

## SPEAKING ANXIETY OF THE ELEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Khalisy<sup>1</sup>, Shynta Amalia<sup>2</sup>, Rizqy Dwi Amrina<sup>3</sup>  
Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang<sup>1,2,3</sup>  
khalisy<sup>26</sup>@gmail.com, shynta\_amalia\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id,  
Rizqydwiamrina\_uin@radenfatah.ac.id

**ABSTRACT:** Anxiety related to speaking can also impair students' communication skills; students who have poorly understood pronunciation feel ashamed and are unwilling to practice speaking. This research was conducted to determine the categories of anxiety of the speaking anxiety level by the eleventh-grade students in the English classroom of SMAN 19 Palembang. This descriptive research used a quantitative descriptive method. The research instrument was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire (FLSAQ) from Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014). This research involved 76 students of eleventh grade in the English classroom of SMAN 19 Palembang. It consisted of 17 statements with three categories: high level, medium level, and low level. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive analysis. Based on the research analysis, it was found that the dominant speaking anxiety was test anxiety. The types faced by the respondents were the fear of test anxiety (75.62%), communication apprehension (73%), and fear of negative evaluation (70.04%). Furthermore, from the questionnaire result, the anxiety level category was determined to be 3 categories: high level, medium level, and low level. The level of students' speaking anxiety in the middle level was 56.6%. It is significantly different from other levels with 32.9% for the low level and 10.5% for the high level. This finding indicated that teachers need to be more aware of students' anxiety to arouse students' motivation to speak confidently and fluently in English-speaking classes. Therefore, teachers must be creative in designing better techniques to encourage students to talk more.

**Keywords:** *anxiety, speaking, level*

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## KECEMASAN BERBICARA PADA SISWA KELAS 10 SMA

**ABSTRAK:** Berbicara adalah sarana untuk menciptakan dan membangun informasi serta mengekspresikan pikiran dan perasaan kepada orang lain. Namun, sulit bagi para pelajar bahasa asing untuk berlatih berbicara dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui kategori kecemasan berbicara pada siswa kelas XI dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMAN 19 Palembang. Penelitian deskriptif ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kuantitatif. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuesioner. Kuesioner tersebut diadaptasi dari Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire (FLSAQ) dari Öztürk dan Gürbüz. Penelitian ini melibatkan 76 siswa kelas XI dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris di SMAN 19 Palembang. Kuesioner terdiri dari 17 pernyataan yang terbagi dalam tiga kategori, yaitu kecemasan berbicara dalam komunikasi, berdasarkan analisis penelitian, ditemukan bahwa jenis kecemasan berbicara yang dominan adalah kecemasan menghadapi ujian. Jenis kecemasan yang dialami oleh responden adalah kecemasan menghadapi ujian (75,62%), kecemasan dalam komunikasi (73%), dan ketakutan terhadap penilaian negatif (70,04%). Selain itu, dari hasil kuesioner, kategori tingkat kecemasan dibagi menjadi 3 kategori, yaitu tingkat kecemasan tinggi, sedang, dan rendah. Tingkat kecemasan berbicara siswa berada pada kategori tingkat sedang

dengan persentase sebesar 56,6%. Hal ini secara signifikan berbeda dengan kategori lainnya yang menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan rendah sebesar 32,9% dan tingkat kecemasan tinggi sebesar 10,5%.

**Kata Kunci:** *kecemasan, berbicara, tingkat*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the skills that students who are studying English should master is speaking. According to Kalanzadeh et al (2013), Speaking allows individuals to express knowledge and thoughts while maintaining social interactions. Peterson (2019) stated that one of the language abilities that needs social engagement is speaking. As a result, speaking is defined as saying words, talking, saying or mentioning something, knowing and being able to utilize the language. Speaking is important not just for connection and for expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas in language, but also for exchanging information with others through communication.

