

# Self-Efficacy and Language Anxiety in Speaking of BASEd-English Major Students

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## ABSTRACT

Effective oral communication is a requirement for pre-service English teachers, but many struggle with speaking due to psychological barriers. In this study, English majors pursuing a Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) investigate the relationship between speaking language anxiety and self-efficacy. There are few studies that are known to tackle language anxiety and self-efficacy in the Philippines, although both of these factors are known to impact language performance. This study aims to determine the level of language anxiety and self efficacy in speaking among the students and if there is a relationship between the variables. The adapted modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and an adapted modified version of the Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) is used by the researchers through descriptive-correlational methodology.

Results indicated that students felt “slightly confident” when it came to speaking ( $M = 2.71$ ) but also experienced moderate anxiety ( $M = 2.86$ ). A statistically significant moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.555$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found between the two variables. In light of this moderate negative correlation, it is important to consider the relationship between anxiety and confidence in speaking, especially in considering how remedial language anxiety can enforce students’ barriers to feeling confident in their speaking abilities. Because the findings suggest that the establishment of supportive environments and effective pedagogical practices would better serve to build pre-service teachers’ communicative competence. The current study aims to investigate classroom strategies within preservice teacher training programs that are emotionally responsive to support future educators better in the development of communication skills.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, language anxiety, speaking

## INTRODUCTION

Proficient speaking skills are particularly important for the students pursuing a career in the education field and for those undertaking English as their major subject. Notably, self-efficacy and language anxiety hinder one's ability to express themselves verbally, which is a key problem for many students. Self-efficacy, according to Yentür (2023), refers to an individual’s perception of his or her ability to successfully perform specified tasks or achieve predefined goals. To put it differently, language anxiety is the worry that one experiences when attempting to converse in a foreign language. These factors can heavily impair the student's performance and ability when it comes to speaking and using the language.

More recent studies have highlighted the prevalence of speaking anxiety stress within the realm of foreign language acquisition. For instance, Cabansag (2020) found that ESL engineering students experienced moderate levels of speaking anxiety which negatively correlated with their English proficiency. Along the same lines, Galabasa, Vibal, and Apohen (2022) reported that self-academic efficacy significantly predicts English language proficiency among first year college students. The studies suggests that having a motivated self-image will be a critical element in reducing anxiety in using a second language and improving multi-functional communication skills.

This study aimed to investigate the relationship of self-efficacy and language anxiety in speaking of the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) English major students at West Visayas State University-Himamaylan City Campus. Furthermore, this study wanted to identify the level of students' language anxiety in speaking and self-efficacy as it pertains to anxiety in the classroom. Moreover, the study determined the degree of relationship between self-efficacy and language anxiety in speaking among students. Covering these areas, this research aimed to provide information that will aid in the formulation of teaching strategies and intervention plans to improve the communicative skills of learners.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Foreign language anxiety is a complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors towards classroom language learning (Song, 2024). It has been widely defined as a negative emotional reaction experienced when using a second language (Gregersen, 2020). Foreign language anxiety may result from a range of sources that include communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Mahmoud, 2024; Song, 2024). It is the changing and dynamic variable with interactions with other factors in complicated systems (Gregersen, 2020). The effect was also on their cognitive processing, social interaction, academic performance, and communication skills (Mahmoud, 2024; Song, 2024).

Foreign language learners, and especially students participating in speaking activities, suffer from language anxiety to a significant extent. Studies show that students form strong speaking anxiety levels during oral tests and presentations (Zabidin et al., 2021). Anxiety weakens motivation, language performance, and class participation (Altun, 2023). The main causes of speaking anxiety are fear of error, fear of negative judgment, and lack of confidence (Dung, 2020). Several studies referred to a high correlation between speaking skill and speaking anxiety (Zabidin et al., 2021; Dung, 2020).

In the case of English language education, studies on language anxiety in Bachelor of Secondary Education English students shows its strong correlation to speaking ability and overall language ability. Fear of public speaking among BSED students exists but is not necessarily directly attributed to language ability (Reyes et al., 2023). Common triggers for anxiety are fear of criticism, low self-confidence, and pressure to do well (Bolivar et al., 2024). Speaking practice, error correction, and interaction with native speakers usually appear to be the most widely reported sources of anxiety (Jugo, 2020).

