

Speaking Anxiety Among ESL Students: A Case Study of the Undergraduate Students of Social Sciences at a Public University

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ABSTRACT

ESL learners have difficulty communicating second language inside and outside the classes, a highlighted phenomenon in post-colonial countries. This study aimed to investigate the level of speaking anxiety among Pakistani ESL university undergraduate students at a public university in Sindh, Pakistan. This study was conducted using SLSAS. The explanatory research design was employed, and descriptive statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS. According to the findings of this study, students often exhibit communication anxiety when speaking English language. When taking or preparing for an English-speaking test, they feel similar to moderately high anxiety levels but are more confused about it. The students also felt some anxiety about their English language studies; they were concerned about showing up to class, engaging in class discussions, and understanding everything the teacher communicated in the class. Male students more frequently agreed with the statements about communication anxiety and speaking test anxiety than female students. The results from the five departments did not significantly differ regarding speaking anxiety. A second language learning laboratory can help students to practice the English language effectively.

Introduction

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As English has spread worldwide, it is now used for most communications in countries where English is the second language, including Pakistan. The primary concern of students in Pakistan is now speaking English. In Pakistan, all official processes are conducted in English because it is the land's official language. Writing, reading, listening, and speaking are the four skills that all learners tend to acquire to become proficient in their respective languages. Except for speaking, the other three skills are easy to obtain (Brown, 1994). Further, language anxiety is the only element that makes learning English as a second language challenging (Na, 2007).

Pollard (2008). Perhaps the most challenging ability is learning a second language speaking. In second language learning classrooms, it is observed that Asian students are hesitant and unwilling to communicate their opinions. They rarely ask the instructors questions and play a somewhat passive role in the exercises (Liu, 2005). In light of this, Sarwar (2014) found that talented learners with outstanding academic writing scores struggle to verbally articulate their thoughts and ideas in a second language such as English. According to Tseng (2012), the elements contributing to speaking anxiety include gender, perception of himself, the context in which one interacts with others, cultural differences, social standing, and the classroom setting.

According to Tseng (2012), sociocultural factors contributing to second language anxiety include gender, the stress students face from their peers to do well on tests, and the fact that they do not receive enough exposure to develop their language proficiency. Young (1991) second language anxiety is a multifaceted and complex problem. As a result, the researchers tried to grasp the knowledge about the factors involved in English-speaking anxiety and further established the different factors involved in the English-speaking anxiety of the students based on the results of their studies. In response, the researchers of this study also noticed that public university students had problems communicating in English as a second language and that this problem caused them to experience a variety of anxieties, including generalized social anxiety. The researchers sought to examine the degree of English-speaking apprehension among the BS-I and BS-II students in the social sciences departments of international relations, political science, Islamic, media, and Pakistan studies.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To understand the extent of English-speaking anxiety among undergrad social sciences students.
2. To determine how male and female students react differently to their anxiety about speaking English.
3. To determine the difference in ESL students' speaking anxiety in various Social Sciences departments at SALU Khairpur.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in this study:

1. What is the level of English-speaking anxiety among undergraduate students of social sciences departments?
2. What is the difference in responses of male and female students regarding English speaking anxiety?
3. What is the significant difference in speaking anxiety of ESL students of different departments of Social Sciences?

Significance of the Study

To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study has been undertaken on the problem, as mentioned earlier, in the context of rural Sindh, Pakistan, even though studies have been conducted in the target region internationally. This study attempts to examine the level of English speaking anxiety amongst ESL learners comprising of the factors; communication apprehension, English language speaking test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and anxiety of English language speaking classes. With the help of this study, the areas regarding existing English-speaking anxiety about ESL students in the Pakistani context can be examined. The study's findings, Speaking Anxiety Among ESL Students, can promote further investigation and implementation of required measures. The study also assisted in identifying the various difficulties encountered by ESL students studying at a public university in Pakistan, allowing for the development of workable solutions to the challenges brought to light.