In speaking, several problems influence the speaking activities to be unsuccessful. Wulandari et al (2022) stated that many learners lack the desire to practice speaking. Then, one of the issues learners have is a lack of vocabulary. However, affective issues cover most of the causes of the hurdles mentioned above. Audina et al (2021) also state that there are several issues with speaking practice that can hinder successful communication. In terms of emotional aspects, the psychological issues that typically hinder students' speaking ability include anxiety, shyness, lack of confidence, lack of enthusiasm, and fear of making mistakes. Meanwhile, in terms of linguistics aspects, linguistic proficiency comprises grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Also, speakers' topical knowledge refers to their familiarity with pertinent topical material. According to Tuan and Mai (2015), affective issues also include feeling anxious, low self-confidence, and having low motivation.

Speaking anxiety is one of the affective issues that frequently occur during speaking. Students' anxiety is one thing that is often neglected by English teachers. According to Fauzi et al (2021), anxiety is a very important psychological factor in learning outcomes. Woodrow (2006) states that Anxiety about speaking a foreign language affects students' academic goals and can be fatal when it prevents them from adjusting to their target environment and speaking English. Speaking anxiety can also hinder students' ability to communicate as well, pronunciation that is poorly understood makes students embarrassed and makes them reluctant to engage in speaking practice making them anxious.

The emergence of a feeling of anxiety because they must be aware of the circumstance that may indicate the possibility of stress is a natural occurrence. Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014) defined anxiety as a condition of mental distress in which a sense of potential threat is felt, and in which the victim exhibits anxiousness and powerlessness consequently. Also, Zakaria and Hasan (2015) state that anxiety is a sensation that does not seem pleasant, like being worried about something. However, if this has gone beyond the excessive limit over time, then this needs to be watched out for.

The level of anxiety can affect students' speaking abilities. According to Sikandar et al (2019) study, 75% of students feel that public anxiety is mostly brought on by a fear of speaking in front of others, regardless of whether they have this fear of speaking. For example, they were more likely to forget their speech and rearrange their preparation, get confused, frequently pause, and feel uneasy speaking in English. It shows that most students struggle with significant levels of public speaking anxiety.

The preliminary study was conducted by observing an English classroom and interviewing some students of SMA Negeri 19 Palembang. The writers found that that when students speak in front of the class the students were completely speechless when asked to present their assignments in class. Then they are allowed to look at their

notes but they still stammer in speech and mention a lot of the words "uhh", "eum" "euu" which can cause delays talk and always look away from her friends and teacher and the writer also saw them feeling excessive sweating and their hands got trembled. Based on the phenomenon that happened in that school, the writer is interested in researching what is the level of students' anxiety in speaking.

Moreover, there are previous related studies that have been conducted to determine speaking anxiety. First, a study conducted by Tercan and Dikilitas (2015), found that students at the A1 competence level felt higher anxiety related to "error correction" than students at the A2 competency level, although there was no significant difference between students at other proficiency levels. Second, based on a study by Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) showed that 58% of the students in their study experienced low levels of anxiety. Third, Mitha et al (2018), in their study showed the result there were 4 low-level learners, and their average score was 68,75 points. Refers to Akkakoson and Songyut (2016), the result showed that most of the students in this survey have mild levels of anxiety about speaking English. The average mean score obtained is between 2.61 and 3.40, which corresponds to a medium level of anxiety. And last a study by Sugiyati and Indriyani (2021), showed that, 58.8% of students had moderate anxiety about public speaking. Overall, these studies indicate that although anxiety is common at all language proficiency levels, its severity varies, with lower-level students feeling more anxious about making mistakes and speaking in general. Furthermore, most of the studies mentioned focused on the students of higher education. Therefore, this study would like to focus more on senior highschool students. Based on the background of the study above, this research aimed to find out the speaking anxiety level of the eleventh-grade students at SMAN 19 Palembang.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### 1. Research Design

A quantitative descriptive method was used in this study to know the level of students' speaking anxiety. Descriptive research gathers information without modifying the setting or doing any other actions. According to Best and Kahn (2006), descriptive research also considers previous events that can be relevant to the current situation. The purpose of this study was to know the categories of anxiety of the speaking anxiety level by the eleventh-grade students in the English classroom of SMAN 19 Palembang.

