoring in English language studies were targeted. According to (Williams, Onsmann, & Brown, 2010) an adequate sample size is required for factor analysis but others consider 50 participants an acceptable number. The whole population comprised 116 questionnaires were distributed during one month. Among the returned questionnaires four were incomplete, having only the first page filled in. Of the remaining 112 questionnaires returned, 58 respondents were male and 54 were female.

Table 1 Summary of Response Rates

Details	total	Male	Female
No. of responses	112	58 (51.8%)	54 (48.2%)

### 2.2 Research Instruments

This research was conducted using quantitative research methods and the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) was used. FLSAS scale is a modified version of the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) which was specifically developed by (E. K. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) to measure FL classroom anxiety from the students' perspective. FLSAS consists of 23 items that are answered in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly agree to strongly disagree". All the 23 items of FLSAS focus on speaking skill. Students are required to choose one answer for each item and their choices are then equated with a numerical value, where strongly agree is weighted 5 points, agree 4 points, neither agree nor disagree 3 points, disagree 2 points, and strongly disagree 1 point. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in SPSS version 21 was used to analyse the collected data.

### 2.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data was obtained by the FLSAS administered to 120 participants personally. This was to enable the researcher to explain any vague items the participants were unsure of in terms of their meaning and purpose. When the participants were given the questionnaires, they were informed about the objectives of the study and were instructed to answer the items as completely

and accurately as possible. Additionally, they were notified that the purpose of this study was for educational purposes only, and to encourage honest responses, the participants were informed that their answers would remain absolutely confidential. One hundred and twelve participants returned completed questionnaires.

#### 2.4 Quantitative Data Preparation

To yield accurate findings, the data entered into the data file should be very accurate prior to any analysis (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Osterlind, 2001). In this section, before conducting quantitative data analysis, some data screening procedures were followed, namely Detection of Missing Data, Univariate Outliers, Normality Test, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KST). According to (J. F. Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009), any invalid values must be identified and dealt with because their existence would threaten the validity of the findings.

Table 2 Data Screening Procedures

Procedure Name	Result of Test	Action taken
Detection of Missing Data	Accepted	Move to next procedure
Univariate Outliers	Accepted	Move to next procedure
Normality Test	Accepted	Move to next procedure
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (KST)	Unaccepted	data transformed into logarithmic base (Log10 base)

The results of all procedures were accepted except for KST, where the data was transformed into Log10 base as recommended in the literature (Coakes & Steed, 2003; Meyers, Gamst, & Guarino, 2006). However, the original variables would not be changed after transforming the data set. When transforming data, the cases of the new data set would be exactly the same as in the old data set (DeCoster, 2001). Data transforming is performed if the data is not linear, not normal, or not homogeneous. Thus once the data is transformed, the remaining data preparation and screening tests are not important and the researcher can proceed with Exploratory Factor Analysis.

#### 2.5 Communalities procedure

Communalities procedures were also employed as the main component of factor analysis. Communalities portray the quantity of the variance in the original variables taken into account by the factor solution. The factor solution is expected to describe half of each of the original variable's variance, at best; hence, the communality value for each of the variables should be at 0.50 or more (J. F. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Therefore, for the purpose of specification, variables with communalities of less than 0.50 were omitted from any further analysis.

When measuring convergent validity, the following criteria were taken into account to retain items: (1) factor loading not less than 0.5, and (2) no cross-loading of items (Hair et al., 2010, p. 108). The reason for choosing a cut-off point of 0.5 or greater in this study was that this threshold value is considered crucial in ensuring practical significance (Ledesma & Valero-Mora, 2007; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

Table 3 Rotated Factor Matrix

Item No	1 <sup>st</sup> Run	Deleted Items	2 <sup>nd</sup> Run	Deleted Items	3 <sup>rd</sup> Run
Item1	.640		.623		.638
Item2	.442	Deleted			
Item3	.678		.722		.715
Item4	.546		.572		.558
Item5	.720		.673		.701
Item6	.630		.375	Deleted	
Item7	.428	Deleted			
Item8	.481	Deleted			
Item9	.579		.555		.593
Item10	.666		.700		.678
Item11	.641		.697		.716
Item12	.471	Deleted			
Item13	.655		.582		.633
Item14	.615		.608		.603
Item15	.558		.565		.573
Item16	.744		.825		.818
Item17	.647		.596		.620
Item18	.651		.642		.647
Item19	.623		.517		.561
Item20	.652		.573		.602
Item21	.700		.678		.702
Item22	.488	Deleted			
Item23	.587		.562		.556