Literature Review

Speaking Anxiety

A student's ability to communicate effectively in a language classroom might be adversely

affected by the presence of speaking anxiety. Students in a foreign language or second language classroom are more likely to suffer from speaking anxiety because they feel that they have little control over the communicative situation and are aware that their performance is being scrutinized, according to a literature review (Horwitz et al., 1986). Second or foreign-language learners may exhibit nonverbal behaviors like blushing and palm scratching to cope with the anxiety of speaking in a new language (Hashemi et al., 2013). Learning a second or foreign language might be intimidating for those who suffer from speaking anxiety (Alrabai, 2014; Basic, 2011; & Hashemi et al., 2013). Teachers and students may find advice in the literature on coping with language anxiety instead of avoiding it. Anxieties caused by the learner's personality can be treated in a support group or supplementary teaching. Pair and group work can be used to address classroom processes. Language problem-solving games and role-playing exercises can be used to introduce new terminology.

Second/Foreign Language Anxiety

A second/foreign language is a language that is not native to the speaker, and anxiety is a phrase that describes a person's fear of new language learning. (Hashemi et al., 2013). Anxiety and second/foreign language acquisition have been increasing scholarly attention in recent decades. It has been suggested by Lamendella (1977) that worry, because of its subjective or emotional character, may affect human endeavors such as communication. Consequently, anxiety disorders such as trait, state, and situational anxiety are often considered significant to the study of languages (Batiha et al., 2014). Combining these factors enables us to better understand the link between anxiety and learners, a specific learning activity, and its environment in the context of learning a second language (L2).

Horwitz et al., (1986) study on LLA is one of the most significant in the field. For students who suffer from Foreign Language Learning Anxiety (FLLA), one of the most important studies of its type has shown that they experience their self-perceptions and beliefs due to the distinctiveness of learning the language. Due to this, the scholars interpreted the occurrences as three interrelated performance anxieties: fear of communicating, anxiety about tests, and fear of a bad assessment. Creating the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was one of their most significant accomplishments (FLCAS). Anxiety responses in foreign language courses have been measured using this

self-report technique in various FLA research. These research findings showed that language anxiety might be crippling in multiple settings, including second- and foreign-language classes.

FLCAS Components of Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) listed three factors as the primary causes of anxiety in speaking a second or foreign language. These fears include apprehension in communication, the anxiety of speaking tests, and the dread of a poor evaluation. According to these researchers, Campbell et al. (1991), Bailey et al. (1999), and Aida (1994), this research is regarded as one of the most reliable and unambiguous in the field of psycholinguistics. Further, this research was advanced by Zhao in 2007 by adapting this scale and adding another variable of anxiety in English language class.

Communication Apprehension

It is an emotion of unease experienced by a person while conversing orally with another person (Horwitz et al., 1986). Communication apprehension is defined by Daly et al. (1997) as "people's readiness to engage or resist social contact." Shyness (Daly et al., 1997), reluctance (Tsui, 1996), and social phobia (Schlenker et al., 1985) are among the terms that are used to describe it. The "presence of communication anxiety" is a problem or difficulty that students encounter when speaking with peers, classmates, or in a group, whether inside or outside the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Speaking Test Anxiety

Test speaking anxiety was identified as a component of EFL/ESL speaking anxiety by Horwitz et al. (1986), who defined it as "a sort of anxiety originating from a sense of failing." By inventing a Test Anxiety Questionnaire comprising 37 items, Mandler and Sarason, 1952, pioneered the idea of test anxiety (TAQ). The researchers wanted to see how summative and distressing examination conditions affected pupils before and during exams. The common criterion for scoring in a higher level of second/foreign language learning lesson is offering tests to the participants. It is where students with significant test anxiety will have a lot of trouble. Young (1990) includes questions about second/foreign language speaking anxiety in the questionnaire, such as "I feel I could speak the second/foreign language fairly well, but I mess up when I realize that I'm being evaluated."