### 2. Population and Sample

The population was the eleventh-grade students consisting of 450 of SMA N 19 Palembang. The sampling technique used by researchers in this research was cluster sampling. It is a sampling approach where the chosen sample consists of a cluster of individuals naturally grouped, as opposed to selecting individual participants. The sample consists of 76 students.

### 3. Instruments

The researchers gave students a questionnaire to measure their levels of anxiety to identify respondents. The researchers adapted 18 items from the questionnaire from Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014). This questionnaire originated from Horwitz & Cope (1986). The researchers adapted the questionnaire by changing a few sentences and then translating it into Indonesian, therefore the respondents are easy to understand. The

questionnaire measured three indicators of speaking anxiety, including their fears of communication, test anxiety, and poor evaluation. The researchers tried out the questionnaire to students at SMA Negeri 4 Palembang. 17 questionnaire items proved to be valid. The range of the students' anxiety scores is 33 to 165. Beginning with very anxious, anxious, middle anxious, relaxed, and very relaxed. The range of the students' anxiety scores is 17 to 85. Beginning with high Anxiety, Medium Anxiety, and Low anxiety. After that, the data underwent two stages of analysis.

#### 4. Data Analysis

To respond to the questionnaire items, data analysis is required. It comprises the quantity of speaking anxiety experienced by learners in speaking classes. A questionnaire used to collect the data for this study was calculated using the calculated using descriptive analysis with Excel from Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) below:

*Table 1.* FLSAQ Scoring

| Negative Context Item | Scale             |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 5                     | Strongly Agree    |
| 4                     | Agree             |
| 3                     | Neutral           |
| 2                     | Disagree          |
| 1                     | Strongly Disagree |

As shown in the above table, if students respond to questions with a negative context by selecting "Strongly Agree," they get a score of 5; if they select "Agree," they received a score of 4, if they select "Neutral," they received a score of 3, if they select "Disagree," they received a score of 2, and if they select "Strongly Disagree," they received a score of 1. After adding together all the student responses to a single number, the degree of student anxiety is calculated by running the data through the level of anxiety scale. Following that, learners were separated into two groups: those with high anxiety levels and those with low anxiety levels.

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## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Findings

The result consisted of 76 students' responses with 17 statements about foreign languages speaking anxiety questionnaire (FLSAQ) from Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014) which were categorized into three parts of domain: test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation.

### 2. Anxiety Categories

The samples of this research were the eleventh-grade classes of XI-3 and XI-6 consisting of 76 students. Based on Horwitz et al (1986), it was analyzed into three types of speaking anxiety such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of

negative evaluation. The total score of the data was 53.05% for strongly agree and agree statements, while 22.57% for disagree and strongly disagree statements. First, for the communication apprehension it was found that the score was 73% which had 52.08% for strongly agree and agree statements, then 21.92% for disagree and strongly disagree statements. Second, the total score of test anxiety type was found 75.62% which had 53.05% for strongly agree and agree statements, and 22.57% for disagree and strongly disagree statements. Last, the type of fear of negative evaluation was found the score was 70,04% which had 52.95% for strongly agree and agree, and 17.09% for disagreeing and strongly disagreeing statements.

