INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN ACADEMIC

NOR LAELI KOMARIYAH
SN. 20522136

2026

INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN ACADEMIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCES

A THESIS

Submitted in Partical Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan in English Education

By:

NOR LAELI KOMARIYAH

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ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI

K.H.ABDURRAHMAN WAHID PEKALONGAN

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2026

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UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan
c.q Ketua Program Studi TBIG
di-
PEKALONGAN

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Setelah diadakan penelitian dan perbaikan seperlunya, maka bersama ini kami kirimkan naskah skripsi saudari:

Nama : NOR LAELI KOMARIYAH
NIM : 20522136
Judul : INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN ACADEMIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCES

Dengan ini saya mohon agar skripsi saudari dapat segera dimunaqasahkan. Demikian nota pembimbing ini dibuat untuk digunakan sebagaimana mestinya. Atas perhatiannya saya sampaikan terimakasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

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Judul Skripsi : **INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN ACADEMIC SPEAKING PERFORMANCES**

Yang telah diujikan pada hari Selasa, 3 Maret 2026 dan dinyatakan LULUS serta diterima sebagai salah satu syarat guna memperoleh Gelar Sarjana Pendidikan (S.Pd) dalam Ilmu Tadris Bahasa Inggris.

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MOTTO

"Let nothing that tries to make you small define you, and never let doubt steal your worth. Greater things are ahead of you waiting for you to grow, to learn, and to become more than you ever imagined."

The researcher

"Dreams are free so go ahead and choose the most expensive one."

Raim Laode

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances and the factors that contribute to it. Using a qualitative case study design, the research involved four fifth-semester students from the English Education Department at a university in Pekalongan. Data were collected through classroom observations using video recordings and semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students experienced various manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances, including physiological, behavioral, and verbal expressions. The physiological and behavioral manifestations included rapid heartbeat, trembling hands, and fidgeting, while the verbal manifestations included speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition or overexplaining during presentations. Furthermore, three main factors contributed to students' anxiety: linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, and peer interaction. Limited vocabulary, concerns about grammar and pronunciation, lecturer evaluation, and classmates' attention intensified students' nervousness during speaking tasks. The study concludes that anxiety in academic speaking performances is influenced by both internal linguistic limitations and external classroom-related social pressures. These findings highlight the importance of creating supportive classroom environments and encouraging adequate preparation to help reduce students' anxiety during academic speaking activities.

Keywords: speaking anxiety, academic speaking, EFL students

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi bagaimana kecemasan dimanifestasikan pada mahasiswa EFL selama penampilan berbicara akademik serta faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadapnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif yang melibatkan empat mahasiswa semester lima dari Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas di Pekalongan. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kelas menggunakan rekaman video dan wawancara semi-terstruktur, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mengalami berbagai manifestasi kecemasan selama penampilan berbicara akademik, yang meliputi ekspresi fisiologis, perilaku, dan verbal. Manifestasi fisiologis dan perilaku meliputi detak jantung yang cepat, tangan gemetar, dan gerakan gelisah, sedangkan manifestasi verbal meliputi gangguan berbicara, mental blocking, serta pengulangan atau penjelasan yang berlebihan selama presentasi. Selain itu, terdapat tiga faktor utama yang berkontribusi terhadap kecemasan mahasiswa, yaitu kesulitan linguistik, ketakutan terhadap evaluasi negatif, dan interaksi dengan teman sebaya. Keterbatasan kosakata, kekhawatiran terhadap tata bahasa dan pengucapan, penilaian dosen, serta perhatian dari teman sekelas meningkatkan rasa gugup mahasiswa saat melakukan tugas berbicara. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kecemasan dalam penampilan berbicara akademik dipengaruhi oleh keterbatasan linguistik internal serta tekanan sosial eksternal yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan kelas. Temuan ini menekankan pentingnya menciptakan lingkungan kelas yang suportif serta mendorong persiapan yang memadai untuk membantu mengurangi kecemasan mahasiswa dalam kegiatan berbicara akademik.

Kata kunci: kecemasan berbicara, berbicara akademik, mahasiswa EFL

PREFACE

Praise and gratitude are devoted to Allah SWT for His immeasurable blessings, mercy, and guidance, which have enabled the researcher to complete this thesis entitled *"Investigating EFL Students' Anxiety in Academic Speaking Performances."* Peace and salutations be upon Prophet Muhammad SAW, his family, companions, and followers.

This thesis is submitted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in English Education. The researcher realizes that this thesis could not have been completed without the support and assistance of many parties. Therefore, the researcher would like to express sincere gratitude to:

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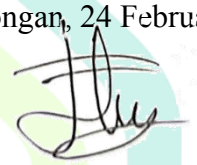
The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful not only for herself but also for readers, educators, and future researchers who are interested in understanding students' anxiety in academic speaking performances. The researcher realizes that this work is still far from perfect; therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly appreciated for further improvement.

Pekalongan, 24 February 2026



Nor Laeli Komariyah

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

At a university in Pekalongan, many EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students experience anxiety when performing academic speaking tasks. Feelings of nervousness and a lack of confidence often arise when they are required to speak in English in formal academic situations, such as being a master of ceremonies, a moderator, or delivering a speech (Horwitz et al., 1986; Lindy Woodrow, 2006). This anxiety is also evident in classroom interactions, especially when students are randomly selected to speak in front of the class. According to Liu and Jackson (2021), foreign language anxiety is a significant emotional barrier that can affect students' ability to communicate in English. This is supported by Chen and Lin (2020), who emphasize that anxiety can lower students' motivation and willingness to perform confidently in front of others.

In EFL learning, speaking skills serve as an important indicator of how well students can use English communicatively. Many students experience anxiety when engaging in academic speaking tasks, which may hinder their speaking performance (Horwitz et al., 1986). This emotional tension makes it difficult for them to express ideas clearly, and some may even avoid speaking opportunities altogether. Marwan (2022) found that fear of negative evaluation, unpleasant past experiences, and low self-confidence are the main triggers of anxiety in speaking activities. Zhang (2020) states that academic speaking tasks such as formal presentations can create intense psychological pressure,

especially for students with limited language proficiency.

Several factors contribute to anxiety in academic speaking contexts, including lack of speaking experience, negative self-perception, limited vocabulary, and psychological aspects such as shyness, fear of making mistakes, and overthinking. Students who feel they lack sufficient vocabulary often struggle to articulate their ideas, which in turn heightens their anxiety during speaking tasks (Setiawan & Nurweni, 2020; Ningrum & Astuti, 2021). When students believe the audience will judge or ridicule them, their willingness to speak decreases (Yanti & Fatmawati, 2023; Pratiwi & Nurhayati, 2022). Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2021) also point out that lexical limitations and social pressure significantly contribute to the linguistic anxiety experienced by EFL students.