Fear of Negative Assessment

Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) is the third component of FLA, according to Horwitz et al. (1986). Watson and Friend (1969), "Nervousness of other's judgments, anxiety over their negative assessments, avoidance of assessing circumstances, and the assumption that someone else would behave in a particular way negatively." In the context of Pakistan, it is one of the most important aspects. This dread of being judged negatively could be applied to various situations, including speaking in public, job applications, and so on (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Anxiety of Speaking in English LANGUAGE classes

It is an anxiety or fear of attending English language speaking classes due to the over-consciousness of learning the language (Zhao, 2007). It happens when the students are supposed to speak in the English language classes in front of other students, and they feel anxious and confused while speaking a second language, which creates chaos within them. They feel worried about speaking in classes.

Previous Studies

The empirical studies are discussed in the following paragraphs, which are conducted in the context of online teaching & learning in different corners of the world:

Zhao (2007) investigated students' anxieties about speaking the English language. The information was gathered from 115 Chinese students using an adaption of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale survey questionnaire. The strategy used was entirely quantitative. The findings showed that students did, in fact, experience relatively significant levels of anxiety when learning English. Males are more anxious than females about taking English classes. Batiha et al (2016) set out to determine the causes of EFL speaking anxiety in the Jordanian setting, taking into account any gender-specific variations. At Jadara University, the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) was given to 112 first-year students. The quantitative approach was utilised by the researcher to gather and examine data. According to the findings, four primary factors—Fear of Negative Assessment, Lack of Preparedness, Fear of Being in Public and Shyness, and General Speaking Class Anxiety—are to blame for learners' speaking anxiety. There were no significant gender differences in the FL-speaking anxiety variables.

Toubet et al (2017) aimed to overview foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) theory. A good number of studies were included to find the collective reasons for speaking

anxiety among the students. The approach used in this study was qualitative because of the nature of the study. The results showed that one major factor that creates anxiety among students besides the FLCA components is the lack of interest in acquiring/learning the English language. Ahmed et al (2018) sought to identify the elements that contribute to postgraduate students at Pakistan's University of Balochistan (UoB) having nervousness when speaking in the English language. The study also sought to identify any statistically significant gender differences. A questionnaire with 33 items was created using the quantitative research design and was derived from a study by Horwitz et al (1986). The results showed that a variety of elements in the EFL classroom were causing anxiety among UOB students. The t-test findings revealed no statistically significant gender difference. It was a completely quantitative study.

Research Methodology

It was an explanatory research work in which the method of inquiry was mainly quantitative. It is because variables are simultaneously examined, and their impact on the English-speaking anxiety of ESL students is also studied. The quantitative method is more useful for analyzing the reliability of the collected data through reliability tests. Additionally, the researcher examined the students' level of English speaking anxiety using descriptive statistical analysis, which determines the variables' importance in the study. The overall design of this research follows a survey method.

The BS-I and BS-II undergraduate students of a public university in Sindh from five faculties of social sciences, including Political Science, International Relations, Islamic Studies, Media Studies, and Pakistan Studies, were the target population for this study. A total of 323 students were enrolled in all five departments of BS-I and BS-II Functional English classes. Their ages ranged from 17 to 21 years, out of which 261 students participated in the main study, and the remaining students didn't participate due to being absent. The data was collected using the random sampling method. The study's participants were chosen using a simple random selection method. Every instance of the population has an equal chance of being included in the model according to the simple random sampling (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005).

The only reliable data collection tool was used in this investigation. The Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS) was modified in this study. Horwitz et al.

created the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) in 1986. Zhao then modified it in 2007 by adding one more variable, Anxiety in English Language Classrooms, to the three domains that Horwitz et al. had already established: Communication Apprehension, Speaking Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the SLSAS had previously not been used in rural Sindh, and this was the first attempt to use the SLSAS. Because English is the nation's official language, it was appropriate for the situation, hence; it is also used as the medium of communication and academic text in schools, colleges, and universities. The instrument was inspected to check its relevance and suitability in the context of rural Sindh, Pakistan.