In the first iteration of factor analysis, factor communalities of items (2, 7, 8, 12, and 22) were below the minimum acceptable value of 0.50. Therefore, they were deleted from the communalities table, as recommended by (J. Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The EFA was conducted again. In the second iteration of factor analysis, factor communality of item (6) was below the minimum acceptable value of 0.50. Thus, it was deleted. In the third EFA run, all items were above the cut-off value of 0.50 and items were loaded accordingly. Therefore, it was not necessary to remove any further items.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Question One: FL Speaking Anxiety Factors

When the remaining 17 items in Table 4 below were assessed by the third iteration of EFA, a unit factor structure was identified. As the result of EFA, nine items (4, 5, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, & 23) were allocated into 'Factor 1' and labelled Fear of negative evaluation. Three items (1, 9, & 10) were allocated into 'Factor 2' and labelled Unpreparedness. Two items were allocated into 'factor 3' (3 & 16) and labelled Fear of Being in Public and Shyness. The last three items were grouped as 'Factor 4' and labelled General speaking class anxiety. These items had values above the cut-off value of 0.5 as shown in the table below.

Table 4 Rotated Component Matrixa for the Remaining Items

Item Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Item5: It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English oral classes per week	<b>.733</b>			
Item15: I am afraid my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make while speaking	<b>.726</b>			
Item13: I don't worry about making mistakes in the oral class	<b>.697</b>			
Item4: It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the oral class	<b>.675</b>			

Item18: I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students	<b>.669</b>		
Item23: I feel nervous when the English teacher asks me questions and I must reply in the oral class	<b>.624</b>		
Item17: I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do	<b>.619</b>		
Item20: I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in my oral class	<b>.561</b>		
Item19: I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	<b>.527</b>		
Item10: It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my oral class		<b>.819</b>	
Item9: I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class		<b>.699</b>	
Item1: I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in the oral class		<b>.616</b>	
Item16: I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in the oral class			<b>.829</b>
Item3: I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in the oral class			<b>.782</b>
Item21: I feel more tense and nervous in the oral class than in my other classes			<b>.814</b>
Item11: In the oral class I can get so nervous I forget things I know			<b>.683</b>
Item14: I feel confident when I speak in the oral class			<b>.661</b>

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.

Factor One: Fear of Negative Evaluation

Factor Two: Unpreparedness

Factor Three: Fear of being in public and shyness

Factor Four: General speaking class anxiety

In computing total scores with scales that contain oppositely worded items (like Item 13), negative item scores were reversed whereas strong disagreement is given the same value of strong agreement in positive items. Therefore, the scoring of disagreement with the first item type (negative items) will be equivalent to agreement with the other item type (positive items). The assumption underlying such a scoring method is that individuals who disagree strongly with an item on one side of the continuum will usually agree with items on the other side. This should result in a similar magnitude of correlations between items oppositely and similarly worded. If similarly-worded items inter-correlate around .40, then oppositely worded items should inter-correlate around -.40 (Spector, Van Katwyk, Brannick, & Chen, 1997).

### 3.1.1 Reliability Analysis

Reliability is defined as the stability and consistency of an instrument used and it is one of the indicators of goodness of measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2003). In the present study, internal consistency was used to test the degree of inter-correlation among items. Internal consistency can be measured by a number of ways but the most common is using Cronbach’s alpha coefficients that provide an indication of the average correlation among all items that make up the scale (Pallant & Manual, 2001; W. Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2012). Coefficient alpha ranges in value from 0 to 1, in which 0 means no consistency and 1 means complete consistency (i.e. all items yield corresponding values) (J. F. Hair et al., 2009; Pallant, 2007; W. G. Zikmund et al., 2010). As the coefficient alphas can take a diverse range of values, Zikmund et al. (2010) recommend the following threshold to interpret the values: scales with a coefficient alpha between 0.80 and 0.95 are considered to have very good reliability, those that have values between 0.60 and 0.70 have fair reliability, and values below 0.60 show poor reliability. In exploratory studies, the alpha value of 0.6 is generally considered sufficient and acceptable, even though a value of Cronbach’s alpha 0.70 is generally considered good (Nunnally, 1978). For this study Cronbach’s alpha coefficients results are shown below in table (5).