This phenomenon is not only supported by previous research but is also observed in real classroom contexts at the university. During my own fifth semester, researcher personally witnessed how students struggled with nervousness, trembling, and loss of focus when delivering academic presentations. This observation indicates that speaking anxiety is not merely a temporary or isolated case, but a recurring issue faced by EFL students. Moreover, based on informal observations and discussions with some students currently taking the Academic Speaking course, it is evident that speaking anxiety remains an issue. This indicates that the phenomenon is not only relevant in previous contexts but also continues to persist among current EFL learners in academic settings.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in investigating the anxiety experienced by EFL students when performing academic speaking tasks. While many previous studies have explored language learning anxiety in general, research that specifically focuses on anxiety in academic speaking performances remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore the contributing factors to students' anxiety and how it influences their experiences in academic speaking performances. By conducting this study with current fifth-semester students, it is expected that the findings will not only enrich the body of knowledge but also provide empirical evidence of how speaking anxiety continues to affect EFL learners in present-day academic contexts.

1.2. Formulation of the Problems

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher addresses the following research questions:

1. How is anxiety manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances?
2. What are the factors that cause anxiety among EFL students in academic speaking performances?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is stated as follows in light of the logic behind the research questions:

1. To investigate how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances.

2. To investigate the factors that cause anxiety among EFL students in academic speaking performances.

1.4. Operational Definitions

To avoid any misunderstanding regarding the terms used in this study, the researcher provides the following definitions:

1. Anxiety :Anxiety is a psychological condition that can hinder EFL students' ability to speak clearly and confidently during academic speaking tasks (Liu & Jackson, 2021; Chen & Lin, 2020).
2. EFL Students :EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students are learners who study English in a non-English-speaking environment, such as Indonesian university students enrolled in English education programs (Harmer, 2007).
3. Academic Speaking :Academic speaking performances refer to structured oral tasks in English within academic

settings, such as giving speeches, moderating, or participating in discussions, which aim to develop students' fluency, accuracy, and confidence (Bailey, 2005).

1.5. Significance of the Study

1. Theoritical Use : This study contributes to theoretical perspectives on foreign language anxiety by examining how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances and identifying the factors that cause such anxiety. The findings enrich existing discussions on foreign language anxiety by highlighting physiological, behavioral, and verbal manifestations as well as linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, and peer interaction as key contributing factors in academic speaking contexts.
2. Empirical Use : This study provides empirical insights into EFL students' anxiety in academic speaking performances.
3. Practical Use : This study offers valuable insights for educators and researchers into EFL students' anxiety in academic speaking performances.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical background for this research is presented in this chapter. The researcher provides several literature reviews releted to the subiect of this study andis divided into.

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Anxiety

1. **Definition of Anxiety**

   Anxiety is a psychological state characterized by feelings of nervousness, worry, and tension that can affect students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning (Spielberger, 1983; Horwitz & Cope, 1986). In the context of foreign language learning, particularly in speaking activities, language anxiety refers to the discomfort students experience when required to speak in a language they have not yet mastered, which may reduce fluency, confidence, and willingness to participate (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Scovel, 1978). Understanding this phenomenon is crucial for supporting EFL students in improving their academic speaking performance.

2. **Behavioral and Verbal Manifestation of Anxiety**

   According to Carlson et al. (2009), anxiety triggers both physiological and

behavioral responses in individuals, which may appear automatically and are not always consciously noticed. In the context of EFL students' academic speaking, these manifestations include:

A. Physiological & Behavioral Manifestation

Non-verbal expressions refer to physical and behavioral signs that indicate nervousness during speaking performances.

1. Rapid heartbeat: an increase in heart rate caused by nervousness when individuals face stressful or evaluative situations.
2. Sweaty palms: excessive perspiration in the hands as a physiological response to stress.
3. Trembling hands: involuntary shaking that occurs due to heightened physiological arousal.
4. Fast breathing: rapid or shallow breathing resulting from anxiety.
5. Fidgeting: restless movements of the hands or feet that reflect nervousness or discomfort.
6. Biting lips or nails: observable nervous behaviors that indicate emotional tension.
7. Shuffling papers: repetitive manipulation of objects, such as notes or papers, as a coping behavior to reduce tension.

In addition to physical reactions, anxiety also influences students' verbal performance.

B. Verbal / Performance Manifestation

McCroskey's (1977) Communication Apprehension Theory highlights that fear of public speaking affects verbal performance. Common verbal manifestations include:

1. Speaking disruption: stuttering, the frequent use of filler words (e.g., "uh", "um"), or slow pronunciation during speech.
2. Mental blocking: forgetting the material or experiencing a blank mind during presentations due to cognitive pressure.
3. Repetition / overexplaining: repeating ideas or over-elaborating to compensate for nervousness.

The factors discussed below may trigger these verbal and non-verbal expressions of anxiety during academic speaking performances.

3. The Factors of Anxiety

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety is closely related to students' fear of negative evaluation and their difficulties in using the target language during communication.

a. Linguistic difficulties: This includes limited vocabulary and insufficient

grammatical knowledge. Learners often feel unprepared to express their ideas accurately and fluently, which leads to anxiety, particularly when they are afraid of making mistakes in front of others.

b. Fear of negative evaluation: This factor refers to students' apprehension about being judged by teachers or peers. The fear of receiving negative feedback can result in avoidance behavior, reluctance to speak, and reduced classroom participation.

In addition to these internal factors, classroom-related conditions may also influence students' anxiety. Young (1991) highlights several external factors in the classroom context, including classroom environment, teacher behavior, and peer interaction.

a. Classroom environment: A highly competitive or overly strict classroom atmosphere can heighten anxiety levels.
b. Teacher behavior: Harsh correction, lack of encouragement, or limited emotional support from teachers can contribute significantly to students' anxiety.
c. Peer interaction: Fear of being laughed at or judged by classmates may also discourage students from participating in speaking activities.

2.1.2. EFL Student

This study focuses on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, who are defined as

learners of English in contexts where English is not the primary medium of communication. According to Harmer (2007), EFL students study English in environments where the language is not used in daily social or institutional interactions, and where exposure to English is typically limited to formal educational settings such as schools or universities. These students learn English as an additional subject rather than a necessary communicative tool in their daily lives.

Richards and Schmidt (2010) further describe EFL students as learners who encounter English mainly through textbooks, classroom instruction, and other structured learning activities, rather than through immersion or natural use in the community. This context can significantly affect their language acquisition process, especially in terms of speaking and listening skills, which often receive less emphasis compared to reading and writing.

McKay (2002) distinguishes EFL from ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts by emphasizing that EFL learners usually lack access to authentic language environments. While ESL learners may be surrounded by native speakers and authentic usage in their daily lives, EFL students often encounter English in artificial or academic situations. This limited exposure can pose challenges in developing communicative competence, especially in speaking and listening skills.