Formal permission was sought from the concerned heads of the departments regarding data collection for the current study. The class teachers were requested to allocate one period of English on the allotted date and timings for administering the questionnaires. A total of 261 students, including 211 males and 50 females students, were selected for the sample of this study. The students responded to 33 items of the Second Language speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS), comprising five options, starting from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The data were thoroughly reviewed before analyzing to ensure no unanswered or missing questions. For analysis, the data were entered into SPSS 25. The descriptive statistics and T-test analysis were carried out to process the entered data to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

The ESL university students from the social sciences departments of Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur responded to the survey questionnaire. The total number of participants was 261, varying in gender, male=211, and female=50. The ESL students provided their demographic detail in the study, where BS-I & BS-II students were 133 and 128. The students were comprised of the different social sciences departments varying in numbers (Political Science=48, International Relations=59, Islamic Studies=43, Media Studies=46, and Pakistan Studies=65). ESL students provided their demographic details in the study; their characteristics are in Table 1.1.

The demographic details of the ESL university students who participated in the survey questionnaire are given in the table appended below:

Table 1.1 Demographic details of study

Participants Characteristics		N	%
Gender	Male	211	80.8
	Female	50	19.2
	Political	48	18.4
	Science		
	International	59	22.6
Department / Institute	Relations		
	Islamic	43	16.5
	Studies		
	Media Studies	46	17.6
	Pakistan	65	24.9
Class	Studies		
	BS-I	133	51.0
	BS-II	128	49.0

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Communication Apprehension

Table 1.2 shows that 60% of students (strongly agree = 52, agree = 105) believed that they are not fully confident speaking English English in class, and 54% (strongly agree = 46, agree = 95) think that speaking English without preparation makes them feel anxious, with means of 2.47 and 2.64, respectively. 57% (strongly agree = 49, agree = 100) of students have reported feeling nervous speaking English with native speakers, and 59% (strongly agree = 46, agree = 108) do not feel comfortable speaking English with them.

72% of students (strongly agree = 101, agree = 87) reported that they did not feel comfortable speaking English in classes where the mean was 2.06, and 52% (strongly agree = 34, agree = 101) reported that they felt extremely self-conscious speaking English with other students where the mean was 2.61. However, 28% of students reported being unsure of their feelings when communicating with other students. 34% (strongly agree = 26, agree = 62) of students get nervous & confused when suddenly speaking the English language in classrooms. However, 51% (disagree = 87, strongly disagree = 45) of students have

reported that they don't feel nervous and confused speaking the English language in classrooms. However, 15% of students are still unsure about their feelings, with a mean of 3.24. Moreover, 50% (strongly agree = 39, agree = 91) have reported that they get nervous about not understanding every word of the English language from the teacher, and 20% have said that they are unsure about their feeling about having a mean of 2.74.

Table 1.2 Communication Apprehension

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English language class.	52	105	54	29	21	2.47	1.16
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.	46	95	51	44	25	2.64	1.22
I feel nervous speaking the English language with native speakers.	49	100	49	47	16	2.54	1.16
I do not feel confident when I speak in English language class.	101	87	38	27	8	2.06	1.10
I feel very self-	34	101	73	37	16	2.61	1.07

conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.								
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English language class.	26	62	41	87	45	3.24	1.27	
I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English language teacher says.	39	91	51	57	23	2.74	1.21	
I do not feel comfortable around native speakers of the English language.	46	108	51	41	15	2.50	1.12	

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

English Speaking Test Anxiety

As can be seen in table 1.3, 59% (strongly agree = 57, agree = 98) of students have reported that they do worry about making mistakes in English language classes, and 24% (disagree = 49, strongly disagree = 13) have negatively reported it, having mean of 2.47. However, 70% (strongly agree = 70, agree = 113) of students do not feel at ease during English

language tests in classes, with a mean of 2.16. Moreover, 52% (strongly agree = 38, agree = 97) of students worry about failing in English language classes, although 21% have reported it neutrally, having a mean of 2.67.