Table 5 Cronbach's Alpha result

Factor	Items deleted	Items retained	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	Std. deviation
Fear of negative evaluation	0	9	0.874	2.744	.86695
Unpreparedness	0	3	0.671	2.913	.94678
Fear of being in public and shyness	0	2	0.850	2.870	1.04136
General speaking class anxiety	0	3	0.664	2.878	.85013

The general statistical depiction of the variables used in this study was generated by using descriptive analysis in the SPSS program. Statistical values of means, standard deviation were calculated for the study variables: four dimensions of foreign language speaking anxiety (i.e. Fear of Negative Evaluation, Unpreparedness, and Fear of being in public and shyness, and General speaking class anxiety). The results of these statistical values are shown in Table 6. All the variables were measured on a five-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neither agree nor disagree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly disagree (1).

In general, the mean values of all variables were between 2.744 and 2.913 with standard deviations ranging from .85013 to 1.04136. The result suggests that the respondents were generally consistent in their opinions with regards to the questions asked on the dimensions of foreign language speaking anxiety (i.e. Fear of negative evaluation, Unpreparedness, Fear of being in public & shyness, and General speaking class anxiety). With regards to the mean values, the result indicates that all factors are considered to be moderate, i.e the respondents of this study indicate moderate anxiety about FL speaking.

The standard deviation (SD) describes the spread or variability of the sample distribution values from the mean, and is perhaps the most valuable index of dispersion (J. F. Hair et al., 2009; W. G. Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2009). If the estimated standard deviation is large, the responses in a sample distribution of numbers do not fall very close to the mean of the distribution. If the estimated standard deviation is small, the distribution values are close to the mean (Hair et al. 2009). In other words, if the estimated standard deviation is smaller than 1, it means the respondents were very consistent in their opinions. On the other hand, if the estimated standard deviation is larger than 3, it means the respondents varied greatly in their opinions (Hair et al. 2009). SD indicates how tightly the amount in the dataset is clustered around the mean value. The simple formula for calculating standard deviation is (Maximum – Minimum)/4. In this study  $5-1/4= 1$ . It can be concluded that 1 is the true SD value for this study as indicated by Hair et al. (2009). However, all of the variables SD values were less than 1, except for Fear of being in public and shyness which is almost 1 as illustrated in table (4.10), so this clearly indicates the consistency of respondents' opinions.

### 3.2 Question Two: Gender Differences between Students

Some literature point out that gender plays a fundamental role in foreign language speaking anxiety (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012; Muhaisen & Al-Haq, 2012; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013). Therefore, this research aims to examine the influence of gender on the degree of foreign language speaking anxiety experienced by Jordanian English learners.

To test differences between unrelated demographic groups, the Independent Samples T-test is the best.. The differences between two groups are tested by comparing the means on the same continuous dependent variable (Field, 2005). The general rule says that: firstly, if the Laverne's Test



(which tests the homogeneity of variance) is greater than or equal to .05, unequal variance is assumed. Any value less than .05 means that the variability is different i.e. scores in first condition vary much from the other condition and the researcher can move to the second T-test (Field, 2005). Secondly, if the significance of the second T-test (sig 2 tailed) is less than .05 it indicates that means are different, and it can be concluded that the two conditions are significantly different. However, if the t-test is equal or greater than .05 the null hypothesis is assumed and it can be concluded that the two conditions are not significantly different. In such a case, means difference is ascribed to chance and not likely attributed to independent variable manipulation (Field, 2005).

