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Overcoming the Fear of Expression: English Speaking Anxiety among the Students of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad



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Abstract

The present research study has been conducted in 2025 amongst the students studying in the multilingual and multicultural environment, and in various disciplines of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad in order to investigate the prevalence, Levels of prevalence and main causes of English language anxiety in these students. For this purpose, mixed-method approach was adopted using surveys to collect numbers and patterns through questionnaires for quantitative analysis, and interviews to understand personal experiences for qualitative analysis of the data. Findings of the study show that many university students suffer from speaking English anxiety even after years of learning the language because of the factors like fear of being judged, weak vocabulary, and unsupportive classroom environments. The study concludes that reducing English speaking anxiety needs both emotional support and better teaching methods. Universities should use confidence-building exercises along with communicative teaching to create friendly classrooms where students can express themselves freely. This research offers useful ideas for teachers, curriculum planners, and policymakers to improve the English learning process in higher education.

Key words: English speaking anxiety (ESA), Multilingual and multicultural environment, Mixed method approach, Prevalence and Main causes of ESA.

1. Introduction

In the modern global world, it is a requirement to be good at speaking English as a prerequisite to succeed in our studies and career at some point in our lives. As English is a universal language, which is applied to education, business, science, and diplomacy, our university requires us to demonstrate good oratory abilities (Hanh, 2024). Even after years of studying English, many of us get jittery when using the language particularly in the presence of other people or during assessable activities such as classroom presentation, group discussions, or orals, even though we have mastered the language. This fear prevents us to talk with certainty and impacts our academic performance and future career in general. Not only is it a language barrier but also a complicated psychological, pedagogical, and sociocultural obstacle that will slow down our academic results, self-worth, and subsequent professional achievements (Saeed, 2024; and Abdullah 2024).

The incidence of ESA is impressive. According to the latest statistics in the world, it has been revealed that about 73-77% of the general population are more or less afraid or anxious about talking in front of people (Lindner, 2025), and we university students are particularly susceptible to this fear due to the stakes involved in academic communication. This anxiety can be expressed in a variety of symptoms, starting with sweating and heart rate and up to forgetfulness and negative self-talk (Pinson, 2024). The effects are extensive: we can skip the involvement, fail in exams, or even rethink academic and professional careers that presuppose the presence of good oral communication (Abdullah 2024).

This assignment is a thorough exploration of the problem of English speaking anxiety in university students, which integrates both the latest empirical studies of the topic (20202025) and theoretical

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Background. It examines the psychological, pedagogical, and sociocultural elements that lead to ESA, analyzes the measurement tools and the intervention plans, and suggests a powerful mixed-method research design to be applied in the future. The report is supposed to provide practical recommendations to the educators, policy makers and even us as students, which will eventually lead to inclusive and effective language learning environments.

2. Significance of the Study

The issues concerning the English-speaking anxiety (ESA) among the university students cannot be overestimated as it is a direct threat to our school performance and oral communication which is a part and parcel of the university program in every country. Examinations can take the form of presentations, group discussions, and viva voice; students with high levels of anxiety tend not to engage actively in the assessment; they tend to evade the opportunity to speak, and in most cases, they score lower in oral assessment. The study is also important since it presents specific knowledge and information regarding the process of overcoming the fear of expression, in particular, in English speaking anxiety among the students of Quaid i Azam University (QAU) Islamabad. It examines the causes and the factors influencing this linguistic phenomenon by giving information on the tendency of ESA in a multilingual environment of QAU. The findings can guide teachers, language experts, and policy makers on how ESA has impacted on our communication, socialization, and learning processes as university students. Furthermore, it is a broader area of sociolinguistics as it focuses on the various areas of interaction of language, society and education as well as the influence of ESA on such interactions. Besides the above, the study can inform the strategies that can be followed in the development of the curriculum, classroom instruction and the development of new language policies, which will help in mitigating the critical issues concerning ESA. Lastly, by diagnosing the underlying reasons behind ESA, educators and higher institutions will be in a position to offer more accommodating learning environments that will enable us to articulate ourselves with a lot of confidence in English.