Additionally, 50% (strongly agree = 38, agree = 93) of students have agreed that they are afraid of correcting every mistake by the teacher they make while speaking the English language in class. However, 36% (disagree = 67, strongly disagree = 27) have reported a negative mean of 2.82. Furthermore, 41% (strongly agree = 35, agree = 71) of students get more confused when they extensively study English language tests, and 46% (disagree = 73, strongly disagree = 47) of students do not feel such a way while studying more about the English language test, having mean of .10.

Table 1.3 English Speaking Anxiety

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
I do worry about making mistakes in speaking English language class.	57	98	44	49	13	2.47	1.17
I am usually not at ease during my speaking tests in English language class.	70	113	49	23	6	2.16	.995
I worry about the consequences of failing my English language	38	97	55	54	17	2.67	1.15

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speaking class.

I am afraid that

93

36

67

27

2.82

1.26

my English

language

teacher is ready 38

to correct every

mistake I make

in speaking.

The more I

71

35

73

47

3.10

1.34

study for the

English

language 35

speaking test,

the more

confused I get.

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Anxiety of English Speaking Classes

Table 1.4 shows that 63% of students reported that it bothered them to take extra English language classes (strongly agree = 64, agree = 101). 60% of them (strongly agree = 57, agree = 100) understand those who become irritated when speaking English in classrooms. It is reported by 64% (strongly agree = 60, agree = 107) of students that they feel pressure to prepare well for English language classes. 75% (strongly agree = 93, agree = 104) of them do not feel relaxed and easy going into English language classes. Additionally, 50% (strongly agree = 40, agree = 90) of them thought they were confused about learning the rules of speaking English, and 29% were unsure about their feelings regarding this.

46% (disagree = 86, strongly disagree = 35) of students disagreed that they did not get frightened of not understanding what the teacher was saying in English, and 39% (strongly agree = 26, agree = 76) had reported it positively. The mediocre response was received on statements that they think about those things that have nothing to do with speaking class of English language. They got so nervous in English-speaking classes that they forgot what they already knew.

51% (strongly agree = 35, agree = 98) of students reported that they still feel anxious about English speaking class even after being well prepared and 19% of them neutrally responded to it. 52% (disagree = 76, strongly disagree = 61) responded that they do not feel difficulty attending English speaking classes, and 57% ((disagree = 93, strongly disagree = 57) of them feel tense and nervous in English speaking classes.

Table 1.4 English Speaking Anxiety

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English.	26	76	38	86	35	3.11	1.24
It bothers me at all to take more	64	101	44	40	12	2.37	1.14

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English language speaking classes.							
During English language speaking class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.							
I understand why people get so upset over	35	71	50	78	27	2.96	1.23
English language speaking classes.							
I can get so nervous in English language speaking class that I forget things I know.							
Even if I am well prepared for English language speaking class, I feel anxious about it.	57	100	61	34	9	2.38	1.07
English language speaking classes.							
I can get so nervous in English language speaking class that I forget things I know.	36	69	46	76	34	3.01	1.28
Even if I am well prepared for English language speaking class, I feel anxious about it.							
I often feel like not going to my English language speaking class.	35	98	49	55	24	2.75	1.20
I often feel like not going to my English language speaking class.	23	59	42	76	61	3.35	1.28

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I feel pressure to prepare well for English language speaking class.	60	107	40	41	13	2.39	1.15
I feel more tense and nervous in my English language speaking class than in my other classes.	21	54	36	93	57	3.42	1.26
When I am on my way to an English language speaking class, I do not feel very sure and relaxed.	93	104	40	17	7	2.01	1.01
I feel confused by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	40	90	75	44	12	2.61	1.08

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Table 1.5 shows that 40% of students (strongly agree = 28, agree = 77) said they tremble when they know they would be called up to speak in English, whereas 38% (disagree = 60, strongly disagree = 38) expressed the opposite. Meanwhile, 22% of students were unsure about their feelings, with a mean of 3.01. Moreover, 44% (strongly agree = 34, agree = 81) of students felt their heart pounding when they were supposed to call on stage to speak English in the classroom, and 22% of students reported it neutrally, with a mean of 2.89. 51% (strongly agree = 37, agree = 96) of students have reported that they kept thinking other students are better at the English language, having a mean of 2.7. 46% (strongly agree

= 35, agree = 86) of students felt that other students are better at speaking the English language having a mean of 2.79, whereas 30% and 33% of students reported it negatively.