Table 6 Gender Differences

Factor	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. Laverne's Test	Sig. (2-tailed)
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Male	58	2.7854	.85533	.759	.453
	Female	54	2.6996	.88512		
Unpreparedness	Male	58	2.7356	.86913	.227	.070
	Female	54	3.1049	.99648		
Fear of being in public and shyness	Male	58	2.9828	.90304	.003	.077
	Female	54	2.7500	1.16857		
Speaking-Class Anxiety	Male	58	2.9885	.79218	.081	.087
	Female	54	2.7593	.90054		

The first thing to do in analyzing t-test data is to check the variance of the two groups which lies under Laverne's Test for equality of variance. As shown in the above table, the Laverne's test results in all cases are greater than .05 indicating no differences in means and the two conditions are not significantly different. Variances for the two groups (male and female) are equal except for Fear of being in public and shyness factor. Hence t-test result and significant value in the 2 tailed must be deliberated for this factor where the significance value in all cases including Fear of being in public and shyness is greater than .05, meaning the differences in this study are not significant.

The small significant value of Fear of being in public and shyness factor in this study might be attributed to chance since its standard deviation is higher than other factors as it was explained in the previous section. Therefore, the results of this study support the null hypothesis, i.e. no significant gender differences exist between Jordanian students in terms of foreign language

speaking anxiety factors.

The result of this research seems to be new and do not entirely resonate with findings in the related literature. (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012) demonstrated that female learners in Iran were more apprehensive than male students within their interlanguage system framework. He added that achieving more knowledge would not necessarily lead to greater reduction in level of FL speaking anxiety because female students at higher levels of language learning were more subject to FL anxiety-provoking factors within their context. While two studies discovered no significant difference between male and female students with regard to Speaking skill, one conducted in Jordan, one by (Ahmed & Alansari, 2004) involving students drawn from Jordan, Iraq, and Palestine, and the other by (Muhaisen. & Al-Haq., 2012) among secondary school students, these studies did not involve exclusively freshmen Thus, this study is the first involving freshmen which shows no significant correlation between gender and any of the EFL speaking anxiety.

#### 4. Discussion

Based on these participants' perspectives, 4 classroom-based factors are found to contribute to FL speaking anxiety as shown in table (4) which are, Fear of negative evaluation, Unpreparedness, Fear of being in public and shyness, and General speaking class anxiety.

The first and most important factor was fear of negative evaluation. Students who have a fear of negative evaluation perceive speaking in the foreign language as a risky situation rather than as a chance to enhance their communication skill (Mak, 2011; Melouah, 2013; Tseng, 2012; Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013). They feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others (Melouah, 2013; Sadeghi et al., 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). In this study learners feel apprehensive and shy, they lose confidence and consequently avoid taking part in oral activities because of fear that their peers would criticize and ridicule their performance. They are scared of peer correction and fear making mistakes. Learners' perceptions about their low ability compared to their peers and fear of making mistakes are deemed as the main factors causing English speaking anxiety (Melouah, 2013; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). The respondents in this study believed that their peers would ridicule their performance when they made mistakes, and consequently cause them embarrassment. They viewed peer correction as degrading, highlighting their weakness which would be embarrassing to them and raise their level of anxiety. The results of this research confirmed the existence of Fear of negative evaluation as a strong source of speaking anxiety among Jordanian EFL learners.

The second main factor found in this study is Unpreparedness. This is responsible for learners' anxiety which in turn hinders their performance. FL learners concentrate on memorizing grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and stock phrases, but they find difficulty using the language in everyday interactions (Wu, 2010). Learners in this research appreciate how vital it is to be prepared to speak so as not to feel anxious; they panic when they have to speak without preparation in English class. They show a high level of anxiety when speaking in class because they are not yet fluent in the target language. They ascribe their lack of participation in the class to their lack of vocabulary or not being ready to speak on certain topics. Unpreparedness as a factor causing speaking anxiety can be explained by two reasons which are: limited language proficiency and inability to respond to spontaneous questions. (Sadeghi et al., 2013) found limited vocabulary knowledge and low language proficiency were two factors causing learners' level of speaking anxiety. (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013) also found problems with language accuracy as a reason

for learners' anxiety in speaking in the target language. Learners with low language proficiency feel anxious about speaking because they lack mastery in the target language; they attribute this to their lack of limited vocabulary, pronunciation, or awkward language structure.