Table 2. The Data Distribution of the Students' Test Anxiety

| No    | Statement   | SA |       | A  |       | TOTAL |       | D  |       | SD |       | TOTAL |       |
|-------|---|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|
|       |   | F  | %     | F  | %     | F     | %     | F  | %     | F  | %     | F     | %     |
| 3     | In English classes, I become nervous when I know I'm going to be called upon.                 | 11 | 14,47 | 28 | 36,84 | 39    | 51,27 | 9  | 11,8  | 2  | 2,63  | 11    | 14,43 |
| 5     | When I have to speak in front of the class in English without any preparation, I get nervous. | 17 | 22,36 | 34 | 44,3  | 51    | 67,09 | 13 | 17,10 | 0  | 0     | 13    | 17,10 |
| 11    | Knowing that tomorrow I will be present in English class really ruins my sleep                | 12 | 15,78 | 13 | 17,10 | 25    | 32,88 | 28 | 36,84 | 15 | 19,73 | 43    | 56,57 |
| 14    | During a presentation in English class, I always forget what to say.                          | 12 | 15,78 | 26 | 34,21 | 38    | 49,99 | 5  | 6,57  | 3  | 3,94  | 8     | 10,51 |
| 15    | I'm concerned about what might happen if my English class presentation doesn't go well.       | 11 | 14,47 | 34 | 44,73 | 45    | 59,2  | 12 | 15,78 | 4  | 5,26  | 16    | 21,04 |
| 16    | I get nervous before presentations in English class even if I'm well-prepared                 | 10 | 13,15 | 34 | 44,73 | 44    | 57,88 | 10 | 13,15 | 2  | 2,63  | 12    | 15,78 |
| Total |   |    |       |    |       | 53.05 |       |    |       |    |       | 22.57 |       |

The investigation of the first component of speaking anxiety, namely test anxiety, is summarized in Table 2. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), test anxiety is an aspect of performance anxiety brought on by a fear of failing. The findings indicated that most learners struggled with test anxiety. Their responses to questions 3, 11, 14, and 15 revealed the cause of their anxiety. Item 5 had the highest score with 67.09%. Student

responses 5 and 16 show that regardless of whether they have prepared or not, they still experience anxiety when speaking in English. Responses from students for item 15 revealed that they were concerned about the repercussions or outcomes of failing after the presentation in English class. This indicates that even if they have practiced for it, students still experience nervousness because they lack confidence. The table indicates a trend of high anxiety levels among students in English classes, particularly around speaking situations, which could impact their performance and learning experience.

Table 3. The Data Distribution of the Students' Communication Apprehensions

| No    | Statement   | SA |       | A  |       | TOTAL |       | D  |       | SD |      | TOTAL |       |
|-------|---|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|----|------|-------|-------|
|       |   | F  | %     | F  | %     | F     | %     | F  | %     | F  | %    | F     | %     |
| 1     | I never feel completely confident when I speak English.                       | 7  | 9,21  | 28 | 36,84 | 35    | 46,05 | 14 | 18,42 | 2  | 2,63 | 16    | 21,05 |
| 4     | When I can't understand what the teacher is saying in English, I am afraid.   | 12 | 15,78 | 37 | 48,68 | 49    | 64,46 | 14 | 18,42 | 0  | 0    | 14    | 18,42 |
| 7     | Speaking English with native speakers makes me uneasy.                        | 15 | 19,73 | 36 | 47,36 | 51    | 67,09 | 4  | 5,26  | 2  | 2,63 | 6     | 7,89  |
| 8     | When I don't comprehend what the teacher is correcting, I become irate.       | 9  | 11,84 | 32 | 42,10 | 41    | 53,94 | 22 | 28,94 | 2  | 2,63 | 24    | 31,57 |
| 9     | In class, I don't feel comfortable speaking English.                          | 14 | 18,42 | 17 | 22,36 | 31    | 40,78 | 18 | 23,68 | 1  | 1,31 | 19    | 24,99 |
| 13    | When I talk in English in front of other students, I am really uncomfortable. | 5  | 6,57  | 21 | 27,63 | 26    | 34,2  | 20 | 26,31 | 1  | 1,31 | 21    | 27,62 |
| Total |   |    |       |    |       | 51,08 |       |    |       |    |      | 21,92 |       |

The findings for the second part of speaking anxiety, called Communication Apprehension, are presented in Table 3. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), communication worry is a form of awkwardness that presents as anxiety when someone interacts with people. The study findings indicate that when speaking in English, most students experience extreme nervousness and frightened