English is also primarily employed as an instructional medium at Filipino institutions of higher learning but students are worried when employing it for communication purposes (Giray et al., 2022). Though it is rampant, language anxiety is still a less-researched topic within the Philippine situation, especially amongst prospective English instructors.

Language anxiety, especially when speaking, it is a common and crippling problem for students, especially aspiring teachers, according to the literature. This demonstrates the importance of the current study in examining the ways in which anxiety appears in BSEd-English majors and how specific teaching strategies can help to lessen it.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual belief that he/she can accomplish the task (Ima Siti Maryam et al., 2019), was found to be strongly associated with speaking proficiency (Thi Mai Vy Luu & Xuan My Truong, 2024; Yuan et al., 2024). Recent studies underscore that students possessing higher self-efficacy for speaking are more likely to be more active during class discussions, deliver oral presentations more confidently, and participate in actual communicative tasks (Rahman & Pandian, 2021). Self-efficacy does not only impact readiness to speak but also interacts with the effect of language anxiety on speaking performance. Those students who are confident in their speaking skills will tend to see speaking activities as challenges instead of threats, hence lessening their anxiety and enhancing their oral competence (Alamer & Almulhim, 2021).

Speaking self-efficacy is required of English majors in the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education because it not only regulates academic performance but also future potential as educators. The more self-efficacious the prospective teachers, the more and better they will participate in class discussion, intervene in speaking activities, and manage communicative diversity, as argued by To Li and Zhang (2021).

This is echoed by Dizon (2023), who found that Filipino English majors with high self-efficacy reported higher levels of participation and showed higher speech proficiency in academic and practicum settings. There are also four primary sources that affect self-efficacy, which are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (Bandura, 1997). In the case of English majors, teacher and peer positive feedback (verbal persuasion) and competent speaking practice (mastery) are crucial (Santos & Reyes, 2024).

Self-efficacy is a key component of oral language performance and general communicative confidence. Including this to the study, which examines its relationship with language anxiety among pre-service English teachers, is justified by its strong correlation with classroom participation and teacher development.

Self-efficacy, foreign language learning anxiety (FLLA), and speaking performance among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners have been discussed in the latest research. Although Hadriana (2020) did not mention any substantial correlation of speaking self-efficacy to language anxiety, other research yielded different results. Istanti Hermagustiana et al. (2021) stated a positive correlation of speaking performance with self-efficacy and negative correlations between speaking performance, self-efficacy, and FLLA. This indicates that greater self-efficacy is linked to better speaking performance and less anxiety.

The relationship between self-efficacy and language anxiety is well-documented in the literature. High self-efficacy is related to lower language anxiety because students who are confident perceive speaking tasks as manageable and are less worried about committing mistakes (Rahimi & Abedini, 2019). Low self-efficacy students are more likely to experience anxiety, which further degrades their speaking performance (Alrabai, 2020).

A recent study by Dela Cruz and Santos (2024) of BSEd English majors in the Philippines revealed a good negative correlation of self-efficacy in speaking and anxiety. Those who were more efficacious had less anxiety and performed better on oral proficiency under tests. The authors conclude that interventions that can build self-efficacy such as goal setting, positive reinforcement, and modeling good models will minimize language anxiety and enhance speech performance.

These two variables, self-efficacy and language anxiety are significantly inversely correlated, according to the reviewed studies. This correlation serves as the theoretical foundation for the current study in which it measures and analyzes its relation to the Filipino BSEd English majors.

Despite the attention to general trends in these studies, evidence is emerging of how demographic variables such as gender, year levels, and prior English exposure condition both language anxiety and self-efficacy. In the Philippines, cultural factors related to public speaking, attitudes toward proficiency, and exposure to English in schools may influence these variables in a distinct manner (Giray et al., 2022; Dela Cruz & Santos, 2024).

It is important for this study that we are able to demonstrate how learner demographics and levels of psychological trait intersect (both year level and gender are included in our quantitative analysis). These two variables offer a more nuanced understanding of how language anxiety and self-efficacy in speaking function in different learning situations.