3. Problem Statement

Although we study English over a long period, notwithstanding the fact that most of the universities, especially in Pakistan, use English as a medium in their teaching, several of us are always anxious about speaking English, although it is paramount to success in schooling and the workplace. The causes of this anxiety lie in various factors: psychological factors such as fear of being evaluated or not so confident, teaching strategies such as teacher-centered lessons with little real speaking opportunities, social or cultural factors such as gender roles, language, or social expectations. The situation has not been studied in terms of context-based research on the experiences and coping mechanisms of university students studying in multilingual settings, including Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, regarding English speaking anxiety. In addition, the available interventions tend to be theoretical and cannot offer any practical strategies which are applicable in actual classes. This study will solve this issue through research endeavors that will focus on the key reasons and causes of ESA among students at QAU Islamabad; effects of ESA on orientation and achievement of these students; and, the teaching and support strategies that will be effective in eliminating or minimizing ESA.

4. Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence and intensity of English speaking anxiety among the

students in a diverse lingual and multicultural environment of Quid-i-Azam University, Islamabad?

2. What are main causes and factors that contribute in the English speaking anxiety among the students at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad?

5. Research Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence and severity of English speaking anxiety among the students across different academic disciplines of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad with divers lingual and multicultural backgrounds?
2. To identify the causes and analyze various factor such as psychological, pedagogical, and sociocultural factors that contribute to ESA.

6. Literature Review

According to the recent studies, most students at universities experience anxiety when addressing in English. As one example, a 2024 study involving 1,745 students at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic concluded that speaking in front of a group or a presentation was the most anxiety-inducing learning activity. Such factors as gender, the kind of high school attended and level of study also predicted anxiety. In a 2023 Malaysian study, the effect of fear of speaking and test anxiety on English speaking anxiety was predicted and the influence decreased with the feeling of being supported by others (Zabidin et al., 2025).

Some studies in Pakistan indicate that English speaking anxiety is socially and culturally affected by such aspects as gender expectations and educational background (Ali and Habib, 2025). As an example, students who did not study at Cambridge schools and more familiar with English speaking environments are more anxious and less confident (Ahmad et al., 2024; Muhammad et al., 2023).

A 2024 study in Afghanistan revealed that students who are learning English as a foreign language experience moderate anxiety during speaking. Among the reasons, it can be low confidence, the fear of being evaluated badly, and a low probability of practicing real English (Quvanch et al., 2024).

The statistics reveal that English speaking anxiety is associated with poor grades, decreased attendance, and negative feelings (Zabidin et al., 2025). Interviews and narratives provide a further understanding of how students experience it, demonstrating how inner emotions and external circumstances combine to make them anxious (Melisa et al., 2025).

Psychology has numerous roles in anxiety in the English speaking. The principal concern is the fear of negative evaluation. Students are afraid of errors, criticism on behalf of classmates or teachers, and embarrassment in the presence of other people (Jibeen et al., 2019).

Anxiety is aggravated by low confidence and inferiority complex, which is usually caused by previous negative experiences or a perception that there is no way to become better at language. Communication apprehension or fear of speaking is also related to English speaking anxiety and leads students to avoid speaking and be less inclined to participate (Jibeen et al., 2019).

The possibility of anxiety of English speaking is also increased by being shy or a perfectionist (Jibeen et al., 2019). Perfectionists only talk when they are confident that they are right and timid students are terrified to talk in front of a classroom. English speaking anxiety is also predicted by fear of tests, that is, fear of being judged or scored, particularly where the grades are based on the oral examination or presentation (Zabidin et al., 2025).

The way of teaching English will reduce or increase anxiety of speaking English. Where the teaching process is centered around the teacher, the number of real speaking opportunities and feedback is limited, and the anxiety increases. Anxiety is reduced and confidence is developed through helpful teaching, such as praise, making the classroom feel safe, and providing helpful feedback (Melisa et al., 2025).