Table 4. The Data Distribution of the Students' Fear of Negative Evaluation

| No | Statement  | SA |       | A  |       | TOTAL |       | D  |       | SD |      | TOTAL |       |
|----|--|----|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|----|------|-------|-------|
|    |  | F  | %     | F  | %     | F     | %     | F  | %     | F  | %    | F     | %     |
| 12 | I worry that I'll make mistakes in my English lessons.           | 3  | 3,94  | 36 | 47,36 | 39    | 51,3  | 13 | 17,10 | 0  | 0    | 13    | 17,10 |
| 6  | In English classes, I feel awkward offering to answer questions. | 4  | 5,26  | 21 | 27,63 | 25    | 38,15 | 22 | 28,94 | 2  | 2,63 | 24    | 31,57 |
| 10 | I worry that my English teacher is                               | 10 | 13,15 | 28 | 36,84 | 38    | 49,99 | 12 | 15,78 | 2  | 2,63 | 14    | 18,41 |

|              |  |    |       |    |       |    |       |              |       |   |              |    |       |
|--------------|--|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|--------------|-------|---|--------------|----|-------|
| 12           | prepared to point out all my errors. I consistently believe that other learners speak English more fluently than I do. | 20 | 26,31 | 27 | 35,52 | 47 | 61,81 | 9            | 11,84 | 1 | 1,31         | 10 | 13,15 |
| 17           | I don't feel under any obligation to practice speaking English in class.   | 23 | 3,26  | 42 | 55,26 | 65 | 58,52 | 4            | 5,26  | 0 | 0            | 4  | 5,26  |
| <b>Total</b> |  |    |       |    |       |    |       | <b>51,95</b> |       |   | <b>17,09</b> |    |       |

Table 8 indicates the results of the third part of the speaking anxiety, which is the fear of negative evaluation. Horwitz et al (1986) define the fear of negative evaluation as the dread of other people's opinions or expectations of other persons negative evaluation of oneself. Because they consistently believe that other students speak English more fluently than they do, as shown by item number 12 the study's findings revealed that students experience anxiety when speaking English and are fearful of feedback from their teacher and other students. The data reflects considerable anxiety about speaking English in class, worrying about errors, and feeling less fluent than peers. This could impact students' willingness to participate, suggesting a need for supportive classroom environments that foster confidence and reduce anxiety.

### 3. The Result of the FLSAQ

The questionnaires obtained responses from 74 students, making up the total number of respondents.

*Table 5. Distribution of the Students' speaking Anxiety Levels*

| Level of Anxiety        | Frequency | Percentage    |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Low speaking anxiety    | 25        | 32.9%         |
| Medium speaking anxiety | 43        | 56.6%         |
| High speaking anxiety   | 8         | 10,5%         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>76</b> | <b>100.0%</b> |

After collecting the results of the student survey, the researchers categorized the levels of anxiety according to Oztürk & Gürbüz's (2014) level of anxiety. According to the questionnaire results, 25 students (32.9%) have low levels of anxiety, 43 (56.6%) have medium levels, and the last 8 (10.5%) have high levels. Low-speaking anxiety students indicated that they are unaffected by their anxiety level. They performed speaking with less stress, which resulted in good English performances. Then, students who had moderate levels of speaking anxiety show that they may fluctuate between being uneasy and nervous and being at ease and secure. When many people experience tension or anxiety before performing in front of others, particularly the teacher, it may be considered typical. Finally, it is common knowledge among students who were experiencing significant levels of speaking anxiety that they exhibited signs of anxiety



such as trembling, lack of eye contact, agitation, and confusion.

