Language Anxiety in Online Speaking Test: A Case of Nutrition Education Students

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Abstract

Speaking skills for some people can be very stressing and dreading, especially for students who partially learn English like nutrition education students. Despite their limited hours of learning English in class, they are demanded to be able to speak or communicate effectively in English about nutrition topics and other general issues. English learning is even more challenging due to the spread of the COVID 19 virus which forces them to study online. Online studying has increased their worry and anxiety about having the online speaking test and this anxiety has affected students' perception as it contributes to their belief, attitude, need and interest in responding to the questions. The students, 94% dominated by female students, stated that they were anxious when having the test although female students are often known to be better learners in speaking than male students. This study is aimed to find out what are the causes of language anxiety among the students of Nutrition Education in the online speaking test, how anxiety affects the students' perception, and what strategy can be used to reduce the students' language anxiety. This study is using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: *Speaking skill, language anxiety, speaking test, effective communication*

Introduction

This research intends to assess the Nutrition Education students' language anxiety in the online speaking test. This chapter includes the background of the problem, research objectives, statement of the problem and the significance of the study.

Background of the Problem

Speaking English communicatively has become a compulsory requirement for almost all jobs including nutritionists who must have the ability to speak communicatively to the patients. Regarding this, students of Nutrition Education have to pass the speaking ability test to make sure they are all able to speak English communicatively. Since the COVID 19 pandemic started, all the learning and the assessment process have been using the online platform. The shift from the offline to online learning has impacted some inconveniences for some students and also the teachers in learning and delivering the materials, although some see the use of online learning is widely viewed as the most effective strategy to learn nowadays to ease students' transition into online learning while fostering their readiness. Online learning orientation is intended to clarify course requirements and processes (Mcgee, Valdes, & Bullis, 2016), however, some people are still afraid or feel uncomfortable even worrying about using the technology (Yunus, Wahid, Omar, & Rashid, 2016), even using computers eases their work, they find it is not always a satisfying or fun event.

In assessments or tests, the online platform has also made certain anxiety for the students. The anxiety influence the students' performance in doing the speaking test (Young, 1991). The anxiety experienced by the Nutrition Education students has affected their perceptions in the

online speaking test where the cognitive processes which consist of beliefs, motivations and attitudes detect, relate and interpret the information in their mind.

The anxiety is not only the uncertainty feeling whether they can do the test, but also the worries of the incapability in operating the computer and the technology used to assist them. In the speaking test, the other students' concern is good communication which has to be built during the test while problems might come up due to the limited internet connection and the clarity of audio. The students might not hear the questions clearly or they cannot well operate the technology and this problem can also happen to the lecturer, in other words, the teacher and students must adapt to the technology to minimize the problems that might occur (Wulandari, Gani, & Muslem, 2022).

Language anxiety has a role in reducing the students' speaking test performance and it is also related to students' positive self-esteem and directly correlated to their fear of negative evaluation and their defensiveness (Zheng & Cheng, 2018)

Research Objectives
This paper aims to examine the level of language anxiety among the Nutrition Education students in the online speaking test, to find out the main factors that cause the language anxiety among the Nutrition Education students in online speaking test and to find out how anxiety affects the Nutrition Education Students' performance in the online speaking test. This paper also tries to find out the instructional strategies that can be used to reduce anxiety in speaking tests.

Statement of the Problem
Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:
1. What is the level of language anxiety among Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?
2. What are the main factors that cause language anxiety among Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?
3. How does anxiety affect the Nutrition Education Students' performance in online speaking test?
4. What strategy can be used to reduce language anxiety among Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?

Significance of the Study
This study on Nutrition Education students' language anxiety in the online speaking test will have numerous significance as follows.
First, the study will make a researcher more familiar with the problem, as well as how to conduct research and also to find out the language anxiety experienced by students when having the online speaking test and how to overcome it. Second, the study will be helpful to the Nutrition Education students and the academician as it will make them aware of the language anxiety and its significant differences experienced by the students when having the online speaking test. Third, this study will be helpful for Nutrition Education students and academicians as it tries to find out the main factors that cause anxiety experienced by the students when having the online speaking test. Fourth, this study will be beneficial for the Nutrition Education students and the academician as it finds out how anxiety affects their test performance in the online speaking test. Fifth, this study will be useful for Nutrition Education students and academicians as it finds out what strategy can be used to reduce language anxiety in the online speaking test.

