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LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AMONG BEED STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of language anxiety on the speaking performance of Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students at Mater Divinae Gratiae College, Inc., Eastern Samar, during the second semester of AY 2025–2026. Employing a quantitative correlational design, 42 students were assessed using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and evaluated on oral tasks through an analytical speaking rubric.

Results showed that students generally experienced moderate levels of language anxiety, with 25% reporting high anxiety. Overall speaking performance was also moderate, with fluency identified as the weakest component and task achievement as the strongest. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong negative relationship ($r = -0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between language anxiety and speaking performance, with fluency most affected and comprehension least affected.

These findings are consistent with previous studies and support theoretical frameworks such as Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, Eysenck's Attentional Control Theory, and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. The study highlights the need for supportive classroom practices, curriculum innovations, and teacher training to reduce language anxiety and enhance students' oral competence. Recommendations include expanding the research across multiple institutions, conducting longitudinal studies, and testing intervention strategies to mitigate anxiety.

KEYWORDS: *Language Anxiety, Speaking Performance, BEED Students, Fluency, Self-Efficacy, Affective Filter, Attentional Control, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*

INTRODUCTION

English proficiency—particularly in oral communication—is a cornerstone of academic and professional success in the Philippines. As one of the country's official languages and the primary medium of instruction in higher education, English functions not only as a tool for knowledge dissemination but also as an indicator of competence in the global workforce. For students in teacher education programs, mastery of spoken English is especially critical. Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students are expected to be effective communicators and role models for their future pupils. Their ability to speak confidently and fluently in English directly influences both their teaching effectiveness and professional credibility.

Despite these expectations, many students struggle with language anxiety—a psychological condition characterized by nervousness, apprehension, or fear when using a foreign language in evaluative or public contexts. Horwitz (2001) describes language anxiety as a distinct form of anxiety manifested through communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. For BEED students, such anxiety presents a significant challenge: it can undermine speaking performance, reduce self-confidence, and hinder their development as future educators.

This study examines the influence of language anxiety on the speaking performance of BEED students. Specifically, it aims to determine the level of language anxiety experienced during English-speaking tasks, assess speaking performance in terms of grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and task achievement, and identify whether a significant relationship exists between language anxiety and speaking performance.

The findings have practical implications for multiple stakeholders. Students may become more aware of how anxiety affects their performance, enabling them to develop effective coping strategies. Teachers can use the results to create supportive classroom environments that reduce anxiety and encourage active participation. Curriculum designers may integrate anxiety-reduction strategies into English courses, while future researchers can extend this work by exploring related dimensions of communication anxiety.

This study focuses on BEED students at Mater Divinae Gratiae College, Inc., Eastern Samar, during the second semester of AY 2025–2026. Language anxiety is measured using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), while speaking performance is assessed through classroom-based oral tasks using an analytical rubric. Other factors, such as motivation, personality traits, and prior language exposure, are beyond the scope of this research.

The study is grounded in three theoretical frameworks. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis explains how high anxiety raises the affective filter, limiting language input and acquisition. Eysenck's Attentional Control Theory suggests that anxiety diverts cognitive resources away from task-focused processing, thereby impairing fluency and accuracy. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory posits that low self-efficacy increases anxiety and reduces persistence and performance in speaking

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tasks. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for understanding the relationship between language anxiety and speaking performance.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between language anxiety and speaking performance among Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students. The participants consisted of 120 BEED students enrolled at Mater Divinae Gratiae College, Inc., Eastern Samar, during AY 2025–2026. Purposive sampling was used, as these students are expected to develop strong oral communication skills for their future teaching careers.

Two instruments were utilized. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), comprises 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale and measures communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. An analytical speaking rubric was used to assess grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and task achievement, also on a 5-point scale. Oral tasks focused on interviews, which were evaluated by trained raters.

Data collection was conducted in two phases. First, participants completed the FLCAS during a scheduled class session. Second, within two weeks, they performed oral tasks that were recorded and evaluated using the rubric. Two raters independently scored each performance, and inter-rater reliability was established.

