

SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG SIXTH SEMESTER ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS IN MICROTEACHING PRACTICE

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Keywords

Speaking Anxiety
Microteaching
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Abstract

This study explores the speaking anxiety experienced by sixth-semester students during English microteaching practice at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung. The study aims to investigate students' perceptions, contributing factors, and anxiety levels. A mixed-method approach was employed. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews and classroom video observation, while quantitative data were obtained using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS). The results revealed three main types of anxiety experienced by students: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Four major factors were found to influence their anxiety: psychological, social, linguistic, and contextual. Based on the FLCAS data, 66.67% of students experienced severe speaking anxiety, while 13.33% experienced panic-level anxiety. These findings suggest that high levels of anxiety can have a significant impact on students' speaking performance in teaching practice. Therefore, there is an urgent need for teaching strategies that help students to reduce anxiety and build confidence in the classroom.

Keywords: Speaking anxiety, Microteaching practice, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), English Education, Mixed-method research

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become essential, particularly for higher education students pursuing English education. English is a global lingua franca and a vital medium in academic, technological, and professional contexts (Fadhilah, 2022; Mumtaz et al., 2023). For Indonesian students, particularly those majoring in English Education, fluency in spoken English is fundamental to their academic and teaching success. However, speaking is a productive and immediate skill (Nunan, 2018) that presents a significant psychological barrier for many learners. Even with sufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, students often experience anxiety that affects their ability to speak English confidently, particularly in high-pressure situations such as microteaching (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020; Damayanti & Listyani, 2020). Speaking anxiety has been widely recognized as a specific dimension of foreign language anxiety that emerges during oral communication. Horwitz et al. (1986) conceptualize foreign language anxiety as a situation-specific affective variable related to language learning, with speaking activities being one of its most anxiety-provoking components. Speaking anxiety is commonly associated with fear of making mistakes, communication apprehension, and concerns about negative evaluation from others. These affective factors often lead students to experience hesitation, mental blocks, and reduced willingness to communicate, even in structured classroom settings.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that speaking anxiety is prevalent among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Zabidin et al. (2023) identified communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as the primary types of anxiety that hinder students' speaking performance. Similarly, Gunawan et al. (2025) reported that lack of self-confidence, limited English proficiency, and fear of judgment significantly contribute to students' reluctance to speak English. These findings suggest that speaking anxiety is influenced not only by linguistic competence but also by psychological and social factors within the learning environment.

In instructional contexts that demand performance and evaluation, such as microteaching classes, speaking anxiety may become more intense. Microteaching requires students to demonstrate teaching skills, language accuracy, and classroom interaction simultaneously while being observed and assessed by peers and lecturers (Monika & Programme, 2023). Tuyet & Le (2023) argue that such evaluative situations can heighten students' anxiety levels, particularly when English is used as the medium of instruction. However, despite extensive research on speaking anxiety in general classroom contexts, limited studies have focused on how this anxiety manifests during microteaching practice, especially within Indonesian higher education settings.

This gap highlights the need for a more contextualized investigation of speaking anxiety in microteaching environments. Therefore, this study aims to examine speaking anxiety among sixth-semester English Education students during microteaching practice at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung. Specifically, the study explores students' perceptions of speaking anxiety, identifies the factors contributing to their anxiety, and determines the level of anxiety using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) proposed by Alamri & Qasem (2024). By addressing speaking anxiety within a simulated teaching context, this study is expected to contribute empirical insights that support the development of more supportive and anxiety-sensitive pedagogical practices in EFL teacher education programs.

Several studies have emphasized the prevalence of speaking anxiety among English learners. Irulappan (2025) identified communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation as the main types of anxiety inhibiting students' speaking performance. Similarly, Hidayatullah (2024) found that factors such as a lack of confidence, low English proficiency, and fear of judgment significantly contribute to learners' reluctance to speak. While previous research has thoroughly addressed the causes and levels of speaking anxiety, limited attention has been given to identifying the

most dominant influencing factor. Furthermore, most existing studies focus on general classroom settings rather than specific instructional contexts such as microteaching, in which students simulate real teaching situations in English in front of their peers and lecturers.

This gap indicates the need for a contextual and in-depth exploration of speaking anxiety experienced during teaching practice, particularly at Indonesian universities. This study aims to address this issue by analysing the speaking anxiety experienced by sixth-semester students during microteaching sessions at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung. The study explores students' perceptions, the contributing factors, and the level of anxiety. This enables the research to support and expand upon prior findings, offering empirical insight into anxiety manifestations within a more specific and practical context.