Review of Related Literature
This part of the paper provides a review of works done by authors and other researchers that relate to the topic under the study. It includes the theory of anxiety, language anxiety, and the source of anxiety, speaking fluency and online speaking test.

Anxiety and Language Anxiety
Anxiety is a negative emotion or state in which worry occurs and there are feelings of uneasiness, tension, and nervousness (Liebert & Morris, 1967). Psychological classification differentiates the categories of anxiety, they are trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality trait while state anxiety is a temporary response to a particular stimulus. Situation specific anxiety is aroused by a specific type of situation or event (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Anxiety, when it is related to language learning, is called language anxiety or foreign language anxiety. It is believed that language anxiety has become central to any examination of factors contributing to the learning process and learner achievement (Hurd, 2007).

Sources of Anxiety
Language anxiety stemmed from the repeated negative experiences associated with the foreign language (Gardner & Macintyre, 1993). The sources of language anxiety can be from the learner itself which may result from learners' erroneous beliefs, unrealistic high standards, poor language abilities, self-perceived incompetence, inclined competitive nature and dispositional fear of negative evaluation (Zhang & Zhong, 2012). several sources of anxiety that affect language learning are 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties, 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching;4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing (Young, 1991).

Anxiety in Online Learning
Online learning continuously grows in use as the result of the uncertain situation caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. The growth so far has not shown a reduction, it is getting higher. The use of online learning orientation is widely viewed as the most effective strategy to learn nowadays to ease students' transition into online learning while fostering their readiness. Online learning orientation is intended to clarify course requirements and processes (Mcgee et al., 2016). However, some people are still afraid or feel uncomfortable even worrying about using the technology (Yunus et al., 2016), even though using computers eases their work, they find it is not always a satisfying or fun event. Some people have a strong aversion to working with computers, and even fear them (Ayar Şentürk, 2019). In other words, it is known as technophobia. Technophobia is defined as the action or behavior of dislikes the technologies. It can be also defined as a negative attitude towards computers or information technology (Brosnan & Lee, 1998). Technophobia as evidence of one or more of the following: (a) anxiety about a present or future interactions with computers or computer-related technology; (b) negative global attitudes about computers, their operation or their societal impact; and/or (c) specific negative cognitions or self-critical internal dialogues during present computer interactions or when contemplating future computer interactions (Rosen, &, & Weil, 1990)

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)
The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) is the most widely used scale to measure students' foreign language anxiety (Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012), 2012). The FLCAS consists of 33 items. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert Scale with the options for each item ranging from strongly agree to agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The FLCAS is key-reversed which means that for the positively

worded items, strongly agree is given a score of 5 while the option strongly disagree is given a score of 1 and for the negatively worded items (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32), the option strongly agree is given a score of 1 while strongly disagree is given a score of 5.

The FLCAS is composed of three components: fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. The questions that measure fear of negative evaluation are 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, and 33. Items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, and 32 measure communication apprehension, while items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28 measure test anxiety. The FLCAS measures a person's anxiety level by summing the score of each of the 33 items. Concerning the level of anxiety, according to Horwitz et al. (1986), there are three categories: low, moderate, and high level of anxiety. These levels of anxiety can be indicated by knowing the result of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) score. The score of FLCAS ranges from 33 to 165. The students whose score is lower than 99 are categorized as having low anxiety levels, while the students who get a higher score than 99 are categorized as having high-level anxiety. However, if the score is exactly 99, they are categorized as a cut-off line, which means they have a moderate level of anxiety (Shanti Manipuspika, 2018).

Language Anxiety and Test Performance
Strategy to Reduce the Language Anxiety

Methodology
This part of the paper shows the whole process of how the study will be done systematically. It will include the design of the study, participants, instrument and data collection, and data analysis.

Design of the Study
This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-method, a method that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is called a sequential explanatory because this study applied a two-phase design where the quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection. The purpose is to use the qualitative results to further explain and interpret the findings from the quantitative phase (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). This study is also called a case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., activity, event, process or individuals) based on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2012).