Collaborating with others, such as talking to the group, assisting a classmate, teamwork, etc., will go a long way in reducing the anxiety of speaking English. They allow the students to speak under low-stress conditions and receive peer support which gradually instills confidence. Such technology as language apps, online discussion boards, and virtual reality also provides new opportunities to practice and encounter less frightening speaking situations (Lim et al., 2023).

It is also important on how tests are utilized. The cause of anxiety can be big exams that determine grades, though step-by-step checks, in which the emphasis is on improvement and work, can help to alleviate anxiety (Melisa et al., 2025).

The English speaking anxiety is under the influence of social and cultural forces. Students feel the same way influenced by gender expectations. Women are more prone to anxiety due to social expectations and the fear of being stereotyped whereas men might be anxious due to the fact that they are trained to be strong and not weak.

Anxiety is also different due to the level of the economy, education, and language. Less privileged students (students with lower income) or those who attend the school where English is not the native language have a harder time (Ali et al., 2025).

It is also important how people perceive English and speaking to an audience. In other locations, speaking English is regarded as a means of social and status ascendancy, which increases pressure on students to perform well and anxiety (Ali et al., 2025). Elsewhere, students believe that English is a second or imposed language and thus they feel excluded and retaliate thus complicating their attitudes toward the language even further (Muhammad et al., 2023).

7. Research Gap

A research gap refers to gaps in the questions that remain unanswered, lack of evidence or conflicting results in the prevailing big picture. It is the gap that can be addressed by researchers to expand knowledge in the future (Bryda and Sadowski, 2024). In essence, it indicates your difference in conducting work compared to previous studies (O’Katain et al., 2010). Despite the available research on ESA, there are still some gaps (Jick, 1979). Our research is unique as it targets Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, undergraduates of which use it as a source, and the linguistic and multicultural backgrounds are wide and located within a single university. Only surveys or interviews are used in most other studies, which is not very deep. Although there are mixed-method studies (O’Sullivan et al., 2024), no one addresses the individual setting of QAU, which is a multilingual and multicultural one. Ali and Habib (2025) stated that cultural, linguistic, and institutional diversity between the students is not accounted in many existing tools and interventions, which supports our argument of the research gap.

8. Methodology

8.1 Research design

So, for this study I decided to use a mixed-methods approach, blending both qualitative and quantitative techniques. A mixed-methods design would be quite appropriate to investigate ESA (English Speaking Anxiety) as it allows me to combine both statistics (such as prevalence or correlations with personal experiences) with personal narrative, coping strategies/skills, and contextual aspects that cannot be captured by numbers only.

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It increases the validity of the findings, allows me to triangulate various streams of data, and helps me to create comprehensive intervention plans (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). This is why I have developed a Google form questionnaire with close ended questions which give pie charts and bar graphs hence I will be able to obtain the specific percentages. I also conducted some in-depth interviews to explore the inner world of the participants, their thoughts, and perceptions regarding the research questions. Simply put, I am applying a convergent parallel mixed-methods model, where I gather and analyse both forms of data simultaneously and then weave them together when I derive meaning in the results to identify overlaps, complements, and contradictions whereby I would have a full picture of ESA.

8.2 Population

I am aiming at the undergrad students that are enrolled in the Quaid-i-Azam University based in Islamabad. The sample consists of both male and female students, approximately an equal number each, representing all the departments. This makes a lot of difference, halves of each gender will reduce bias and enable me to make my findings more generalizable, which is my goal in this research.

8.3 Sampling frame

In the case of my actual sample, I chose fifty students of both genders in different departments and I did not prejudice one group over another. I randomly recruited them to do the interviews, irrespective of their majors, and informed consent was obtained by use of a short form. All the questionnaires were completed and thoughts discussed in the interviews, hence the sample could be regarded as ethical and the sample was representative, contributing to the overall generalizability of the research.