The study has three objectives: (1) to investigate how students perceive their anxiety when speaking in front of the class, (2) to identify the factors contributing to their anxiety, and (3) to determine the level of anxiety using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz et al. (1986). Using a mixed-methods approach, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety in microteaching and proposes strategies to mitigate such anxiety in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education programmes.

METHOD

This study used a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the speaking anxiety experienced by sixth-semester students during their microteaching practice. This approach enables researchers to collect and analyse both qualitative and quantitative data, exploring complex phenomena from multiple perspectives (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2018). Specifically, this study used a sequential exploratory strategy, starting with qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by quantitative analysis to validate and extend the findings.

The research consisted of several defined stages. First, the researcher identified speaking anxiety as a phenomenon among English education students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. Then, sixth-semester students involved in a microteaching class where English was the medium of instruction were selected as participants. Data were collected through three main instruments: interviews, classroom video observations, and questionnaires.

During the qualitative phase, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and video observations. These instruments were selected for their effectiveness in capturing emotional expression and contextual responses (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1994). The interview questions focused on the students' personal experiences, while the videotapes were analyzed to identify behavioral indicators of anxiety during teaching practice. The qualitative data were analysed using a three-step process: data reduction, data display, and concluding (Miles et al., 2014). Classroom video observation was conducted to capture students' observable anxiety-related behaviours during microteaching sessions, such as hesitation, voice trembling, long pauses, avoidance of eye contact, and signs of nervousness while speaking in English. The observation focused on how anxiety manifested in real teaching performance rather than on students' verbal responses alone. These observational data complemented the interview findings by providing contextual and behavioural evidence of speaking anxiety, thereby enabling the identification of recurring themes related to students' perceptions as well as the psychological, social, linguistic, and contextual factors influencing their anxiety.

In the subsequent quantitative phase, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), was used to assess speaking anxiety levels. The FLCAS consists of 20 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. These items were categorized into three types of anxiety: communication apprehension (9 items), test anxiety (6 items), and fear of negative evaluation (5 items). Following the anxiety model

proposed by Halter (2018), the responses were then scored and classified into four levels of anxiety: mild, moderate, severe, and panic. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative data enables triangulation of the findings, thereby increasing the validity and the reliability of the research, according to Noble and Heale (2019). Triangulation enhances the credibility of qualitative research by cross-verifying data from multiple sources. In this study, methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing results from interviews and observations. This comprehensive methodology enables the study to investigate the students' perception about their speaking anxiety, the factors contributing to students' anxiety, and quantify its extent among participants.

RESULT

This study investigated the speaking anxiety experienced by sixth-semester students during the English microteaching class. Data were collected by interviews, classroom video observations, and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The results are presented below.

Students' Perception of Speaking Anxiety

Qualitative data revealed that students commonly experienced anxiety in three main forms: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension presented as nervousness and mental blocks during performance, while test anxiety was characterized by fear of receiving poor grades, making grammar mistakes, and being assessed by instructors. The fear of negative evaluation was also prevalent, with students expressing concern about being judged by their peers and lecturers, which caused them to feel ashamed and hesitant.

Table 1 Students' Perceptions of Speaking Anxiety

No	Types of anxiety	Statements
1	Communication Apprehension	"Really nervous, I have it in my mind, but I'm confused about how to express it." (FM) "Got nervous first, suddenly blanked out" (TDS) "I was prepared, but when I got there, my mind went blank." (AAPP) "I can do it in Indonesian. But in English, sometimes I'm like, what is this?" (BTW) "Nervous, unable to express everything due to nervousness." (WWA)
2	Test Anxiety	"I'm really afraid of failing micro teaching because of my poor English" (BMH) "nervous, afraid of making grammatical mistakes" (SMD) "I'm really afraid that my grades will drop because of my performance" (TDS) "nervous, because I knew I would be judged" (DAM) "I'm nervous and scared. I'm scared of having to make a lot of revisions." (RVW) "worried, afraid of blanking out during a performance." (VS)
3	Fear of Negative Evaluation	"Sometimes I'm afraid of being judged. I think they'll judge me anyway." (VS) "More afraid of being judged on grammar." (BMH) "I'm afraid I'm the only one who doesn't understand." (FM) "Ashamed, if I make a mistake, I feel inferior." (AAPP) "Often hesitant, afraid of making grammatical mistakes." (NNA) "I feel inferior when my friends are better than me, so I do not feel like talking." (MFCA) "Shame, it makes performance drop." (RVW)

Table 1 illustrates students' perceptions of speaking anxiety as reflected in their verbal expressions during interviews. The data indicate that communication apprehension was the most frequently reported form of anxiety, characterized by nervousness, mental blocks, and difficulty expressing ideas despite prior preparation. Several students reported experiencing sudden blankness and confusion when speaking in English, suggesting that anxiety interfered with cognitive processing during performance.