EFL students are characterized by their learning context, which is shaped by limited

language input and reduced opportunities for real-life communication. Understanding who EFL students are is crucial for studies that examine their language learning experiences, especially in relation to challenges such as anxiety, confidence, and performance in academic speaking settings.

2.1.3. Academic Speaking

Academic speaking refers to oral communication that takes place in formal educational settings and is typically structured, purposeful, and often evaluative. According to Goh and Burns (2012), academic speaking involves expressing complex ideas clearly and appropriately in contexts such as presentations, group discussions, debates, and oral examinations. It requires not only linguistic competence but also the ability to organize content logically, engage an audience, and respond to questions critically.

Basturkmen (2006) emphasizes that academic speaking is context-dependent, where learners are expected to use formal vocabulary, appropriate register, and cohesive devices to present arguments, defend positions, or explain academic content. This makes academic speaking particularly challenging for EFL learners, who may struggle with fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and confidence.

Hughes (2010) further notes that effective academic speaking involves the use of discourse strategies such as signposting, clarification, elaboration, and paraphrasing, which are not commonly found in everyday informal speech. These strategies are vital for maintaining

coherence and ensuring that listeners can follow the speaker's line of thought.

For EFL students, the challenges in academic speaking are often intensified due to limited exposure to authentic English-speaking environments. Flowerdew and Miller (2005) argue that learners may face difficulties in understanding and producing academic talk, leading to anxiety and underperformance during oral tasks. These difficulties can be cognitive (organizing ideas), linguistic (vocabulary/grammar use), or affective (fear of evaluation or embarrassment).

In this study, academic speaking specifically refers to students' oral performances in classroom contexts such as presentations and public speaking tasks, where they are required to use English to express ideas formally, clearly, and persuasively. Understanding academic speaking as a distinct type of oral communication is essential to analyze the factors that trigger anxiety and to identify appropriate pedagogical support for EFL learners.

2.2. Previous Study

Zumarnis et al. (2023) conducted a study entitled "An Exploration of Students' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in Classroom Presentation at SMAN 1 Kampar Timur." This research aimed to explore the level of students' speaking anxiety and the factors that influenced it during classroom presentations in English classes. The study employed a qualitative method with a case study approach, involving four 10th-grade students selected through purposive sampling based on observed anxiety

symptoms during their presentations. The data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), direct observations, and in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that all participants experienced speaking anxiety, which was categorized into two levels: very anxious and anxious. Eight factors were identified as contributors to students' speaking anxiety, including lack of self-confidence, weak grammar mastery, poor pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, fear of being laughed at, fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation, and exam anxiety. Among these factors, lack of preparation was found to be the most dominant. This study is relevant to the present research because it highlights how speaking anxiety manifests in classroom presentation contexts, although it focused on secondary school students, whereas the current research focuses on university-level public speaking classes.

Rafsanjani (2021) conducted a qualitative case study entitled “Investigating Student’s Anxiety in Public Speaking Class” at UIN Ar-Raniry. This study aimed to explore the causes of anxiety in public speaking and how students manage their fear. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten English education students. The findings revealed that lack of confidence, fear of eye contact, limited vocabulary, and lack of preparation were the main contributors to students’ speaking anxiety. Students adopted several strategies to cope, such as avoiding audience’s gaze, using hand movements, and practicing at home. This study is highly relevant to the present research as it investigates public speaking anxiety within a structured academic context at the university level, using a similar qualitative approach.

Khafidhoh et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study entitled “Investigating Anxiety in Speaking among EFL Students” published in the *Ahmad Dahlan Journal of English Studies*. This study aimed to investigate the causes of speaking anxiety and how students overcome it. The participants were sixth-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Ahmad Dahlan. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researchers collected data through the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and semi-structured interviews. The results revealed that the most common causes of speaking anxiety were nervousness, trembling, shyness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence. Students applied various coping strategies such as preparation, peer support, and self-practice. This study is relevant to the present research for its qualitative design and university context. However, it focused on general speaking activities, whereas the present study examines structured academic speaking tasks and incorporates video-recorded observations to analyze non-verbal indicators of anxiety.

Aminah (2023), in her undergraduate thesis entitled "Investigating Students' Anxiety in the Practice of Teaching English in Microteaching Course." aimed to explore the types of anxiety experienced by English education students and the reasons behind it during their microteaching sessions. The study involved four English education students from Universitas Islam Negeri K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan and employed a qualitative descriptive method. Data were collected through classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings revealed that students experienced three types of anxiety based on Horwitz’s (1986) theory: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-

specific anxiety. The causes of anxiety included negative past experiences, such as forgetting material or being laughed at, and irrational fears like making mistakes or being unable to deliver material properly. Students managed their anxiety using strategies such as preparation, relaxation, holding objects while presenting, and using gestures. While this study provides valuable insight into speaking anxiety in a teaching context, its scope is limited to microteaching practice. In contrast, the present research focuses on structured public speaking presentations, which emphasize formal academic performance in front of broader audiences.

Most previous studies investigating foreign language speaking anxiety have provided valuable insights into its causes and coping strategies. However, there are still several gaps that need to be addressed in this study. First, while some studies explored speaking anxiety in general classroom settings or specific contexts like microteaching and thesis seminars, they did not focus on structured academic speaking tasks such as moderating, delivering formal speeches, or being an MC, which require higher levels of linguistic performance and self-confidence. Second, although the majority of the studies employed qualitative approaches, their data were primarily drawn from interviews and questionnaires, without incorporating video-based observations to examine non-verbal cues such as posture, facial expressions, and gestures. Lastly, while coping strategies were discussed in several studies, they were often explored in non-academic or less formal speaking situations. Therefore, the present study aims to fill these gaps by investigating EFL students' speaking anxiety through both verbal and non-verbal manifestations in

structured academic speaking performances at the university level, using a qualitative case study approach that includes video-recorded classroom observations and in-depth interviews.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with a case study approach to investigate the types and factors of anxiety experienced by EFL students in academic speaking performances at a university in Pekalongan. The qualitative method was chosen as it enabled the researcher to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors within a natural classroom context (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since this study aimed to understand what types of anxiety occurred and the factors contributing to it, the case study approach was considered appropriate (Yin, 2018).

3.2. Setting and Participant

This study was conducted at the English Education Department of a university in Pekalongan, focusing on the Academic Speaking class of fifth-semester students. The classroom setting was considered suitable for exploring the phenomenon of speaking anxiety, as students were regularly required to engage in various oral academic tasks in English. According to Marwan (2022), classroom-based speaking activities often trigger anxiety, especially when students are expected to perform in a foreign language.