8.4 Instrumentation

I am going to use Google Forms as my primary tool. The quantitative section involves the students responding to the close ended questions and two open ended questions at the end of the paper to get the qualitative data- explanations, interpretations, and personal views. To augment the qualitative insights, I made some proper interviews as well.

8.5 Theoretical framework

The conceptual framework of studying ESA has been provided by Horwitz Foreign Language Anxiety Theory (1986), which is the theoretical context on which this study will be proposed.

It describes why I am looking at it this way and how the theory that is in place justifies my design. The theory establishes the constructs of English speaking anxiety that are of central concern, sets the measurement method by the use of the FLCAS, and maintains the results on a well-known academic tradition. It can be used to explain such phenomena as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These are the notions according to which ESA is to be measured among the university students and FLCAS instrument created by Horwitz and others is the tool that is to be turned to when it comes to measuring anxiety. The surveys, interviews, or observations to be used in collection of information are based on the three dimensions to ensure that such subtle experiences are captured.

9. Data Collection, Analysis and Results

My data collection method includes a mixed-method approach and the use of Google forms. The survey was filled in by approximately 50 students of various departments at the Quaid -i- Azam University, Islamabad. Only the enrolled students were considered in the study and their courses must mandate English speaking tasks like

presentations, discussions or oral exams. The consent form given to each respondent described the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the amount of time they will spend, there were no risks, and the benefits, the responses would be anonymous, and respondents can skip any question or withdraw at any time, and how to reach out to us with any questions. The same online form collected quantitative data, which was obtained through close-ended questions, and qualitative data, which was obtained through two open-ended questions at the conclusion. Responses to these open-ended questions contained descriptions, meanings to them and personal views. The quantitative data collected by Google Forms provided quantifiable information on what is happening in terms of the English speaking anxiety prevalence and the statistical connections, whereas the qualitative data presented the individual experience, perceptions, and setting. The quantitative data presented in the pie charts and bar graphs were used to analyze the data and determine trends in the frequency of the students feeling anxious and in the departments. Weinrich theory was applied in the analysis of the qualitative data. Through summing up numbers and stories, we were able to see the complete picture and a complete picture on English speaking anxiety (ESA) (O’Kathain, 2010).

I sent 100 undergraduates of different departments of QAU with the request of completing the form with the prospects of 50 respondents. In its place, we got 92 responses. These were processed, analyzed, interpreted and presented. The results are presented in pie charts and bar graphs to enable addressing the research question and objectives.

1. Do you feel terrified at the thought of speaking before a group of people?

89 responses

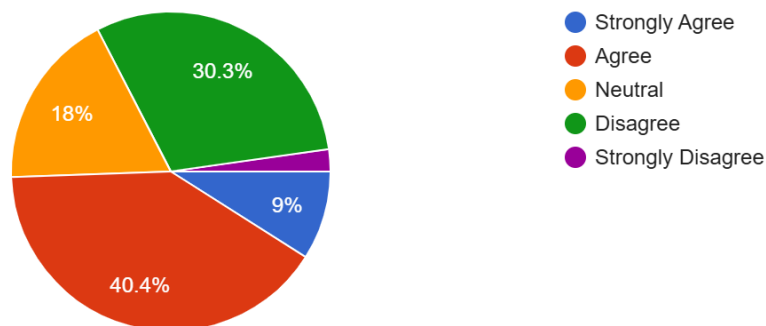


Figure 1. Prevalence & levels of SEA among students frightened of speaking before people

The question 1 of the questionnaire is in accordance to the questions 1 & 2 of the research project seeking responses from the participants about the prevalence & levels of SEA and the main factors influencing the SEA. Figure 1 shows great resemblance with the first research objective to the extent of prevalence and levels of SEA among QAU students. It shows that about 09 % of the students suffer from higher level ESA, 40 % face mild SEA, while speaking in front of other people. However, the remaining of them either don’t face significant anxiety in the same environment. These findings are in contrast to results published by many of the previous research studies where higher level of ESA prevailed in most of the students (Quvancha, 2024). It may be due

to multiple reasons such as intake of top merit students, best faculty and better guidance of the students in QAU.