Participant
The participants were 105 Nutrition Education students of Polytechnic of Health, Ministry of Health Surabaya. These students were chosen because they share a similar background. Their ages are around 18 to 20 years old and they have been studying English for more than 10 years. The students who participated in the study are from the fourth semester but the researcher decided not to control for the gender because the number of female and male students was not equal. There were 98 female students and 7 male students.

Instrument and Data Collection
The participants were asked to fill out two questionnaires. The first questionnaire is intended to collect background information about participants (age, sex, etc.). The second questionnaire is the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales), developed by Horwitz et al. (Horwitz, and Horwitz, and Cope, 1986) which assesses the degree to which students feel anxious during a speaking test and its significance.

Semi-structured interviews will be used to elicit students' main reasons and strategies best applied to minimize the language anxiety in the online speaking test. The rationale for these interviews as a data-gathering tool is that researchers can capture data that is not directly observable (Tanveer, 2007). Other basic advantages of interview use are highlighted as "select, reconstruct, and reflect" (Ohata, 2005) upon the participants' experience.

Data Analysis
The data collected will be analyzed through descriptive statistics, a statistical description of the data set (Stapor, 2020) is used to find out the degree of language anxiety among Nutrition Education students, and the causes (i.e. psychological anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, social-environmental factor) that may contribute to overall student language anxiety.

To find out the causes of students' language anxiety, how anxiety affects the students' performance and the strategy best applied to minimize the language anxiety in the online speaking test, the semi-structured interviews will be audiotaped. Since it is a semi-structured interview, some pre-specified points are highlighted and then analyzed. Content analysis will be used to evaluate and interpret the data gathered as it is a systematic, rigorous approach to analyzing documents obtained or generated in the course of research (White & Marsh, 2006).

Result and Discussion
What is the level of language anxiety among Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?
The first research problem deals with the anxiety level of the fourth-year students of Nutrition Education students. To analyze their anxiety level, the participants were asked to fill out the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The scales of the questionnaire ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data were analyzed by summing respondents' total scores and calculating the mean score. The result is presented in the following
table:

	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean Score
Score Valid N	105	52	130	103.43

Table 1 shows the students' anxiety levels. N is the total number of respondents who completed the questionnaires. It consists of 105 students from the fourth semester of the Nutrition Education program. Based on the result, the minimum score of anxiety owned by the individuals was 52, while the maximum score was 130, which left the mean score of 103.43 indicating a high anxiety level. This is based on Horwitz et al (1986) who said that if the score is higher than 99, the participants are categorized as having high-level anxiety. Specifically, the participants' levels of speaking anxiety were categorized using Oetting's scale (1983) in the following table:

Range	Level	Number of Participants
124-165	Very Anxious	8
108-123	Anxious	30
87-107	Mildly Anxious	60
66-86	Relaxed	5

| 33-65 | Very Relaxed | 2 |

What are the main factors that cause language anxiety among Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?

To find out the main factors that cause language anxiety among Nutrition Education students, the researcher needs to analyses the mean and standard deviation in the three types of performance anxiety associated with foreign language anxiety (FLA). The three types are communicative apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The mean score for fear of negative evaluation is 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, and 33. Items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, and 32 measure communication apprehension, while items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28 measure test anxiety. The data have been arranged in ascending order of importance to facilitate comprehension. The highest scores obtained by the instrument indicate in all instances a higher level of FLA.

Items: Communicative Apprehension	N	Mean	SD
14. I would not be nervous speaking a foreign language with native speakers.	105	2.324	1.139
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	105	3.029	1.096
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in a foreign language.	105	3.286	0.958
18. I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	105	3.333	0.927
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	105	3.467	0.91
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	105	3.476	1.11
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking a foreign language in front of other students.	105	3.476	0.982
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	105	3.495	0.932
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	105	3.59	1.007
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	105	3.629	0.933
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	105	3.848	0.918
Overall mean: 3.359			

As shown in Table 3, communicative apprehension got a 3.359 mean score. This score was higher than fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. The table also shows that the statement which receives the highest score is item 9, which states "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class".

Items: Fear of Negative Evaluation	N	Mean	SD
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	105	2.219	0.93

	N	Mean	SD
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	105	3.01	1.131
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	105	3.048	1.086
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak a foreign language.	105	3.381	1.138
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	105	3.543	1.144
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	105	3.695	0.932
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	105	3.705	0.929
Overall mean: 3.229			

As shown in Table 4, fear of negative evaluation got a 3.229 mean score. This score was the second higher of all the three types of performance anxiety. The table also shows that the statement which receives the highest score is item 23, which states "I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do".