### 3. Discussion

This study aimed to determine the categories and the level of anxiety in speaking in English at the eleventh grade of SMAN 19 Palembang. Through the analysis of the data for three types, which are test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation. Test anxiety was shown to be the most common type experienced by students in the eleventh grade at SMAN 19 Palembang, with a percentage of 53,05%. The result of previous research by Gusnovita et al. (2018), the findings are anxiety of fifth-semester students of the Japanese Language Education Study Program Japanese, with the highest score of 1506, there is one type of anxiety that predominates which is test anxiety. Putri and Marlina (2019), Based on the data analysis of students speaking anxiety faced by the fourth-semester students in the English Education Program of the English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang delivering the questionnaire, It was shown that test anxiety was the most common form of difficulty students faced with a percentage 44%. They were so afraid of failing the speaking class's consequences that they were also afraid of other aspects of speaking anxiety. Communicative apprehension, with a proportion of 52,08%, came in second position for speaking anxiety. Mitha et al (2018) also examined the types of speaking anxiety of fourth-year students in the English Education Study Program, Department of English, State University of Padang showed speaking anxiety type in the second position was communicative apprehension with being percentage was 34%. Last, at a proportion of 51,95%, was fear of negative evaluation. Plantika and Adnan (2021) indicate the most dominant type faced by speaking class at Universitas Negeri Padang is the Fear of Negative Evaluation of the Mean score ( $M=171.95$ ). In comparison with the findings of Soim (2014) study, which investigated the anxiety experienced by male and female students learning English when learning a foreign language. According to the findings of his study, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation predominated among both male and female students after the speaking test in front of the class and completing the anxiety questionnaire. Test anxiety creates a fear of being evaluated negatively.

As seen by the FLSAQ results, 56.6% of students were found to have a medium level of anxiousness. Students who reported having a medium level of anxiety can be described as typical, meaning neither too high nor too low. This could say that they can speak normally. Students who have this level of anxiety do not consider their speaking fear to be terrifying. This result is in line with a study by Sugiyati and Indriyani (2021) which related that they also reported that most EFL students in English departments experience a medium level of anxiety with a score of 58.8%. Also supported by Meyriza (2023) reported that the highest level is medium level with a score of 65%. Students with a medium level of speaking anxiety indicated that they occasionally feel relaxed and confident while speaking in English, but occasionally they also feel pressure and insecure. Second, students with low levels of anxiety were found to be 32.9%. They experience less tension and occasionally speak English without any difficulty when their speaking anxiety is low. Students who were at a low level of speaking anxiety showed that they had high self-confidence. The unexpected finding in this study was that students with low levels of anxiety had an average score of 32.9%. The result of previous research by Öztürk and Gürbüz (2014), showed that students who experienced low levels of anxiety slightly higher, which is 58%. The knowledge that speaking English is a definite advantage in most situations in Turkey may be the cause of this low level of

speaking anxiety. As expected, students enthusiastically try to enhance their speaking skills in their language classes and consequently suffer low anxiety. In contrast to the findings of the earlier study by Mitha et al. (2018), only 9% of students reported having low levels of anxiety. Last, it was found that 10,5% of students had high levels of anxiety, which were characterized by excessive worry and a lack of confidence. They tended to have trouble managing and controlling the anxiety they experienced, such as worrying about getting corrected by the teacher for their mistakes in front of their friends, not feeling confident in speaking English, and a sense anxious when speaking English in front of other students. When compared to the results of earlier research by Pratiwi. (2023), which showed that most of the students are in a high level of anxiety with a score of 59.7%

## CONCLUSION

Through the distribution of questionnaires, the quantitative descriptive approach was used to recruit people to identify the categories and measure each participant's level of speaking anxiety. Based on the findings of the research, the researchers found the result of aspects of speaking anxiety. Some students were anxious about speaking English without preparation, students experienced extreme nervousness while speaking English with native speakers, and students felt insecure and frequently thought that other students spoke English more fluently than they did. Among the three types of speaking anxiety such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety was shown to be the most common type experienced by students.

Based on the findings of this research, the researchers found that the anxiety of speaking English of the eleventh-grade students' at SMAN 19 Palembang was classified medium level of anxiety. From a sample of 76 students, 43 students were at medium anxiety level, 25 students had at low anxiety level, and 8 students were at high anxiety level. Students who claimed to have a high level of speaking anxiety described feeling uneasy, insecure, and fearful when speaking in English. Then, students with a medium level of speaking anxiety indicate that sometimes they feel at ease and confident while speaking English, but other times they feel uneasy and insecure. Last, students who were at a low-level speaking of anxiety indicated they felt relaxed, confident, and calm when speaking English.

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