The participants consisted of four students in the fifth semester of the academic speaking class, selected

using purposive sampling to ensure that they represented the group experiencing anxiety during public speaking activities (Patton, 2015). These students were chosen based on their willingness to participate and their self-reported anxiety when speaking in front of an audience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample included two female and two male students, allowing for a balanced perspective on gender-related variations in speaking anxiety (Mertens, 2015). The small sample size allowed for an in-depth investigation into the emotional aspects and factors contributing to speaking anxiety in a controlled academic setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Data were collected through classroom observations, interviews, reflective journals, and document analysis to ensure a comprehensive understanding of participants' anxiety and its contributing factors (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

Table 3. 1

No	Name of Participants	Gender	Age	L.1	L.2
1	Student A	female	20	Javanese	English
2	Student B	male	20	Javanese	English
3	Student C	female	20	Javanese	English
4	Student D	male	20	Javanese	English

3.3. Data Collections

Data for this study were collected through two main methods: classroom observation and in-depth interviews. The observation was conducted directly by the researcher in the classroom by recording their academic speaking

performances, which included serving as master of ceremonies (MC), delivering speeches, and acting as moderators in classroom discussions. The video recordings were taken using a smartphone placed on a stable surface or tripod to ensure clear and steady visuals. This method allowed the researcher to observe both verbal and non-verbal signs of speaking anxiety, such as stuttering, filler words, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and other cues indicating discomfort or nervousness (Creswell, 2014). These recordings provided authentic data that reflected how anxiety manifested during academic speaking in a real classroom environment.

Following the performances, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four students, consisting of two males and two females, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. The interviews explored what triggered their speaking anxiety and how it affected their performance during academic speaking tasks. This flexible interview format enabled the researcher to probe into specific areas of interest while allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings openly (Patton, 2015).

The interviews were conducted in a quiet room at a university in Pekalongan to ensure comfort and minimize distractions. In addition, follow-up interviews were conducted online to clarify and strengthen the findings obtained from the classroom observations. The conversations were audio-recorded using a smartphone's built-in voice recording application to maintain data accuracy and convenience. Each interview lasted approximately 10–15 minutes, depending on the participant's responses and the depth of discussion. The

follow-up interviews conducted online were collected through WhatsApp voice messages, which were documented for data analysis.

3.4. Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the reliability and validity of this study's findings, the concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research was applied by emphasizing both data triangulation and member checking. Triangulation was a key strategy used to enhance the credibility of the research by combining multiple data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, triangulation was implemented by collecting data through classroom observations of students' academic speaking performances and semi-structured interviews with the participants. This approach allowed the researcher to examine the phenomenon from various perspectives, thereby strengthening the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014). Through this comprehensive and diverse data collection, the study aimed to provide a more accurate and in-depth understanding of the types and factors of students' speaking anxiety in the context of various academic speaking activities. To make sure the findings were accurate, member checking was done. After the interviews were transcribed and initial notes were made, the researcher shared the transcripts and main points with the participants. They could then check if their answers were recorded correctly, clarify anything that was unclear, and confirm that their intended meanings were properly understood. This process helped ensure that the data interpretation reflected the participants' actual perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.5. Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which is commonly used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns of meaning (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach was considered suitable for understanding students' experiences and perceptions regarding how anxiety is manifested and the factors that cause anxiety during academic speaking performances.

The analysis process involved several stages as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which included:

1. Familiarizing with the data: The researcher read the interview transcripts, observation notes, and reviewed the video recordings repeatedly to gain a thorough understanding of the content.
2. Generating initial codes: Meaningful data segments related to speaking anxiety were highlighted and coded systematically.
3. Searching for themes: The initially generated codes were then grouped into broader thematic categories.
4. Reviewing themes: The themes were refined to ensure that they accurately represented the data and were relevant to the research questions.
5. Defining and naming themes: Each theme was clearly labeled and defined to reflect its meaning within the context of the study.
6. Producing the report: The finalized themes were presented in a structured analytical narrative.

The researcher maintained a reflective journal to monitor potential personal biases during the analysis process, ensuring that interpretations remained grounded in participants' perspectives. Data coding was conducted

manually to organize and identify the main themes that emerged (Nowell et al., 2017).

The interview and observation data were interpreted using several theoretical perspectives as analytical lenses. Carlson et al. (2009) were used to explain the physiological and behavioral manifestations of anxiety observed during students' speaking performances. McCroskey's (1977) Communication Apprehension Theory was applied to understand verbal manifestations such as speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition. In addition, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Anxiety framework was used to interpret linguistic difficulties and fear of negative evaluation, while Young's (1991) framework was used to examine classroom-related social factors, particularly peer interaction that may contribute to students' anxiety during academic speaking performances.

The interview and observation data were interpreted using Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Anxiety framework as a conceptual lens to understand anxiety in language learning contexts. Spielberger's (1983) distinction between state and trait anxiety was applied to identify the nature of anxiety experienced during academic speaking performances. In addition, Young's (1991) framework was used to examine classroom-related and interpersonal factors contributing to anxiety, particularly those related to peer interaction and evaluative situations.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of how anxiety is manifested and what factors contribute to anxiety among EFL students in academic speaking

contexts, ensuring alignment with the study's research questions and objectives.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Manifestations of Anxiety in EFL Students during Academic Speaking Performances

The researcher used a video recorder as a medium to observe the participants enrolled in the Academic Speaking course. Data were collected through observation notes, and interviews to identify the manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. The researcher found three non-verbal expressions of anxiety: Rapid heartbeat, trembling hands, and fidgeting (restless hand or foot movement). In addition, the researcher identified three verbal expressions of anxiety: speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition/overexplaining.

a. Rapid heartbeat

The findings revealed that rapid heartbeat was commonly experienced by the participants during academic speaking performances. Based on the interview data, three participants

(A, B, D) reported feeling their heart beating faster when they were asked to present in front of the class. This physical reaction indicated that the participants experienced nervousness while performing

academic speaking tasks in front of the audience.

Participant A reported experiencing a rapid heartbeat when presenting in front of the class. The participant explained that the feeling of being the center of attention made her feel very nervous during the speaking performance. This statement is supported by the participant's response in the interview:

> *"I felt very nervous and my heart was beating fast when I stood in front of the class. I was worried that I might make mistakes while speaking and be the center of attention." (Participant A, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This finding indicates that participant A experienced a strong feeling of nervousness when speaking in front of the class. The rapid heartbeat described by the participant reflects a physical reaction that commonly occurs when individuals face situations that make them feel anxious or pressured. In this case, the participant's concern about making mistakes and becoming the center of attention contributed to the emergence of anxiety during the academic speaking performance.