The third main factor considered in this study is Fear of Being in Public and Shyness. Among international students in Malaysia, Algerian and Iranian EFL learners (Middle Eastern learners) seem to be affected by this factor when speaking English (Zhiping & Paramasivam, 2013). Learners in this research too admitted that they trembled in anticipation of being called upon in the oral class. They reported feeling apprehensive about participating or getting involved in any speaking activity; they would get confused and stressed even if they were familiar with the topic. This could stem from different reasons like low self-esteem or fear of interaction. The results of this research seem to resonate with those of other empirical studies. A study conducted in an Arab EFL context in Algeria, confirmed that low self-esteem is a factor aggravating learners' speaking anxiety (Melouah, 2013). Learners in this study seemed to think poorly of their speaking skill, which affects their performance negatively; they were afraid to be exposed to the class because of low self-esteem. Different studies have referred to this by different names, e.g. Performing in front of others (Suleimenova, 2013), Interactional domains (Cutrone, 2009), and Presentation in the classroom (Tseng 2012). These results seem to confirm Fear of Being in Public and Shyness as a factor that arouses speaking anxiety in FL learners. Respondents who experience Fear of Being in Public and Shyness perceive a speaking activity as a scary situation. They believe that they are still new students and cannot speak properly; if they have any question they would wait till the class is over and ask the lecturer privately in the office to avoid being exposed in class.

The fourth main factor considered in this research was General speaking class anxiety. (Cassady, 2010) defines anxiety as a permanent state of apprehension during class sessions. Such anxiety appears to vary during classes or other situations that require the use of the FL. The respondents in this research seemed to be either unsure or unrelaxed when attending FL oral class. In addition they said that during oral class they forgot things they knew, and would think of things that had nothing to do with the class. Several reasons may have prompted this, such as: Self-perceived ability in speaking English, Negative attitude, and previous experience at school. (Subaşı, 2010) claims that self-perceived ability in speaking English is one of the factors contributing to learners' high level of speaking anxiety. FL speaking activities involve speaking in front of other students; therefore, those who compare their abilities with other students' abilities will experience language anxiety. These learners avoid taking part in speaking activities with those who can perform better. Of course their evaluation against the other student's performance is not based on real criteria, but it is attributed to their negative self-perceptions of their abilities in speaking English. Moreover, those with a negative attitude will tend to allow less input into their language acquisition device. Some learners in this research admit that they studied English not because they liked it, but because of family persuasion or to meet market needs. Other students claimed that they did not understand English inside the classroom, which frustrated them, making them hate English.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of the study show that the Jordanian EFL respondents tended to feel moderately anxious. The duplication of factor analyses of FL speaking anxiety in the classroom could provide a clearer picture since it contributes to the distinction of FL speaking anxiety from general FL classroom anxiety. These findings highlight the reality of the particular FL speaking anxiety in the Jordanian undergraduate context. Instructors and teachers of EFL should be aware of this and be sensitive to students with speaking anxiety by being patient and considerate, and they should seek to implement appropriate measures to help them.

In the literature, two models of anxiety are recognized, namely the interference retrieval model and skill deficit model. This staging of anxiety has implications for the classroom environment. Respondents in this research have shown several anxiety factors associated with the two models. The two types of anxious learners are: 1) those with low ability in the target language and 2) those with medium or high ability in the target language. Treatment for both types is not an easy issue. Those with low ability in the target language have to enhance their abilities to cope with the target language communication demands, while those with adequate ability to speak require more relaxed and supportive methods to encourage them to speak better. However, both types of anxious learners seem to perceive FL speaking activities as evaluation situations rather than as a chance to enhance their oral production. They worry about inferring the wrong meaning or misunderstanding linguistic structures for fear of embarrassment should they commit an error.

This research has identified the factors causing speaking anxiety to a particular group of EFL learners in Jordan by examining the views of students, and some suggestions have been offered for elevating such anxiety to facilitate language learning in a friendlier environment. It is expected that further research investigating other aspects of the EFL teaching /learning situation in a more holistic manner may provide clearer insights into the causes of this EFL speaking anxiety, and offer more effective ways of managing students affected by such anxiety.