Language anxiety should be addressed through the best coping mechanisms suitable for students. Social support increases confidence and decreases levels of anxiety (Pedroso et al., 2023). Task management strategies such as dividing tasks into steps can also help to counter psychological overload (Hong et al., 2023). Mind training such as meditation increases concentration and lowers levels of stress so that students are able to manage anxiety. Furthermore, establishing positive boundaries to school duties can avoid burnout and enhance a sound learning approach (Gamble-Lomax, 2024).

Schools can play an important role in eliminating language anxiety and improving students' speaking abilities. Public speaking skills training courses provided under professional development programs can equip students with confidence and competence in oral communication activities. Psychological empowerment interventions

aimed at enhancing learner self-esteem have been shown to decrease the level of anxiety (Xueyun et al., 2025). Equitable reward systems that give a high value to learner accomplishment can motivate students to be more actively involved in classroom activity as well as oral tasks.

Since English teaching is dependent on speaking, language anxiety and self-efficacy must be incorporated into pre-service teacher training. With the help of communicative language teaching, positive reinforcement, and a good classroom environment, pre-service teachers will become confident individuals and minimize anxiety (Bai, 2023).

Lastly, test processes must be calibrated communicative competence and precision such that students will be guided to value meaning transmission higher than error avoidance. Peer collaboration, reflective practice, and guidance from veteran teachers may also assist in the acquisition of speaking ability and psychological hardness (Dela Cruz & Santos, 2024).

A broad range of instructional and institutional approaches that may boost self-efficacy and decrease anxiety are emphasized in the literature. By supporting evidence-based pedagogical answers to students' psychological needs, this study seeks to produce observations that can directly inform teacher preparation programs.

### Research Questions

1. What is the level of self-efficacy in speaking among BSEd English major students?
2. What is the level of language anxiety in speaking among BSEd English major students?
3. Is there a significant relationship between language anxiety in speaking and self-efficacy in speaking among BSEd English major students?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This quantitative study aimed to examine the relationship between language anxiety in speaking and self-efficacy in speaking among BSEd English major students. The descriptive aspect of the study aimed to identify the levels of language anxiety in speaking and speaking self-efficacy, while the correlational aspect attempted to examine the extent of the interrelationship between these two variables. Specifically, the study used a descriptive-correlational based on an Adapted Modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz and Cope (1986) and an Adapted Modified Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) by Wang, Kim, Bai, and Hu (2014) in quantifying the level of self-efficacy.

### Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were all students taking up Bachelor of Secondary Education, primarily in the English program. The table below shows the distribution of respondents:

Year Level	Male	Female	Total
First Year	9	18	27
Second Year	10	26	36
Third Year	2	34	36
Fourth Year	5	37	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>141</b>

### Instrument

Since the size of the population is small and was accessed easily, the researchers employed the use of total enumeration sampling. The researchers identified this strategy as fitting for this descriptive-correlational study

as it allowed the researchers to capture the entire population without applying sampling. Total enumeration guarantees data completeness and accuracy because it employs all the respondents of the class of interest. The research instruments were handed over to the entire English department students. An Adapted Modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and an Adapted Modified Questionnaire of English Self-Efficacy (QESE) was provided in electronic form (Google Form), and the respondents were asked to respond to the items in a true manner. The data obtained from all the participants were then subjected to statistical analysis to determine if there was any relationship between their level of language anxiety and self-efficacy and their speaking ability.

## Data Analysis

To determine the level of self-efficacy and language anxiety in speaking among BSED English major students, Means and Standard Deviations were used.

To investigate the significant relationship between language anxiety in speaking and self-efficacy in speaking among BSED English major students, Spearman' rho were used.

## RESULTS

Table 1 Level of Self-efficacy in Speaking among BSED English Major Students.