Participant B also experienced a rapid heartbeat during the academic speaking performance. The participant stated that nervousness caused his heart to beat faster while speaking in front of the class. This condition was also accompanied by other physical reactions that indicated anxiety during the presentation. This finding was supported by the participant's statement in the interview:

> *"My heart was beating fast, and my body was even sweating because I felt very tense during the presentation." (Participant B, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This findings show that participant B experienced a strong physical reaction when delivering the presentation in front of the class. The rapid heartbeat and sweating described by the participant reflect visible signs of nervousness during the speaking performance. These reactions suggest that the participant felt considerable tension while speaking in front of the audience, which contributed to the emergence of anxiety during the academic speaking task.

Participant D admitted that the heart started beating rapidly when delivering the presentation in front of the class. The participant stated that nervousness during

the speaking performance triggered this physical reaction. The participant explained this experience in the interview:

> *"Yes, I think it happened because I felt nervous. My heart was beating fast"*
>
> *(Participant D, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This findings indicates that participant D experienced nervousness during the academic speaking performance, which triggered a physical reaction in the form of a rapid heartbeat. The participant's explanation shows that speaking in front of the class created a feeling of tension while delivering the presentation. This condition suggests that the speaking task in front of the audience contributed to the emergence of anxiety during the performance.

b. Trembling Hands

The observations revealed that trembling hands appeared as one of the behavioral manifestations of anxiety during the academic speaking performance. Based on the classroom observation and video recordings, this behavior was particularly evident in Participant A. During the presentation, Participant A displayed continuously

trembling hands, which indicated a high level of nervousness while presenting in front of the class. This non-verbal expression suggested that the participant experienced strong anxiety during the speaking task. This observation was supported by her interview statement:

> *"Yes, that happened because I was really nervous. My hands were shaking and I kept moving my body because I felt uncomfortable" (Participant A, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This statement indicates that participant A experienced a strong feeling of nervousness during the academic speaking performance. The trembling hands described by the participant reflect a visible physical reaction that occurred when she felt anxious while presenting in front of the class. In addition, the participant's statement about feeling uncomfortable suggests that speaking in front of the audience created pressure during the presentation.

c. Fidgeting

The observations revealed that fidgeting was a common behavioral manifestation of anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on classroom observations this behavior was

experienced by three participants, namely Participant A, Participant B, and Participant D. Fidgeting was reflected through restless body movements, clenched hands, and tense gestures while the participants were delivering their presentations.

Participant A was frequently observed to move her body during the presentation, indicating restlessness and nervousness while speaking in front of the class. This behavior suggested that the participant experienced discomfort during the speaking task. This observation was supported by her interview statement:

> *"Yes, that happened because I was really nervous. My hands were shaking and I kept moving my body because I felt uncomfortable. (Participant A, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This statement indicates that participant A experienced nervousness during the academic speaking performance. The participant's explanation about continuously moving her body reflects a feeling of discomfort while presenting in front of the class. Such restless body movements suggest that the participant felt uneasy during the speaking

task, which contributed to the emergence of anxiety during the presentation.

Participant B also showed signs of fidgeting during the academic speaking performance. Classroom observations showed that he repeatedly clenched his hands and avoided eye contact while speaking in front of the class, reflecting visible nervousness during the presentation. This finding was consistent with his interview response:

> *"Yes, I avoided eye contact because I felt very nervous. I also clenched my hands because I was trying to control my nervous fee ling."*
> *(Participant B, interview, 6th of February 2026)*

This findings show that participant B experienced nervousness while presenting in front of the class. The participant's explanation about avoiding eye contact and clenching his hands reflects visible signs of discomfort during the speaking performance. These behaviors suggest that the participant attempted to manage his nervous feelings while delivering the presentation, which indicates the presence of anxiety during the academic speaking task.

Participant D also exhibited fidgeting through tense and restless body movements while delivering the presentation. This observation was further supported by the participant's explanation in the interview:

> *"My legs also kept moving because I felt very anxious while presenting."*
> *(Participant D, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

This statement suggests that the participant's restless leg movements reflected anxiety and discomfort during the speaking performance. The inability to remain physically still indicates nervousness while presenting in front of the class.

d. Speaking Disruption

The observations revealed that speaking disruption appeared as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on classroom observations, this behavior was experienced by two participants, namely Participant C and Participant D. Speaking disruption was reflected through the use of filler words, prolonged pauses, and rapid speech during the presentation.

Participant C frequently used filler words such as "eee" and experienced prolonged pauses while delivering the presentation. These verbal behaviors

suggested difficulty in maintaining fluency during the speaking performance. This observation was supported by her interview statement:

> *"Yes, I think it happened because I was nervous. Sometimes I said 'eee' and paused because I needed time to think about the next sent ence."*
> *(Participant C, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

Participant D also displayed speaking disruption during the academic speaking performance. The participant spoke very quickly with limited pauses, reflecting nervousness and difficulty in controlling verbal output during the presentation. This observation was further supported by his interview response:

> *"Yes, I think it happened because I felt nervous. My heart was beating fast, so I spoke quickly because I wanted to finish the presentatio n sooner."*
> *(Participant D, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

These findings indicate that speaking disruption, manifested through filler words, prolonged pauses, and rapid speech, emerged during academic speaking performances and reflected the participants' difficulty in maintaining fluent speech when experiencing anxiety.

e. mental blocking

The observations revealed that mental blocking appeared as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on classroom observations, this behavior was particularly experienced by Participant C during the presentation. Mental blocking was reflected through moments when the participant paused for a relatively long time and appeared to forget what she intended to say while delivering the speech.

Participant C showed signs of mental blocking during the presentation. At several moments, she paused for a relatively long time and struggled to recall the next ideas to deliver, indicating difficulty in maintaining the flow of speech while presenting in front of the class. This observation was supported by her interview statements:

> *"I only feel nervous when performing in public. In regular activities, I am not nervous.*

However, when I am in front of many people, their attention is focused on me, so if I make a mistake while speaking, I feel embarrassed and then my mind goes blank." (Participant C, interview, 4th of December 2025)

"Yes, I think it happened because I was nervous. Sometimes I said 'eee' and paused because I needed time to think about the next sentence." (Participant C, interview, 6th of March 2026)

These findings suggest that mental blocking, manifested through prolonged pauses and difficulty recalling ideas, emerged as a verbal manifestation of anxiety in Participant C during academic speaking performances. The participant's nervousness in front of the audience contributed to temporary interruptions in her speech flow.

f. repetition/overexplaining

The observations revealed that repetition or overexplaining appeared as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on classroom

observations, this behavior was particularly experienced by Participant A. This manifestation was reflected through the repetition of similar sentences while delivering the presentation.

Participant A frequently repeated the same sentences while presenting in front of the class. This repetition suggested that the participant felt nervous and attempted to ensure that the message was delivered correctly, indicating the presence of anxiety during the speaking performance. This observation was supported by her interview statement:

> *"Yes, that happened because I was really nervous. My hands were shaking and I kept moving my body because I felt uncomfortable. I also repeated some sentences because I lost my focus while speaking."*
> *(Participant A, interview, 6th of March 2026)*

These findings suggest that repetition or overexplaining, manifested through repeated sentences, appeared as a verbal manifestation of anxiety in Participant A during academic speaking performances. The participant's nervousness and difficulty maintaining focus contributed to this behavior.