Items: Test Anxiety	N	Mean	SD
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.	105	1.543	0.821
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for a language class.	105	1.952	0.903
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	105	1.962	0.898
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.	105	2.371	0.963
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	105	2.438	1.064
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	105	2.686	0.931
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	105	2.686	0.923
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	105	2.876	1.035
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	105	3.038	1.1
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	105	3.124	1.107
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	105	3.476	0.889
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	105	3.562	1.109
16. Even if I am well prepared for a language class, I feel anxious about it.	105	3.581	1.133
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	105	3.648	1.118
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	105	4.152	0.928
Overall mean: 2.873			

As shown in Table 5, test anxiety got a 2.873 mean score. This score was the third higher of all the three types of performance anxiety. The table also shows that the statement which receives the highest score is item 10, which states "I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class".

Based on the result, it is proved that the students of Nutrition Education perceived all types of anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety while having the online speaking test.

How does anxiety affect the Nutrition Education Students' performance in online speaking test?
Speaking is a productive skill in the oral mode which involves more than just pronouncing words (Marriam Bashir; Muhammad Azeem; Ashiq Hussain Dogar, 2016) and it is causing more anxiety compared to other skills (Aida, 1994). Psychological classification differentiates the categories of anxiety, they are trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). Trait anxiety is a relatively stable personality trait while state anxiety is a temporary response to a particular stimulus. Situation specific anxiety is aroused by a specific type of situation or event (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Anxiety, when it is related to language learning, is called language anxiety or foreign language anxiety. It is believed that language anxiety has become central to any examination of factors contributing to the learning process and learner achievement (Hurd, 2007), furthermore, it can disrupt complex learning, test-taking,
and effective thinking (Covington, Omelich, & Schwarzer, 1986).

Test anxiety did cause poor performance and that anxiety was inversely related to students' positive self-esteem and directly correlated to their fear of negative evaluation and their defensiveness (Hembree, 1988). Furthermore, anxiety might interfere with test performance by diverting the students' attention while doing the test and this anxiety has created a particular condition of learning which are threatening to disrupt test-taking (Covington et al., 1986). In other words, the perceived threat has caused anxiety arousal which results in impaired performance (Zheng & Cheng, 2018). The relationship is formulated as follows:

<div align="center">perceived threat – anxiety arousal – impaired performance</div>

From the interview, it is also found that 87% of Nutrition Students like English subjects but 82% said that they felt nervous, worried and afraid when having a speaking test, although the test was conducted online. They said they might feel more anxious when the test was conducted offline.

What strategy can be used to reduce the language anxiety among the Nutrition Education students in online speaking tests?
To minimize the anxiety, the Nutrition Education students have done some activities such as doing the preparation for the topic being discussed in the speaking test, memorizing specific words dealing with nutrition topics and also practicing speaking with their friends before the test day. The data gained from the interview showed that almost 52% of students did preparation before the speaking test, while the rest did not do the preparation such as practicing speaking because they thought the topic, they were practicing might be different from the one that was being tested. However, during the speaking test students were feeling relaxed when they were asked about themselves, they started to feel panic when the speaking topic is specifically about nutrition. The preparation they did before the speaking test was memorizing

the specific or difficult word (34%), practicing speaking with their friends (26%), practicing self-talk (21%) and reading the materials in the book (12%) and others (7%).

During the online speaking test, students who have better English language background are shown to be a dare in taking a risk by not preparing before the test day. Taking risks was the strategy used by an overwhelming majority and was also considered the most important (Hurd, 2007). Other strategies used by the students were imagining that they have informal chat during the speaking test, however, this strategy could not be applied by the less skilled students because of their limitation of English knowledge and vocabulary.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the language anxiety in an online speaking test among the Nutrition Education Students and the result shows that the students experienced high-level anxiety. Of all the three types of performance anxiety, communicative apprehension ranked first place followed by the fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. The anxiety has affected the students' test performance because the students felt nervous, worried and afraid of making mistakes, however, to overcome this problem, students have their own different strategies to reduce the anxiety which were based on their level of English knowledge.

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