Additionally, 41% (strongly agree = 21, agree = 85) positively reported that they felt embarrassed in volunteering answers in English language classes, and 31% negatively reported it having a mean of 2.88. 45% (strongly agree = 26, agree = 92) have agreed that they worry about getting left behind as the English class moves quickly, and 37% (disagree = 74, strongly disagree = 23) disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, 46% (strongly agree = 27, agree = 92) of students have reported getting upset when the teacher corrects them, and 32% (disagree = 62, strongly disagree = 22) have reported it negatively. However, 22% were still unsure about their feelings towards this statement.

In addition, 50% (strongly agree = 41, agree = 90) reported that they get nervous about the randomly asked questions by the teacher in the class, and only 19% were unsure about it. Moreover, 46% (disagree = 74, strongly disagree = 47) had reported that they were not afraid of other students' laughing at them when they speak English, and 15% were unsure about their verdict on the statement.

Table 1.5 Fear of Negative Evaluation

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
I tremble (Shaking without control) when I know I will be called on in English language class. I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking	28	77	58	60	38	3.01	1.24
	37	96	50	53	25	2.7	1.21

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English than me.

It embarrasses

me to volunteer

answers in my

English

language

speaking class.

I get upset when

I do not

understand what

the teacher is

correcting.

I can feel my

heart pounding

when I'm going

to be called on in

English

language

speaking class.

I always feel that

the other

students speak

the English

language better

than I do.

English

language class

moves so quickly

that I worry

about getting

left behind.

21

85

73

68

14

2.88

1.05

27

92

58

62

22

2.84

1.15

34

81

55

61

30

2.89

1.23

35

86

55

69

16

2.79

1.15

26

92

46

74

23

2.91

1.18

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I am afraid that

the other

students will

laugh at me 41 61 38 74 47 3.09 1.36

when I speak the

English

language.

I get nervous

when the

English

language

teacher asks 41 90 49 54 27 2.75 1.24

questions that I

have not

prepared in

advance.

Descriptive Statistics

In table 1.6, it can be seen that most students agreed with the statements in communication apprehension and test anxiety (mean = 2.60 & 2.64). However, the students reported mediocre anxiety about English classroom speaking and fear of negative evaluation (mean = 2.76 & 2.88). Still, English classroom speaking anxiety was statistically more significant, with a 0.48 standard deviation among the following.

Table 1.6 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	261	1.00	4.00	2.6034	.50426
Test Anxiety	261	1.00	4.40	2.6460	.59098
English Classroom Speaking Anxiety	261	1.00	3.82	2.7607	.48430
Fear of Negative Evaluation	261	1.00	4.78	2.8804	.68986

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Gender Difference

It can be viewed in tables 1.7 & 1.8 that there is a difference in responses received from male & female students in communication apprehension and test anxiety. Most male students agreed with the statements of communication apprehension and test anxiety (mean = 2.57 & 2.60), but most female students moderately agreed with them (mean = 2.71 & 2.80). However, a significant number of male and female students moderately agreed with the statements of the English classroom speaking anxiety (mean = 2.73M & 2.86F) and fear of negative evaluation (mean = 2.90M & 2.79F). Yet, the standard deviation was found statistically significant in English classroom speaking anxiety in both genders' responses (sd = 0.48 & 0.46).