Overall, the findings indicate that physiological, behavioral, and verbal manifestations of anxiety are interconnected and collectively influence the performance of EFL students during academic speaking performances.

4.1.2 Factors that Cause Anxiety among EFL Students in Academic Speaking Performances

After identifying the types of anxiety experienced by the students, this section presents the factors that contributed to their anxiety. The analysis is based on interview data and classroom observations. The findings indicate that the participants experienced anxiety due to multiple, interconnected factors.

a. Linguistic Difficulties

Linguistic difficulties in this study refer to students' limitations in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation that affected their performance during academic speaking activities. Based on the interview data, all four participants (Participants A, B, C, and D) reported experiencing anxiety related to their linguistic abilities.

Participant A expressed anxiety related to her limited vocabulary during academic speaking performances. She stated:

> *"During my performance, I feel anxious about being the center*

> *of attention, making mistakes while speaking, and using incorrect vocabulary, as there are still many English words that I am not familiar with."* (Participant A, interview, 6th of November 2025)

Participant B reported that concerns about grammar accuracy caused him to feel anxious while speaking in class. He stated:

> *"I am most afraid of making grammar mistakes, so whenever I speak in class, I tend to overthink."*
>
> *(Participant B, interview, 4th of December 2025)*

Participant C mentioned that limited vocabulary and lack of experience in public speaking contributed to her anxiety during academic speaking activities. She explained:

> *"Maybe because my vocabulary is still limited and I rarely speak in public, I become really panicked, especially when speaking in English, and I just want to finish quickly."*
>
> *(Participant C, interview, 4th of December 2025)*

In a similar manner, Participant D reported that difficulties related to grammar and pronunciation caused him to feel nervous during speaking performances. He stated:

> *I' am more afraid of making mistakes in grammar and pronunciation; these two things make me feel nervous and anxious."*
>
> *(Participant D, interview, 4th of December 2025)*

The data show that linguistic limitations, including limited vocabulary, concerns about grammar accuracy, and pronunciation difficulties, were experienced by all participants during academic speaking performances.

b. Fear of Negative Evaluation

According to Horwitz and Cope (1986), fear of negative evaluation refers to learners' apprehension about being judged, criticized, or evaluated unfavorably by teachers or peers. The findings of this study indicate that Participants B, C, and D experienced anxiety related to concerns about evaluation during academic speaking performances.

Participant B explained:

"When I'm with my friends, I feel pretty normal because we've been together since the second semester. But what really makes me overthink is when there's a lecturer, because they usually explain our mistakes in front of everyone. Even though it's meant for evaluation, when I realize I've made a mistake, I start to panic and lose my confidence."
(Participant B, interview, 4th of December 2025)

Participant C stated:

"Based on my experience, especially when the lecturer gives feedback and my classmates can hear it, I become afraid of being judged or talked about."
(Participant C, interview, 4th of December 2025)

Participant D shared:

"I feel fine when it's with my friends because I think we're all learning together. But when it's with the lecturer, I feel more afraid because my performance will be evaluated, so I feel like it has to be good."

(Participant D, interview, 4th of December 2025)

The results show that feelings of anxiety emerged when participants were aware that their speaking performances were being evaluated by lecturers or observed by classmates. Concerns about receiving feedback publicly were reported during academic speaking activities.

c. Peer Interaction

According to Young (1991), peer interaction is one of the external classroom-related factors that can influence learners' foreign language anxiety. Learners may feel nervous or apprehensive when they believe classmates are closely observing, evaluating, or judging their performance. The findings indicate that Participants A, B, C, and D experienced anxiety related to peer attention during academic speaking performances.

Participant A stated:

"Yes, because when my classmates focus on me, I start to panic and think, 'Did I do something wrong?'

(Participant A, interview, 6th of November 2025)

Participant B stated:

> *"I really don't like it when my classmates laugh while I'm performing in front of the class, because I immediately go blank and start thinking, 'Did I make a mistake?' At that moment, I become nervous and confused about how to continue speaking."*
>
> *(Participant B, interview, 4th of December 2025)*

Participant C also described similar feelings:

> *"When my classmates go quiet and focus on me, I get extremely nervous. I keep thinking, 'Please don't stare at me like that, I'm embarrassed.'*
>
> *(Participant C, interview, 4th of December 2025)*

Participant D reported,

> "Yeah, especially when they all look at me at the same time, it makes me wonder if I did something wrong."
>
> *(Participant D, interview, 4th o f December 2025)*

These responses demonstrate that students' awareness of peer attention and

scrutiny heightened their nervousness during speaking performances. Peer interaction functioned as a significant trigger for anxiety, as learners are concerned about how they are perceived by classmates. This finding aligns with Young's (1991) theory, which emphasizes that classroom-related social factors, such as peer evaluation and observation, can substantially contribute to foreign language anxiety.

Based on the findings, students' anxiety during academic speaking performances arises from multiple interconnected factors. Linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, and peer interaction interact dynamically, creating a complex and situational pattern. Each factor reinforces the others, indicating that anxiety results from a combination of internal linguistic limitations and external social pressures within the classroom

4.2 Discussion

The researcher examines the findings in this section and connects them to the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter II. This discussion addresses the research questions of the study: how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances and the factors causing their anxiety during academic speaking performances. The study focuses on students' experiences of anxiety while

performing English in the Academic Speaking course. Based on the findings, it is evident that students' anxiety is manifested through physiological, behavioral, and verbal expressions during academic speaking performances, and is influenced by multiple interconnected factors.

4.2.1 How Anxiety Is Manifested in EFL Students during Academic Speaking Performances

The findings of this study indicate that students experienced various manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. According to Carlson et al. (2009), anxiety triggers physiological and behavioral responses, such as rapid heartbeat, trembling hands, and fidgeting, which may occur automatically when individuals face stressful or evaluative situations. In addition, McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory (1977) highlights that fear of public speaking can affect verbal performance, resulting in speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition or overexplaining. In this study, students' anxiety emerged when they were required to speak English in front of the class, expressed through interconnected physiological, behavioral, and verbal manifestations.

a. Rapid Heartbeat

Rapid heartbeat emerged as one of the most common physical manifestations experienced by students during academic speaking performances. Based on the

interview data, three participants reported experiencing a faster heartbeat when they were asked to present in front of the class, indicating that the speaking task created a sense of nervousness and pressure during the performance.