	N	Mean	Interpretation	Standard Deviation
Self-Efficacy in Speaking	86	2.71	Slightly Confident	0.47

Note: 1.00-1.75 "Very Confident", 1.76-2.50 "Confident", 2.51-3.25 "Slightly Confident", 3.26-4.00 "Not Confident at all"

The result shows that the self-efficacy of the students in speaking is slightly positive, with a Mean of 2.71 and a Standard Deviation of 0.47. According to the interpretation scale, this score falls between the range of "Slightly Confident" (2.51–3.25). That is, even though the students are certainly confident that they have some level of competence in speaking English, they are not extremely confident. The relatively low standard deviation indicates that the majority of the students had levels of perceived self-efficacy that were extremely similar to one another.

Table 2 Level of Language Anxiety in Speaking among BSED English Major Student

	N	Mean	Interpretation	Standard Deviation
Language Anxiety in Speaking	86	2.86	Anxious	0.56

Note: 1.00-1.75 "Not Anxious at all", 1.76-2.50 "Slightly Anxious", 2.51-3.25 "Anxious", 3.26-4.00 "Very Anxious"

The data information shows that overall, BSED English major students tend to have a moderate level of language anxiety in speaking, as the Mean score value is 2.86 with a Standard Deviation of 0.56. This indicates that it falls under the "Anxious" category range (2.51) of the scale interpretation, which means most of the respondents are admitting to feeling anxious while doing speaking tasks. The standard deviation shows that there was some variation in the responses of individuals, although overall, the students uniformly suffer from language anxiety.



Table 3 Relationship Between Language Anxiety in Speaking and Self-efficacy in Speaking among BSED English Major students

			Language Anxiety	Self-Efficacy
Spearman's rho	Language Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-0.555
		Significance (2-tailed)		*0.000
	Self-Efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	-0.555	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	*0.000	

\* $p < 0.05$ , "significant"

The correlation between language anxiety and speaking self-efficacy indicated a statistically significant moderate negative correlation with a Spearman's rho value of -0.555 and a p-value of 0.000. Because the p-value is lower than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that as language anxiety rises, students' self-efficacy in speaking will decrease. That is, those who experience greater levels of speaking anxiety feel less capable of speaking effectively, and the negative correlation between these two psychological states is noted.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal that the BSED English major students exhibit a "Slightly Confident" level of self-efficacy in speaking, with a mean score of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 0.47. This suggests that while students possess a certain degree of assurance in their ability to speak English, this confidence is not strong or well-developed. Describing them as being "slightly confident" may be inadequate in capturing the emotional experiences they go through. While in familiar or low-stakes situations where they might be comfortable speaking up or responding orally, they can be lacking in confidence when faced with higher stakes situations like being in an oral presentation, a graded recitation, or speaking publicly. Such high-pressure situations have a tendency to cause students to be anxious or intimidated and doubt speaking skills even if in normal situations where they perform well.

This suggests that their self-efficacy may be more tentative and context-dependent rather than a consistent belief in their speaking ability. This observation aligns with Bandura's (1997) idea that self-efficacy is both task- and context-specific. Without qualitative insights, however, it's hard to tell whether this slight confidence comes from fear of negative evaluation, lack of preparation, or previous discouraging experiences in speaking English.

As shown in Table 2, the students also report a moderate level of language anxiety in speaking, with a mean score of 2.86 and a standard deviation of 0.56. This score falls under the "Anxious" category, suggesting that most respondents feel considerable nervousness or fear when engaging in speaking tasks. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), language anxiety can significantly hinder learners' ability to express themselves fluently and confidently. The observed variation in standard deviation suggests that although anxiety is common, individual experiences still differ, pointing to the need for personalized interventions that address varying anxiety levels.

Table 3 further demonstrates a statistically significant moderate negative correlation between language anxiety and speaking self-efficacy, with a Spearman's rho value of -0.555 and a p-value of 0.000. This inverse relationship indicates that as students' language anxiety increases, their self-efficacy in speaking decreases. This is consistent with the findings of Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert (1999), who found that higher anxiety levels were associated with lower self-perceived competence in language use. The significance of this correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) provides strong evidence that anxiety reduction could be key to improving students' confidence in their speaking skills.

Overall, the results emphasize the critical interplay between psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and anxiety in shaping the speaking performance of language learners. Educators and language practitioners should consider incorporating strategies that reduce anxiety, such as supportive classroom environments, positive reinforcement, and increased speaking opportunities. Such efforts could help students develop stronger speaking self-efficacy, thus enhancing their language acquisition and communicative competence (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Understanding these dynamics is essential for designing effective language learning curricula that are responsive to students' emotional and cognitive needs.