Table 1.7.1 Gender Difference (Male)

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	211	1.00	4.00	2.5782	.48852

Test Anxiety	211	1.00	4.40	2.6095	.58871
English Classroom Anxiety	211	1.00	3.82	2.7350	.48651
Fear of Negative Evaluation	211	1.00	4.44	2.9015	.66097

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Table 1.7.2 Gender Difference (Female)

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	50	1.00	3.88	2.7100	.55870
Test Anxiety	50	1.00	4.20	2.8000	.58134
English Classroom Anxiety	50	1.00	3.73	2.8691	.46397
Fear of Negative Evaluation	50	1.00	4.78	2.7911	.80175

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Descriptive Statistics of difference in Social Sciences Departments

It can be seen in the tables of differences in responses of students of different departments that there is only the Political Science department whose students reported moderately agreed to the statements of communication apprehension (mean = 2.79) and speaking test anxiety (2.75). However, most of the other four departments' students agreed with the statements of it. Moreover, no significant difference was found in all five departments in the English classroom responses: speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Table 1.8.1 Descriptive statistics of Political Science

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	48	2.00	4.00	2.7943	.40892
Test Anxiety	48	1.20	4.00	2.7500	.62908
English Classroom Anxiety	48	1.82	3.82	2.8580	.44374
Fear of Negative Evaluation	48	1.67	4.44	3.0972	.70296

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Table 1.8.2 Descriptive statistics of International Relations

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	59	1.38	3.50	2.5169	.47255

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Test Anxiety	59	1.20	4.40	2.6169	.58284
English Classroom Anxiety	59	1.91	3.82	2.7149	.51300
Fear of Negative Evaluation	59	1.44	4.44	2.7439	.66930

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Table 1.8.3 Descriptive statistics of Islamic Studies

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	43	1.00	3.88	2.5669	.67057
Test Anxiety	43	1.00	4.20	2.5953	.63619
English Classroom Anxiety	43	1.00	3.73	2.7526	.57746
Fear of Negative Evaluation	43	1.00	4.44	2.8165	.75783

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Table 1.8.4 Descriptive statistics of Media Studies

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	46	1.63	3.25	2.5489	.36274
Test Anxiety	46	1.80	3.60	2.5478	.45301
English Classroom Anxiety	46	1.82	3.64	2.8103	.41674
Fear of Negative Evaluation	46	1.78	4.22	2.9807	.70596

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Table 1.8.5 Descriptive statistics of Pakistan Studies

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Communication Apprehension	65	1.00	3.88	2.6038	.53197
Test Anxiety	65	1.00	4.40	2.6985	.62462
English Classroom Anxiety	65	1.00	3.73	2.7007	.46291
Fear of Negative Evaluation	65	1.00	4.78	2.8154	.60867

Source: Table comprised as per primary data collected.

Discussion & Conclusion

Discussion

The collected data from 261 ESL university students through survey questionnaires and analyzed with the help of the descriptive statistical analysis technique. The key findings carried out in this study are discussed below:

RQ1: Level of English Speaking Anxiety among the ESL Students

Researchers conducted a descriptive analysis to learn more about ESL university learners' anxiety about speaking English 60% of students said they were confident in their ability to speak English in class, compared to 54% who panic when speaking in front of others without preparation. 57% feel uneasy when speaking to native English speakers. 59% do not feel comfortable speaking English, and 72% do not feel confident speaking English in class. Role-playing on the spot in class, speaking publicly in front of the group, performing plays or oral presentations, delivering an unprepared conversation, and trying to write on the boards provoke anxiety among the students (Ferdous, 2012). Since they were anxious about making grammatical mistakes, language learners experienced anxiety when speaking with their second language teachers. Many second language learners have anxiety about learning and generating second language conversation (Young, 1991; MacIntyre, 1995; Aida, 1994). Instructors should assist and encourage these students to participate in classroom engagements without worrying about making grammatical mistakes to support students overcome this type of anxiety (Woodrow, 2006). The above results indicate a moderately high percentage of them have difficulty communicating apprehension.

The 59% of students have reported that they worry about making mistakes in English speaking tests, 70% do not feel at ease when speaking the English language to the students, and 52% worry about failing the English speaking test. Mak (2009) discovered that it was proven to be anxiety-inducing for learners to have their speaking errors rectified by classmates or teachers. The responses also reveal that 72% of students are concerned about making errors during English speaking tests.