EFL instructors need to work at alleviating this speaking anxiety among their EFL students. According to (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009) “Establishing a learning community and a supportive classroom atmosphere, project work, and providing indirect, rather than direct correction” would help anxious learners who fear negative evaluation in an FL context (p: 42). Teachers may arrange group activities or act as a guide to help those who need more support. Many students prefer small group interactions because they can ask for help from the others in the group and they can also relate to others facing similar difficulties in understanding the target language. Thus, group work might be a good idea especially for more challenging speaking activities or topics as those students with a high level of proficiency may help others with lower levels of proficiency and thus reduce their level of anxiety. Moreover, in small groups that tend to develop close relationships, chances of being ridiculed and criticized are much reduced.

Language teachers and instructors should acknowledge the challenges faced by learners with low levels of language ability. According to the findings of this research, two reasons cause students to feel unprepared, namely their own low language proficiency and spontaneous questions directed at them. Language instructors should recognize the importance of providing adequate time for preparation ahead of any speaking activity. They need to provide information about the speaking activity at hand, such as background information or a schema before speaking and giving feedback

after the speaking activity. A clear introduction about the topic at hand that serves to activate the students' prior knowledge about the topic and stimulate their interest may contribute to better understanding and easier processing. When students are allowed to express the challenges of a speaking activity and to ask questions, they are better able to evaluate their understanding of the topic at hand and to reduce their apprehension. Learners who have low language proficiency and who panic at being asked spontaneous questions need more supportive techniques, and they can benefit from instructions in language learning strategies.

To manage learners with low self-esteem or who have a fear of interaction instructors could use relaxation techniques and be gentler, or show more sympathy. Language teachers should understand that freshmen EFL learners need more empathy and privacy which could be provided if the number of students involved in an activity is low. In general, such learners would benefit from working in small groups as it would be less scary to make mistakes in a small group. Students with low self-esteem would feel free to express themselves and interact with their peers.

As for learners with General speaking class anxiety may be due to a negative self-perception of their ability in speaking English, or a negative attitude, or previous negative EFL experience in school. Language instructors need to pay more attention to students' prior language learning experience in school. The cause of skills deficit anxiety is inadequate language skills, or poor learning habits which are reflected at the output stage anxiety when the learner realizes his inadequacy (Woodrow, 2006). Such learners avoid speaking in the class because of their self-perceived low ability in the target language, and FL anxiety will be elevated when they compare their language ability with those better than them. Constant positive feedback whenever possible may be helpful in boosting these learners' self-confidence to help them to develop fluency.

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## Appendix



UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA (UKM)

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES  
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGE STUDIES AND LINGUISTICS

RESEARCH TITLE

## Speaking Anxiety among English as a Foreign Language Learners in Jordan: Qualitative Research.

### OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. What are the factors that contribute to EFL speaking anxiety?
2. How do male and female students differ in terms of EFL speaking anxiety factors?

عزيزي المشارك بالاستبيان، الرجاء قراءة العبارات بدقة والاجابة بكل شفافية بناء على خبرتك كطالب في تخصص اللغة الانجليزية. جميع الاجابات ستكون سرية كما ان هذا الاستبيان سيستخدم فقط لاغراض اكااديمية بحثه تخص دراستي لاستكمال رسالة الدكتوراة. يعتمد هذا البحث لايجاد مصدر القلق والذي من شأنه ان يعيق الطالب من استخدام اللغة الانجليزية للمحادثة في داخل الصف او خارجه. ومحاولة مساعدة الطلاب للتمكن من التغلب على عامل القلق اثناء استخدام اللغة الانجليزية حتى تتمكن من جني تحصيل افضل سواء بالجانب الدراسي (درجات افضل) أو العلمي (تطبيق افضل). لذا ارجوا منك عزيزي الطالب الاجابة على العبارات والاسئلة جميعاً من ذلك دون تردد. دمتم بحفظ الله.