2. Are you usually in fear of forgetting the important contents in your Presentation?

88 responses

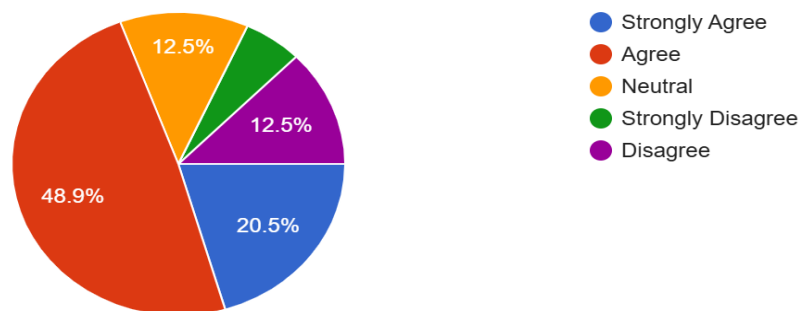


Figure 2. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to fear of forgetting contents of the presentation

Question 2 and Figure 2 are also in line with the research questions and research objectives laid down in the instant research work, respectively. Figure 2 shows that about 69 (48.9+20.5=69.4) % of the students are faced with prevalence of high or moderate level anxiety caused by the fear of forgetting the important contents of the presentations. These results are in agreement to the findings of the research conducted and published by some previous researchers (Quvancha, 2024).

3. I often forget what I want to say when speaking English in front of others?

89 responses

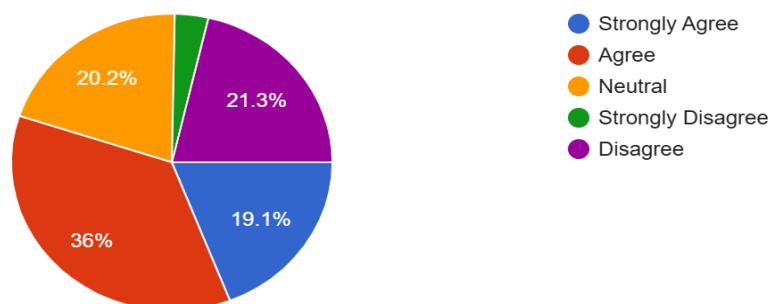


Figure 3. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to forgetting what they want to say when speaking in front of others.

Question 3 and Figure 3 are manifestations of the research questions and research objectives laid down in the instant research work, respectively. Figure 3 exhibits high level prevalence SEA where more than 50 (36+19.1=55.1) % of the students confessed to be encountered with the problem of SEA caused by forgetting what they want say when speaking in front of other people. These findings are also in agreement to the previously published results (Ali & Habib, 2025).

4. I find it hard to speak fluently in English when I'm in front of a group or in a Presentation.

89 responses

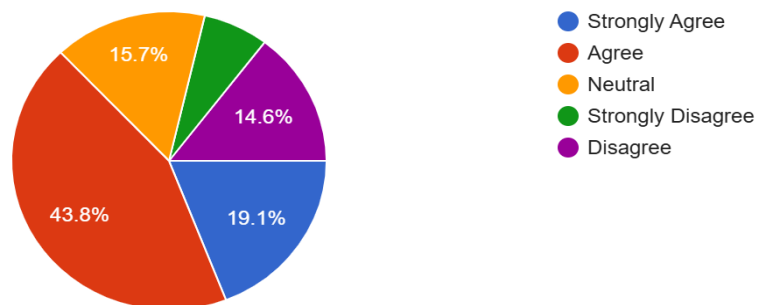


Figure 4. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to hardships in speaking English fluently in front of group or in presentation.