Test anxiety also emerged prominently, particularly in relation to evaluation and grading during microteaching sessions. Students expressed fear of making grammatical mistakes, receiving low scores, and having to revise their teaching performance. This anxiety was intensified by the awareness that microteaching serves as a formal assessment, which increased pressure and negatively affected students' confidence while speaking.

In addition, fear of negative evaluation was evident in students' concern about being judged by peers and lecturers. Feelings of shame, inferiority, and hesitation were frequently mentioned, especially when students compared their speaking ability with that of more proficient classmates. This fear led some students to limit their participation or avoid speaking altogether, indicating that social comparison plays a significant role in shaping speaking anxiety during microteaching practice.

Factors Influencing Speaking Anxiety

Thematic analysis from interview data revealed four main factors influencing students' anxiety: psychological, social, linguistic, and contextual.

Table 2 Factors Influencing Speaking Anxiety

No	Factors	Description	Statements
1.	Psychological	Students experience high levels of anxiety, such as excessive nervousness, panic, and fear, even though they have made preparations.	"Even though I was prepared, I was still worried." (BMH) "I was so nervous, when I got home, I felt really sad." (AAPP) "Suddenly, the time in front of the class was blank." (SMD)
2.	Social	Fear of being judged by others, feelings of inferiority, and comparing one's abilities with those of more skilled friends.	"Sometimes I feel like I'm being judged." (VS) "Feeling a bit down compared to friends" (NNA) "Afraid of being judged badly by the lecturer." (AAPP) "I feel inferior when talking to people who are more fluent." (ABS) "Less confident compared to friends." (WWA)
3.	Linguistics	Difficulties in grammar and vocabulary mastery make students hesitant, confused, and even choose not to speak at all.	"Not yet mastered much vocabulary." (ABS) "Sometimes I have repeated it several times (pronunciation) but it's still like this." (SMD) "often unsure because of grammar" (NNA) "If my pronunciation is wrong, it's better to remain silent(FM)
4.	Contextual	Pressure increases in formal situations such as being assessed by a lecturer, giving a presentation in front of the class, or speaking without preparation.	"When the lecturer looks tense, the atmosphere becomes cold." (TDS) "When I found out, I panicked a little." (ABS) "nervous because I will be assessed." (FM) "If the interaction (conversation in English) is unexpected, it can be frightening." (WWA) "I immediately blank out when asked to speak without preparation(AAPP)

As presented in Table 2, students' speaking anxiety during microteaching practice was influenced by four main factors: psychological, social, linguistic, and contextual. Psychological factors were reflected in students' intense nervousness, panic, and feelings of sadness despite adequate preparation. Several students reported experiencing mental blankness and loss of focus when standing in front of the class, indicating that anxiety disrupted their emotional regulation during performance.

Social factors also played a substantial role in shaping students' anxiety. Many students expressed fear of being judged by peers and lecturers, as well as feelings of inferiority when comparing their speaking ability with more proficient classmates. These social pressures often reduced students' confidence and willingness to speak, particularly in formal classroom settings where performance was visible to others.

Linguistic factors emerged in relation to students' limited mastery of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Uncertainty about linguistic accuracy caused hesitation and led some students to avoid speaking altogether. In several cases, students preferred to remain silent rather than risk making mistakes, demonstrating how linguistic insecurity directly contributed to heightened anxiety levels.

Contextual factors further intensified speaking anxiety, especially during formal assessment situations such as microteaching. Being evaluated by lecturers, speaking without prior preparation, and sudden instructional demands increased students' tension and fear. These conditions created a high-pressure environment that amplified both psychological and social anxiety, ultimately affecting students' speaking performance.