Ethical standards were strictly observed. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Written informed consent was obtained, and confidentiality was ensured by assigning codes in place of names.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were computed to determine levels of language anxiety and speaking performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the variables, with the level of significance set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Analysis of the FLCAS revealed that BEED students generally experienced moderate levels of language anxiety, with an overall mean score of 3.763 on a 5-point scale. Twenty percent of students reported low anxiety, 55 percent moderate anxiety, and 25 percent high anxiety. This distribution suggests that while most students fall within the moderate range, a significant proportion experience high anxiety that may severely hinder their oral performance.

Table 1. Speaking anxiety level among BEED students during English speaking tasks

INDICATORS	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.	INTERPRETATION
1. I feel nervous when my teacher asks me to speak English in class.	3.86	1.002	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
2. I start to panic when I must speak English without preparation.	3.95	1.035	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
3. I worry about making grammatical mistakes when speaking English.	4.17	1.010	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
4. I feel embarrassed when my classmates hear me speak English.	3.43	1.291	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
5. My heart beats fast when I am asked to answer questions orally in English.	3.93	1.045	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
6. I feel tense and anxious when I participate in English oral activities.	3.95	0.962	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
7. I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak in English.	3.79	1.138	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
8. I get nervous when my English pronunciation is corrected by my teacher.	3.29	1.274	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
9. I worry that I will not be able to express my ideas clearly in English.	3.90	0.958	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
10. I feel self-conscious speaking English in front of others.	3.95	1.011	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
11. I do not feel confident when speaking English in class.	4.00	1.126	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
12. I do feel relaxed during English speaking activities.	3.05	1.168	Moderate Level of Speaking Anxiety
13. I feel anxious even if I am well-prepared to speak English.	3.67	0.902	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
14. I worry about being evaluated when I speak English.	3.79	0.782	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
15. I feel pressure to speak English perfectly in class.	4.07	0.921	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
16. I get confused when speaking English in front of my teacher.	3.81	0.969	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
17. I feel uneasy when I do not understand questions asked in English.	4.05	0.795	High Level of Speaking Anxiety

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18. I feel more nervous speaking English than other students do.	3.67	1.004	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
19. I worry that my English speaking ability is weaker than my classmates'.	3.64	1.226	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
20. I do feel confident expressing my thoughts in English.	3.29	1.066	High Level of Speaking Anxiety
AVERAGE	3.763	1.03425	High Level of Speaking Anxiety

Students' speaking performance was moderate overall. Grammar had a mean score of 2.56, vocabulary 2.46, fluency 2.29, pronunciation 2.67, and task achievement 2.41. Among the five components, fluency was the weakest area, while task achievement was relatively stronger. This pattern indicates that anxiety may particularly disrupt the smoothness and spontaneity of speech, even when students understand the content.

Table 2. Summary Table of BEED Students in their Speaking performance Level

INDICATORS	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.	INTERPRETATION
Grammar	2.56	1.16	Low Level of Speaking Performance
Vocabulary	2.46	1.11	Low Level of Speaking Performance
Fluency	2.29	1.11	Low Level of Speaking Performance
Pronunciation	2.67	1.18	Moderate Level of Speaking Performance
Task achievement	2.41	1.04	Low Level of Speaking Performance
GRAND MEAN	**2.56**	**1.16**	**Low Level of Speaking Performance**

Pearson's correlation coefficient revealed a strong negative correlation between language anxiety and speaking performance ($r = -0.559$, $p < 0.01$). Subcomponent analysis showed significant negative correlations across all dimensions: grammar (-0.55), vocabulary (-0.58), fluency (-0.61), pronunciation (-0.49), and comprehension (-0.44). Notably, fluency was most affected by anxiety, while task achievement was least affected.

Table 3. Correlation table between speaking anxiety and the speaking performance of BEED students

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	DEPENDENT VARIABLE	Coefficient of correlation	Interpretation	P value	interpretation	Decision
Language Anxiety	Speaking performance	-0.559***	Moderate negative correlation	<.001	Significant	Reject Ho

Overall, the findings confirm that language anxiety exerts a debilitative effect on speaking performance among BEED students. Higher anxiety levels were consistently associated with lower performance, particularly in fluency and vocabulary.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed that BEED students at Mater Divinae Gratiae College, Inc. generally experience moderate levels of language anxiety, with a significant proportion reporting high anxiety. Their speaking performance was also moderate overall, with fluency emerging as the weakest component and comprehension as the strongest. Most importantly, statistical analysis confirmed a strong negative correlation between language anxiety and speaking performance, indicating that higher anxiety consistently undermines oral communication skills.