Question 4 is in close resemblance to the research questions and the pie chart obtained from its respective data reflects the research objectives of this work. Keeping in view the prevalence & levels of SEA and its causes, in this case also the same trend, has been followed as in case of Figures 2 & 3; and these findings, too, are in agreement to those explored in some previous studies (Melisa *et al.*, 2025).

5. I feel embarrassed about my English when speaking in front of Class.

89 responses

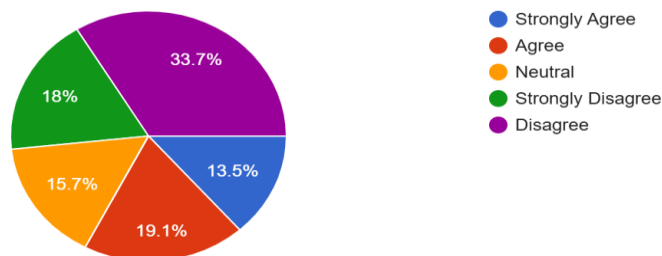


Figure 5. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to embarrassment facing the class

The question 5 of the questionnaire is in accordance to the questions 1 & 2 of the research project related to the prevalence & levels of SEA and the main factors influencing the SEA. Figure 5 shows great resemblance with the research objective. It shows that about 13.5 % of the students suffer from higher level SEA and 19 % face mild SEA due to the feeling of embarrassment when speaking in front of the class. However, the remaining of them either don't face significant anxiety in the same environment. These findings are in contrast to results published by many of the previous research studies where higher level of SEA prevailed in most of the students under similar circumstances (Quvancha, 2024). It may be due to such reasons such as better classrooms environment in QAU that provide the students with more confidence when speaking in front of the class.

6. It is difficult for me to search my mind calmly for the right words to express my thoughts.

89 responses

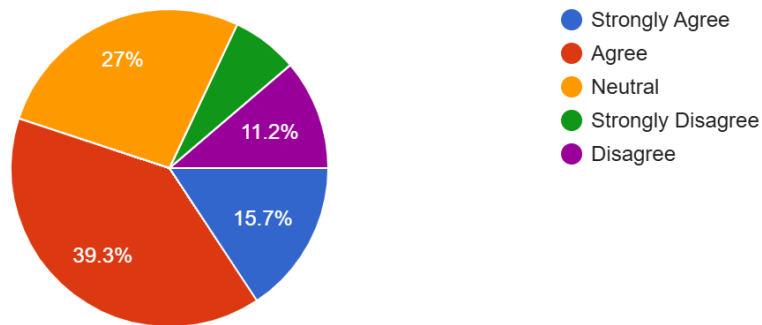


Figure 6. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to difficulty in finding right words for expressing one's mind

Question 6 is made part of the questionnaire as it has close resemblance and relation to the research questions of my work, and the pie chart obtained from its respective data reflects the research objectives of this work. As far as the overall prevalence & levels of ESA (39.3+15.7=56 %) faced by the QAU students and its main causes are concerned, in this case somewhat similar trends and patterns are observed as in other cases of this study where higher levels of ESA prevalence exist among the QAU students observed under similar circumstances; and these findings, too, are in agreement to those investigated by some previous studies under mimic environments (Muhammad *et al.*, 2023).

7. The faces of my audience are blurred when I look at them during Presentation.

88 responses

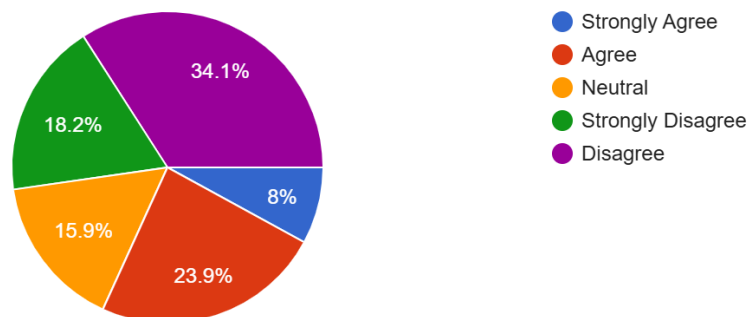


Figure 7. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to blurred faces of the audience.