Participant A reported that her heart started beating rapidly when she stood in front of the class because she felt nervous about becoming the center of attention and worried about making mistakes during the presentation. Similarly, Participant B also experienced a rapid heartbeat accompanied by sweating, which indicated that the presentation situation created

Participant D admitted that his heart beat rapidly because he felt nervous when presenting in front of the class. These responses indicate that speaking in front of an audience created psychological pressure for the participants, which then triggered noticeable physical reactions during the academic speaking performance.

This finding is consistent with Carlson et al. (2009), who explain that anxiety can activate physiological responses such as increased heart rate when individuals face stressful or threatening situations. In the context of academic speaking, presenting in front of classmates may create emotional tension for students, which is reflected through physical reactions such as a rapid heartbeat.

b. Trembling Hands

Trembling hands were identified as one of the physical manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. The findings obtained from classroom observations, video recordings, and interview data indicated that this behavior was particularly evident in Participant A during the presentation. While delivering the material in front of the class, the participant displayed continuously trembling hands, which reflected a high level of nervousness during the speaking task.

Participant A explained that the shaking occurred because she felt very nervous and uncomfortable while presenting in front of the audience. This condition suggests bahwa speaking in front of classmates created psychological pressure, which was expressed through visible physical reactions during the presentation.

These patterns indicate that anxiety experienced during academic speaking performances can be reflected through physical reactions such as trembling hands when students feel nervous while speaking in front of an audience. This finding is consistent with Carlson et al. (2009), who explain that anxiety may produce physiological responses such as shaking or

muscle tension when individuals face stressful situations.

c. Fidgeting

Fidgeting was identified as one of the behavioral manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. The findings from classroom observations, video recordings, and interview data showed that three participants, namely Participant A, Participant B, and Participant D, demonstrated fidgeting behavior while delivering their presentations. This behavior appeared through restless body movements, clenched hands, and tense gestures during the speaking performance.

Participant A frequently moved her body during the presentation, indicating restlessness and discomfort while speaking in front of the class. Participant B showed fidgeting behavior by repeatedly clenching his hands and avoiding eye contact during the presentation, suggesting visible nervousness while delivering the material. Similarly, Participant D demonstrated restless leg movements while presenting, which reflected tension and difficulty remaining physically still during the speaking task.

These patterns indicate that anxiety experienced during academic speaking performances can be expressed through restless body movements when students

feel uncomfortable being observed by others. This finding is consistent with Carlson et al. (2009), who explain that anxiety may produce behavioral responses such as restlessness when individuals face stressful situations.

d. Speaking Disruption

Speaking disruption was identified as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. The findings obtained from classroom observations, video recordings, and interview data indicated that this behavior was experienced by two participants, namely Participant C and Participant D. Speaking disruption was reflected through the use of filler words, prolonged pauses, and rapid speech during the presentation.

Participant C frequently produced filler words such as “eee” and experienced several prolonged pauses while delivering the presentation. These verbal behaviors indicated difficulty in maintaining fluency during the speaking performance. During the interview, the participant also explained that nervousness caused her to pause and think about the next sentence while speaking.

Participant D demonstrated speaking disruption during the presentation by speaking very quickly with limited pauses. This behavior reflected nervousness and difficulty in controlling verbal delivery

while presenting in front of the class. In the interview, the participant explained that feeling nervous and experiencing a rapid heartbeat made him speak faster because he wanted to finish the presentation sooner.

These patterns indicate that anxiety experienced during academic speaking performances may interfere with students' verbal fluency, which can appear through filler words, pauses, or rapid speech during presentations. This finding is consistent with James C. McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory (1977), which explains that fear of public speaking can influence verbal performance and lead to disruptions in speech during communication situations.

e. Mental Blocking

Mental blocking was observed as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. The findings, obtained from classroom observations, video recordings, and interview data, indicated that this behavior was particularly evident in Participant C. Mental blocking was reflected through prolonged pauses and moments when the participant appeared to forget what she intended to say while delivering her speech.

Participant C experienced difficulty maintaining the flow of speech during the presentation. She paused several times and

struggled to recall the next ideas to deliver, which demonstrated a temporary interruption in her verbal performance. The combination of observation, video evidence, and interview data suggests that these pauses were linked to nervousness and the pressure of speaking in front of an audience.

These patterns indicate that anxiety can temporarily disrupt cognitive processing and verbal output in academic speaking contexts. This finding aligns with James C. McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory (1977), which explains that fear of public speaking can interfere with speech fluency and lead to mental blocking or hesitation during communication situations.

f. Repetition/Overexplaining

Repetition or overexplaining was identified as one of the verbal manifestations of anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on classroom observations, video recordings, and interview data, this behavior was particularly evident in Participant A. This manifestation appeared through the repeated delivery of similar sentences during the presentation.

Participant A frequently repeated her sentences while presenting, which indicated nervousness and an attempt to ensure that her message was conveyed

correctly. The combination of observation, video, and interview data suggests that these repetitions were not random but were triggered by the participant's anxiety and difficulty maintaining focus under performance pressure.

These patterns support the concept from James C. McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory (1977), which explains that fear of public speaking can affect verbal performance, leading speakers to repeat ideas or over-elaborate as a coping mechanism for nervousness. In the context of academic speaking, repetition or overexplaining reflects the temporary disruption of verbal fluency caused by situational anxiety.

Overall, the findings from observations, video recordings, and interviews indicate that physiological, behavioral, and verbal manifestations of anxiety are interconnected and collectively influence the performance of EFL students during academic speaking tasks. Each manifestation, from rapid heartbeat and trembling hands to fidgeting and verbal disruptions, highlights how anxiety can affect both the physical and cognitive aspects of speaking in front of an audience.

4.2.2 Factors that Cause Anxiety among EFL Students in Academic Speaking Performances

Anxiety experienced during academic speaking performances emerged from the interaction of linguistic challenges and classroom social dynamics. Analysis of observation data, video recordings, and interviews identified three primary factors contributing to students' anxiety, namely linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, and peer interaction. These factors reflect how internal competence-related concerns and external evaluative pressures shape students' emotional responses in academic speaking contexts, as discussed in foreign language anxiety research (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1991).

a. Linguistic Difficulties

Linguistic limitations were found to be a central factor contributing to students' anxiety during academic speaking performances. All participants reported concerns related to their linguistic competence, although the specific focus varied across individuals. Participant A associated her anxiety with limited vocabulary and uncertainty in word choice during presentations. Participant B experienced anxiety due to concerns about grammatical accuracy, which led to overthinking while speaking. Participant C linked her anxiety to limited

vocabulary and lack of experience in public speaking, which intensified panic and reduced confidence during performance.

Similarly, Participant D reported that difficulties in grammar and pronunciation contributed to nervousness and disrupted fluency during speaking activities. These patterns indicate that students' perceived inadequacy in linguistic competence triggered feelings of uncertainty and emotional tension in performance situations.