## CONCLUSIONS

Developing communicative competence English continues to be an important goal for pre-service teachers, as these performances play a vital role in both academic and professional settings. In line with this, the current study investigate the correlation between language anxiety and self-efficacy in speaking among BSEd English major students. The study focused in determining how students self-perceptions of their speaking ability affects their level of anxiety in dealing with oral language performance. These two concepts such as language anxiety and self-efficacy are recognized to have important roles in influencing students' classroom lives and overall language achievement.

The findings indicated that the respondents tended to manifest a "slightly confident" level of self-efficacy in speaking, and also moderate levels of language anxiety. The statistical correlation by Spearman's rho yielded a significant moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.555$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ) between the two variables. The inverse relationship depicts that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower is the level of students' confidence in their speaking ability. These results support earlier theory, e.g., Bandura's self-efficacy model, and supplement previous studies that emphasize the debilitating impact of anxiety on learners' oral performance. In spite of the basic speaking abilities, it is seen that the psychological status of the students has been a factor in restraint on their communicative competence. Although the students were labeled as 'slightly confident' this may mask some emotional aspects. The self-confidence appears to be tentative and may depend on the degree of difficulty of a task or context. This emphasizes the importance of developing not just the language and the requisite skills, but also the emotional and psychological readiness necessary for the actual speaking tasks.

These findings imply the need for incorporating emotionally responsive pedagogical practices into English language teaching, especially for prospective educators. The findings indicate the importance of classroom environments that minimize fear of speaking and facilitate confidence-building through positive feedback, peer interaction, and extensive speaking practice. Given that self-efficacy in speaking is negatively influenced by language anxiety, teacher education programs need to implement anxiety-reducing strategies in the curriculum. These may include scaffolded speaking tasks, peer collaboration with low risk, and speaking in safe environments. When it comes to practicum and methods courses, pre-service teachers need opportunities for: feedback that is supportive, simulations of teaching contexts, and reflective journaling that enables them to measure their speaking confidence across time. Incorporating such activities into language teaching programs could develop not only the oral proficiency of language learners, but also a role model for the confident usage of target language in their future students.

While the research supports established theoretical linkages between self-efficacy and anxiety, it also provides scope for future research into contextual and individual determinants affecting these relationships. Addressing these issues helps improve students' language performance and equips future English teachers be better prepared to become confident and effective educators who are emotionally and psychologically resilient enough to handle the challenges of the teaching profession.

This study relies entirely on data and numbers, which are helpful but never completely represent the emotional aspects of language anxiety and self-efficacy. Future research would improve and be enriched with interviewing or open-ended questions to gain a better insight into students' experiences and how they manage to cope up with these problems.

This research only considered one campus's English majors, so the findings may not extend to students from other campuses. Future studies should attempt to involve participants from various campuses, regions, or cultures to determine whether the relationship between anxiety and self-efficacy is the same in other contexts.

Although the study examined the language anxiety and self-efficacy in speaking relationships using correlational analysis, future research could benefit further with more advanced statistical methods. For example, one might conduct a regression to determine whether language anxiety predicts self-efficacy (or vice versa). Mediation analyses might also assess whether self-efficacy mediates the influence of anxiety on real performance in speaking. Such paradigms would help for deeper understanding of how these psychological variables influence each other and help inform targeted interventions.

## AI ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The prompts used include:

1. Create a research design of Language Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in Speaking of BSEd English Major Students as a descriptive correlational study using a Likert scale and speaking test. In paragraph form, provide RRL.
2. Create an introduction for my research with the title "Language Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in Speaking of BSEd English Major Students."
3. Based on this research title, create a research question.
4. Please create me a research instrument based on the research design.
5. Based on the data below, make a data analysis about our research.
6. Suggest studies about a 5-point Likert scale and speaking test using a descriptive correlation in our research, Language Anxiety and Self-Efficacy in Speaking of BSEd English Major Students. This is the sample structure of the instrument based on other research studies.

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