Question 7 and the pie chart in Figure 7 are both in close resemblance to my research questions and research objectives is made part of the questionnaire as it has close resemblance and relation to the research questions of my work, and the pie chart obtained from its respective data reflects the research objectives of this work. As far as the overall prevalence & levels of ESA (39.3+15.7=56 %) faced by the QAU students and its main causes are concerned, in this case somewhat similar trends and patterns

are observed as in other cases of this study where higher levels of ESA prevalence exist among the QAU students observed under similar circumstances; and these findings, too, are in agreement to those investigated by some previous studies under mimic environments (Muhammad *et al.*, 2023).

8. Even though I speak fluently with friends, I struggle to find words when speaking in front of a Teachers.

88 responses

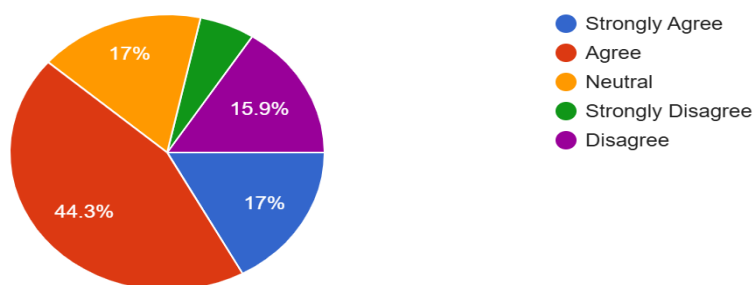


Figure 8. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to fear of speaking in front of teachers.

The Pie chart of in Figure 8 answers that higher levels of ESA prevalence is observed when the otherwise good performing students vis-à-vis ESA find it hard to find words when speaking in front of their teachers. For instance, 44.3 % agree and 17 % strongly agree student data shows that more than half of the population suffer from ESA under the referred environment i.e. they fell it difficult to express themselves in front of their teachers. While only 17 % students are unable to align themselves with the questions. This portrays that these results answer the research objectives.

9. During a presentation, I am in a constant state of anxiety.

89 responses

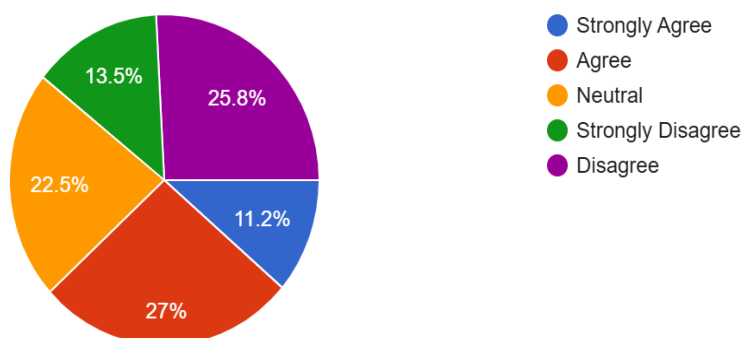


Figure 9. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to constant state of anxiety

The Pie chart in Figure 9 illustrates that a considerable level of ESA prevalence is observed when students experience a constant state of anxiety during presentations. The data reveals that 27% of the respondents agree and 11.2% strongly agree that they remain anxious while presenting, indicating that a substantial proportion of students suffer from ESA in presentation settings. Furthermore, 22.5% of the respondents remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty or situational anxiety among students. In

contrast, 25.8% disagree and 13.5% strongly disagree with the statement, reflecting that a smaller segment of the population does not experience persistent anxiety during presentations. Overall, the findings demonstrate that more than one-third of the respondent's experience heightened anxiety in presentation contexts, thereby reinforcing the presence of ESA and aligning with the objectives of the present research.