This finding supports Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) perspective that concerns about linguistic accuracy and language competence can function as internal sources of foreign language anxiety. Within the context of academic speaking, linguistic difficulties operated as internal factors that heightened students' vulnerability to anxiety when performing in front of others.

b. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Concerns about being evaluated were found to intensify students' anxiety during academic speaking performances. Participants B, C, and D reported heightened nervousness when their performance was subject to public feedback or assessment by the lecturer. Participant B associated his anxiety with the possibility that mistakes would be

explained in front of the class, which led to overthinking and reduced confidence. Participant C expressed fear of being judged when feedback was delivered publicly, indicating sensitivity to how her performance might be perceived by others.

Similarly, Participant D reported increased anxiety when his performance was evaluated, as the awareness of assessment created pressure to perform well. These patterns indicate that anxiety emerged from students' anticipation of judgment and awareness of evaluative situations rather than from the speaking task alone.

This supports Horwitz et al.'s (1986) concept of fear of negative evaluation, which explains learners' apprehension about being judged or evaluated unfavorably in language learning contexts. Within this study, evaluative conditions functioned as situational factors that amplified students' emotional tension during academic speaking performances.

c. Peer Interaction

Peer-related classroom dynamics were found to contribute to students' anxiety during academic speaking performances. All participants reported increased nervousness when classmates focused their attention on their

performance. Participant A associated anxiety with being the focus of peer attention, which triggered panic and self-doubt. Participant B reported losing concentration when classmates laughed during the presentation, indicating heightened sensitivity to peer reaction.

Participant C experienced discomfort when classmates observed her intensely, which led to embarrassment and increased nervousness. Similarly, Participant D reported anxiety when being simultaneously observed by peers, as such attention prompted concerns about making mistakes. These patterns indicate that students' awareness of peer observation and reaction heightened emotional tension during speaking activities.

This supports Young's (1991) explanation that classroom interpersonal factors, including peer attention and reaction, can function as significant sources of foreign language anxiety. Within this study, peer interaction operated as an external social factor that amplified students' anxiety in academic speaking contexts.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study, focusing on how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances and the factors that contribute to this anxiety. It also offers practical suggestions based on the findings of this qualitative case study for students, lecturers, and future researchers.

5.1. Conclusion

This study aimed to how anxiety is manifested in EFL students during academic speaking performances and the factors that cause anxiety during academic speaking performances. Based on the findings, the conclusions of this study are presented as follows.

1. The findings revealed that there are three main manifestations of anxiety among students during academic speaking performances: physiological, behavioral, and verbal. The findings revealed that students' anxiety was expressed through interconnected physical, behavioral, and verbal responses during their presentations.

   Physiological manifestations included rapid heartbeat and trembling hands. Students reported feeling their hearts beat faster and hands shake when presenting in front of the class, indicating nervousness and psychological pressure. This finding supports Carlson et al. (2009), who explain

that anxiety can trigger automatic physiological responses in stressful or evaluative situations.

Behavioral manifestations included fidgeting and restless body movements. Students frequently moved their hands, clenched their fists, shifted positions, and displayed restless leg movements while speaking. These behaviors suggest that students experienced discomfort and heightened tension during the performance, consistent with Carlson et al.'s (2009) description of anxiety-driven behavioral responses.

Verbal manifestations included speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition or overexplaining. Students frequently used filler words, paused to recall ideas, and repeated sentences during presentations. These patterns indicate difficulties in maintaining verbal fluency and cognitive flow under performance pressure. This finding aligns with McCroskey's (1977) Communication Apprehension Theory, which posits that fear of public speaking can interfere with verbal performance and lead to disruptions in speech as a coping mechanism.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that physiological, behavioral, and verbal manifestations of anxiety are interconnected and collectively influence students' academic speaking performance. Each manifestation highlights how anxiety affects both the physical and cognitive aspects of delivering a presentation in front of an audience.

2. The findings revealed that there are three factors that cause anxiety among EFL students in academic speaking performances, namely linguistic

difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, and peer interaction. The findings revealed that students' anxiety during academic speaking performances was influenced by multiple interconnected factors. Linguistic difficulties, including limited vocabulary, concerns about grammatical accuracy, and pronunciation problems, functioned as internal sources of anxiety. Students experienced anxiety when they were unsure about word choice, worried about making grammatical errors, and felt insecure about pronunciation, which led to overthinking, panic, and disrupted fluency during speaking performances. This finding supports Horwitz et al.'s (1986), who explain that concerns about language competence can trigger anxiety in language learning contexts.

Fear of negative evaluation intensified students' anxiety when they anticipated judgment or public feedback from lecturers and classmates. Anxiety increased when speaking performances were evaluated and when mistakes were explained in front of others, which reduced confidence and heightened nervousness during presentations. This factor is also consistent with the same framework (1986), which identifies evaluative situations as a major source of foreign language anxiety.

Peer interaction also contributed to anxiety when students became highly aware of classmates' attention and reactions during speaking performances. Students experienced increased nervousness when they became the focus of attention, when classmates observed them closely, or when peers reacted visibly during presentations,

which triggered panic, embarrassment, and loss of concentration. This finding aligns with Young's (1991), who explains that classroom-related social factors, including peer attention and observation, can significantly influence learners' anxiety.

5.2. Sugesstions

This study provides several practical implications regarding EFL students' anxiety in academic speaking performances. Based on the findings and conclusions presented above, the researcher proposes several suggestions for students, lecturers, and future researchers.

1. English Department Students

   Students are suggested to manage their anxiety during academic speaking performances by applying both preparation and coping strategies. Thorough preparation, such as organizing key points, rehearsing presentations, and practicing with peers, may help reduce nervousness and improve speaking fluency. In addition, students are encouraged to apply simple self-regulation strategies, including deep breathing, stretching, and positive self-talk, to manage physiological and behavioral manifestations of anxiety, such as rapid heartbeat, trembling hands, and restless movements. Continuous speaking practice may also help students cope with verbal manifestations, including speaking disruption, mental blocking, and repetition or overexplaining. Furthermore, regular practice can assist students in overcoming linguistic difficulties related to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation,

as well as reducing anxiety associated with fear of negative evaluation and peer interaction during academic speaking performances.

2. Lecturers

   Lecturers are suggested to maintain a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment to assist students in managing anxiety during academic speaking performances. Providing constructive feedback and delivering evaluations in a positive manner may help reduce tension and fear of negative evaluation. Lecturers can also facilitate gradual exposure to speaking tasks, encourage peer collaboration, and design activities that help students feel more comfortable presenting in front of classmates, thereby reducing both performance-based and social anxiety.

3. Researchers

   Future researchers are suggested to involve more participants and explore different academic speaking contexts to obtain more comprehensive findings. Further studies may also examine different factors influencing students' anxiety in academic speaking and use additional data collection methods to obtain deeper insights.

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Appendix 4

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