Dear participant please read the questions carefully and choose your answers as accurate as possible based upon your experience in English course. Your answers will be anonymous and will be used for pedagogical purposes as a requirement of my Ph.D. thesis. The current research is meant to investigate the anxiety factors experienced by undergraduate learners when speaking English as a FL. The findings will allow suggestions for effective learning methods to lessen level of anxiety in order to promote EFL learners' speaking performance. Please answer all questions **honestly** and without **references to any sources**. Stay blessed. Thank you in advance.

- Jafar Mohammad Najib Batiha
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### PART A: BACKGROUND QUESTIONS: الجزء الأول اسئلة عامة

- 1) Gender الجنس :  Male ذكر  Female انثى

**PART B: FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY SCALE.**

الجزء الثاني استبيان خاص بقياس مقدار القلق عند استخدام اللغة الأجنبية

Item العبارة	1. Strongly Agree أوافق بشدة	2. Agree أوافق	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree غير متأكد	4. Disagree لا أوافق	5. Strongly Disagree لا أوافق بشدة
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in the oral class a. لم أكن يوماً متأكداً تماماً من نفسي عندما أتكلم في صفّي باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. I often feel like not going to the oral class a. أشعر دوماً بعدم الرغبة بالذهاب لمحاضرة المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in the oral class a. يرتجف جسدي عندما أعلم أن اسمي سيذكر في محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the oral class a. مما يخيفني أنني لا أفهم ما يقوله الأستاذ داخل محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English oral classes per week a. لا يضيرني المزيد من محاضرات المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. During the English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course a. أجد نفسي أحياناً أفكر بأشياء ليس لها علاقة بالمحاضرة أو الدراسة	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well to my oral presentation a. لا أشعر بالاجهاد أو الضغط ابداً حين أجهز جيداً للعرض الشفوي باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. I am usually at ease during the oral class a. عادة ما أكون هادئاً الأعصاب خلال محاضرات المحادثة باللغة الإنجليزية	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class a. أشعر بالرعب عندما يتوجب علي أن أتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية دون تحضير	SA	A	N	D	SD

10. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my oral class a. ممايجرجني ان اجيب سؤالا طوعاً في محاضرات المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
11. In the oral class I can get so nervous I forget things I know a. اشعر بالتوتر عندما انسى اشياء اعرفها خلال محاضرة اللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
12. It would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers a. لا اشعر بالتوتر عندما اتحدث مع الاجانب الذين يتحدثون اللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
13. I don't worry about making mistakes in the oral class a. لا يقلقني اني اخطأ احيانا في محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
14. I feel confident when I speak in the oral class a. اشعر بالثقة عندما اتحدث في محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
15. I am afraid my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make while speaking a. اشعر بالخوف لمعرفة ان المحاضر سيقوم بتصحيح اي خطأ اقوم به خلال المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
16. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in the oral class a. اشعر بقلبي يخفق بشدة عندما اعلم ان اسمي سيكون التالي في محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
17. I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do a. أشعر دوماً أن الطلبة الآخرين يتحدثون اللغة الإنجليزية أفضل مني	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
18. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students a. دائما اشعر ان الطلبة الاخرين يتكلمون اللغة الانجليزية افضل مني	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
19. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English a. اخاف ان يضحك الطلاب الاخرين مني عندما اتكلم اللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
20. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in my oral class a. اشعر بالتوتر والتشويش عندما اتحدث في محاضرة اللغة الانجليزية	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
21. I feel more tense and nervous in the oral class than in my other classes a. اشعر بالقلق والضغط في محاضرة المحادثة باللغة الانجليزية اكثر من اي مادة اخرى	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>

<p>22. When I am on my way to the oral class, I feel very sure and relaxed</p> <p>a. اشعر الثقة والارتياح عندما اكون في طريقي لمحاضرة اللغة الانجليزية</p> <p>b.</p>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>1. N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
<p>23. I feel nervous in the oral class when the English teacher asks me questions and I must reply in the oral class</p> <p>a. اشعر بالتوتر عندما يسأل المحاضر اشياء يتوجب علي الاجابة عنها</p>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>