Students' Levels of Speaking Anxiety

Based on FLCAS results, students' speaking anxiety levels were categorized as follows:

Table 3 Students' Speaking Anxiety Levels (N=15)

Level of Anxiety	Frequency	Percentage
Mild	2	13.33%
Moderate	1	6.67%
Severe	10	66.67%
Panic	2	13.33%

Table 3 presents the distribution of students' speaking anxiety levels during microteaching practice. The results indicate that the majority of students experienced high levels of anxiety, with most participants categorized as having severe anxiety. Students in this category commonly showed intense nervousness, mental blankness, hesitation, and difficulty organizing ideas while speaking in front of the class. These symptoms suggest that anxiety significantly interfered with students' oral performance during teaching practice.

A smaller proportion of students experienced panic-level anxiety, characterized by overwhelming fear and an inability to speak fluently during microteaching sessions. Observable reactions among these students included prolonged silence, trembling voice, and avoidance of eye contact, indicating extreme emotional distress in formal speaking situations.

In contrast, only a limited number of students experienced mild anxiety. These students were generally able to manage their nervousness and continue speaking despite feeling anxious. The unequal distribution of anxiety levels suggests that microteaching, as a performance-based and evaluative context, tends to intensify speaking anxiety for most students rather than function as a low-pressure learning environment.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that speaking anxiety presents a significant barrier to sixth-semester students performing microteaching in English. This anxiety is not only a

personal or emotional issue, but also has linguistic, psychological, social, and contextual dimensions, as reflected in students' perceptions and their anxiety levels.

The high percentage of students experiencing severe anxiety (66.67%) and panic (13.33%) shows that speaking English, especially in high-pressure situations such as teaching practice, can elicit strong emotional responses. This finding is consistent with Halter's (2018) framework, which suggests that severe and panic anxiety levels are characterised by an inability to focus, overwhelming fear, and physiological symptoms such as trembling and mental blanking. Symptoms that were consistently reported by students in statements such as "When I got home, I felt sad," or "blanking out when asked to speak without preparation".

These findings are consistent with those of others who classified speaking anxiety as falling into one of three categories: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Akaraphattanawong et al., 2024). In this study, many students reported experiencing sudden mental blocks and nervousness, which confirms the presence of communication apprehension. Typical expressions of this type of anxiety include statements such as "nervous, suddenly blank" and "nervous, unable to say everything he wanted to say".

The results also reinforce the conclusions of Damayanti & Listyani (2020) and Ajiza et al. (2022) that a lack of confidence, a fear of making mistakes, and peer judgment are the main causes of anxiety. This study builds on these insights by demonstrating how evaluation by lecturers and the sudden nature of speaking tasks increase anxiety, which aligns with the contextual anxiety factors discussed by Sari & Susanti (2024). For instance, the statement "If you know you're being evaluated, I'll panic a little" illustrates how situational factors can intensify performance pressure.

This study's strength lies in its ability to provide practical insights for instructors and curriculum designers. By identifying the most common types and causes of speaking anxiety, the study encourages lecturers to create more supportive classroom environments, employ scaffolding techniques, and gradually introduce students to performance tasks. It also emphasises the importance of language support programmes that enhance students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, thereby alleviating linguistic anxiety.

In conclusion, the speaking anxiety experienced by students during microteaching is a multifaceted issue demanding pedagogical attention. This study affirms previous theories and research, while also providing more specific insights into anxiety within the context of teaching practice. This paves the way for interventions that can foster student confidence and communication skills in English.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that sixth-semester students in the English Education Department at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung experienced significant levels of speaking anxiety during their microteaching practice. Most students fell into the severe and panic categories. This anxiety was caused by a combination of psychological, social, linguistic, and contextual factors, including lack of confidence, fear of negative evaluation, limited grammar and vocabulary mastery, and the pressure of being formally assessed. This study contributes to language learning innovations by emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing speaking anxiety as a critical aspect of teacher preparation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small and limited to sixth-semester students from a single university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Second, the study focused specifically on microteaching practice; therefore, the results may not fully represent speaking anxiety experienced in other instructional settings or real classroom environments. Third, although the study employed mixed methods, the quantitative data

relied on self-reported responses, which students' subjective perceptions may influence. Future research is encouraged to involve larger and more diverse samples, include longitudinal designs, and examine additional instructional contexts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of speaking anxiety among EFL pre-service teachers. In pedagogical terms, the findings suggest that lecturers should create a more supportive and gradual learning environment that enables students to build confidence through structured practice, constructive feedback, and meaningful classroom interaction, thereby reducing fear and fostering effective communication.

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