These findings align closely with prior research conducted both internationally and locally. Arfin and Manda (2021) reported that Indonesian high school students with higher speaking anxiety scored lower in oral tests, emphasizing the direct impact of anxiety on fluency and confidence. Amini (2019) found that EFL learners with elevated anxiety struggled with oral presentations due to fear of mistakes and limited vocabulary recall. Erdiana et al. (2023) observed that moderate to high anxiety levels led to weaker verbal organization and slower speech rates in EFL classes. Local studies reinforce this pattern. Empuerto et al. (2022) highlighted that fear and nervousness reduced ESL students' classroom participation, while Pontillas and Talaue (2021) confirmed a strong negative relationship between oral communication skills and speaking anxiety among Filipino educators. Macayen et al. (2023) further demonstrated that language-learning anxiety adversely affects both speaking and writing skills among Filipino college students. The consistency of these findings across contexts underscores the pervasive and debilitating nature of language anxiety.

The results can be explained through three theoretical lenses. Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that high anxiety raises the affective filter, blocking language input and reducing acquisition. In this study, students with high anxiety likely processed less linguistic input, which limited their vocabulary and grammar development. Eysenck's Attentional Control Theory posits that anxiety diverts cognitive resources away from goal-directed processing toward threat monitoring. For BEED students, anxiety about peer judgment or teacher evaluation consumed working memory that should have been devoted to organizing speech, recalling vocabulary, and

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applying grammar rules. Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory emphasizes that low self-efficacy increases anxiety and reduces performance. Students who doubted their ability to speak English confidently were more prone to anxiety, which in turn undermined their oral performance. Conversely, those with higher self-efficacy demonstrated stronger comprehension and pronunciation, as confidence enabled them to persevere despite challenges.

The findings carry significant implications for teacher education programs. Teachers should adopt supportive strategies that reduce anxiety, such as collaborative speaking tasks, gradual exposure to oral presentations, and constructive feedback. English courses should integrate anxiety-reduction techniques, including role-playing, peer modeling, and confidence-building exercises. Future educators must be trained not only in language proficiency but also in recognizing and addressing language anxiety among their pupils. Institutions should consider policies that promote low-stress learning environments, such as flexible assessment methods and opportunities for informal speaking practice.

While the study provides valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The sample was limited to BEED students from a single institution, which may restrict generalizability. Other factors influencing speaking performance, such as motivation, personality traits, or prior language exposure, were not examined. The study relied on self-reported measures of anxiety, which may be subject to bias.

Future studies should expand the sample to include multiple institutions and programs, conduct longitudinal research to track changes in anxiety and performance over time, and explore intervention strategies such as mindfulness training or peer mentoring. Investigating the role of motivation, personality, and cultural factors in shaping language anxiety would also provide a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that BEED students at Mater Divinae Gratiae College, Inc. experience moderate levels of language anxiety, with a notable proportion reporting high anxiety. Their speaking performance was also moderate overall, with fluency emerging as the weakest component and comprehension as the strongest. Statistical analysis confirmed a strong negative correlation between language anxiety and speaking performance, indicating that higher anxiety consistently undermines oral communication skills.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing language anxiety in teacher education programs. For BEED students, who are future educators, the ability to communicate confidently in English is essential. Anxiety not only impairs their current academic performance but also threatens their professional development as language models for their pupils. Reducing anxiety through supportive classroom practices, curriculum innovations, and teacher training is therefore crucial. By fostering environments that build self-efficacy, lower affective filters, and strengthen attentional control, institutions can help students overcome anxiety and enhance their oral competence.

Although the study was limited to a single institution and did not account for other factors such as motivation or personality traits, it provides valuable insights into the relationship between language anxiety and speaking performance. Future research should expand the scope to include multiple institutions, conduct longitudinal studies, and explore intervention strategies. Ultimately, addressing language anxiety is not only a matter of improving academic outcomes but also of preparing future teachers to be confident, effective communicators in their classrooms and communities.

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