The students also encountered fear of negative evaluation by the teachers and peers, and they also felt the anxiety of self-correctness by others. However, the learners' responses were mediocre in this domain of the study; few were still concerned with anxiety among ESL learners. Mak (2011) states that many students of the second language suffer from anxiety due to their concern of receiving a negative evaluation. Teachers can overcome their anxiety by providing them with an interactive learning environment.

It is crucial to understand the anxiety students feel in English language classes where mediocre responses are received from the learners. However, the learners responded the moderately high statements, accumulatively, the modest response received from their end. 75% of learners do not feel it easy going to English classes, 63% of them feel that English classes bother them, and 60% of them understand the people who get upset over English language classes. The learners and authorities need to take some necessary measures to create interest in students in English language learning by making learning the language a thrilling job for the students.

RQ2: Gender-Based Difference in the Responses of English Speaking Anxiety among ESL Students

The study's results showed gender differences among undergraduate students at a public university in Khairpur in the outcomes of its two variables, communication apprehension and speaking test anxiety, which helped to address the second question of the research. The male students responded moderately high to the statements of the two above variables, which show that they felt more anxiety in communication apprehension and speaking test anxiety. Female students provided mediocre responses, indicating that they felt less anxiety in relation to these two variables compared with male students of the same departments. However, in the other two variables, fear of negative evaluation and anxiety about English language classes were the same in both genders. A mediocre response was received from both genders, male and female, on these two variables' statements. This finding is consistent with previous research findings (Chiang, 2012). Since both genders, male and female students at Khairpur's public university, share a similar social and educational background, both genders struggled with anxiety related to speaking English. Although, the difference found in the earlier two variables was evident in the less anxiety felt by female students in communication apprehension and speaking test anxiety.

RQ3: Difference in English Speaking Anxiety among the Students of Different Departments

The difference in English-speaking anxiety among the five different social sciences departments at a public university in Khairpur was not significantly different. The only Political Science department students responded moderately high to the statements of communication apprehension and speaking test anxiety. However, all other departments

responded no differently to each other, as they have the same social and educational background. Yet, it was prominent to know that they all feel anxiety concerning all four variables; communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, speaking test anxiety, and anxiety of English language classes. It is a need of an hour for authorities to improve students speaking skills and provide them an environment where they can feel ease in speaking English because anxiety is the reason which lessens their performance in speaking the English language.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine Pakistani ESL university undergraduate students' speaking anxiety at a public university in Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan, in terms to know the level of ESL speaking anxiety, the difference in responses of both male and female genders, and all five different social sciences departments.

The descriptive analysis revealed that students typically experience communication anxiety as they answered nearly all statements with relatively high responses, except where 51% of them did not experience anxiety when speaking English in class. They share a similar level of moderately high anxiety when attempting or preparing for an English-speaking test, only that they are more perplexed about it. While the study's findings indicated that students have a moderate concern for their peers' opinions of them, they do feel some anxiety about this. Additionally, the students did experience some anxiety about their English language classes, where they worried about going to class, participating in discussions, and not comprehending every word the teacher said in the class.

According to research, male and female students responded differently to communication and speaking test anxiety. Male students were more likely than female students to agree with the statements on communication apprehension and speaking test anxiety. However, the comments involving speaking anxiety in English class and fear of receiving a poor evaluation were moderately supported by a sizable portion of both male and female students.

Except for the political science department, where only a modest minority of students expressed agreement, most of the other four departments agreed with the statements regarding communication anxiety and speaking test anxiety. Furthermore, there was no substantial difference between the five departments' responses regarding

speaking anxiety and fear of receiving a poor evaluation in English-speaking classes. The ESL teachers and authorities are required to create an environment for ESL learners where they speak the language easily and without anxiety. It is only possible by creating a second language learning laboratory where students may collectively practice speaking the English language regularly. They may be guided individually, not corrected, and evaluated in front of all other fellows. They may be motivated and appreciated for trying to speak the English language, not bullied over their mistakes.

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