10. I sweat and shake right before I have to speak.

88 responses

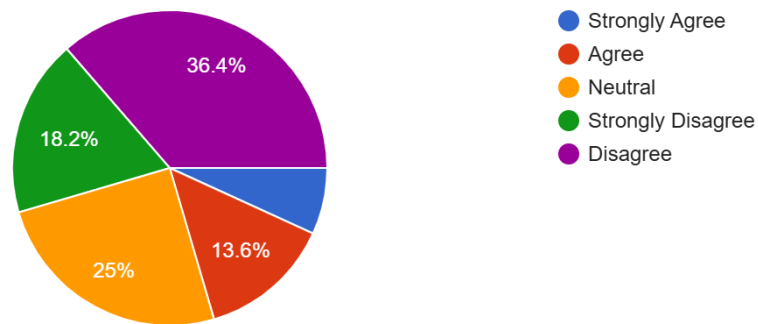


Figure 10. Prevalence and levels of SEA due to physiological factors like sweating & shaking

The pie chart in Figure 10 answers that moderate levels of ESA prevalence are observed due to physiological factors such as sweating and shaking right before speaking. The data indicate that a considerable proportion of student's experience physical symptoms associated with ESA prior to oral expression. For instance, 13.6% of the respondents agree and a smaller proportion strongly agree, collectively suggesting that a segment of the population exhibits noticeable anxiety-induced physiological reactions before speaking. Additionally, 25% of the students remain neutral, indicating uncertainty or situational variability in experiencing such symptoms. On the contrary, 36.4% disagree and 18.2% strongly disagree, showing that a larger portion of students do not associate sweating and shaking with their speaking experiences. Nevertheless, the presence of physiological symptoms among a notable group of respondents reflects the existence of ESA triggered by physical manifestations of anxiety. This portrayal supports the research objectives by highlighting the role of physiological factors in influencing students' speaking anxiety. These findings are in contradiction to results of previously published studies where a higher levels of ESA prevalence has been reported (Abdullah *et al.*, 2024; Qizi, 2025).

9.1 Qualitative research analysis

The open-ended question in the Google form answer the qualitative part of the research. Following are two open ended questions in this study.

Q1. Why do you and other students of Quaid-i-azam University are in the state of Anxiety when speaking English in front of others? (Please select the main reason(s): i. Fear of negative evaluation, ii. Lack of self-confidence, iii. Facing public embarrassment, iv. Perceived linguistic incompetency, v. Sociocultural pressures, vi. All of them.



Figure 9.1: Factors contributing to English speaking anxiety among university students. Figure 9.1 shows the responses of the students regarding English speaking anxiety among undergraduate students of Quaid-i-Azam University. This question explores the reasons as to why we experience stress when communicating in English in the presence of other people. I collected a collection of replies using open-ended and close-ended choices, and the trends were very comparable. The responses are explicit on how English speaking anxiety is a multidimensional entity and influenced by psychological, linguistic, and sociocultural materials. The results are in line with what we have read in the literature of second language anxiety, particularly the communication-related concerns, and the fear of negative evaluation and the sense of linguistic incompetence all add up in the perspective of the 1986 theory of Foreign Language Anxiety by

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Horwitz and Cope.

We are told that a large motivator is fear of negative appraisal. We fear being judged and criticized or laughed off by classmates and teachers because we falter with the English language. That anxiety leads directly to a low opinion about ourselves as most of us believe that we do not speak English well enough to talk to people easily. Such thoughts cause us to be shy, nervous and unwilling to engage in speaking situations which further increases the anxiety.

The other general response was the embarrassment one would have to face in front of the people. Talking English to colleagues is usually a risk of humiliation the wrong sound, grammar mistakes, or lack of vocabulary. This type of reactions demonstrates that the perception of linguistic incompetence only intensifies the anxiety further because we are being trapped in our own heads realizing that we cannot express our ideas in the most fluent and accurate way. That gives rise to a self-critical loop of self-dismissal.

A significant amount of responses was also given to sociocultural pressure. The English language appears to be a symbol of smarts, confidence and social standing, thus when we are not able to speak it proficiently, we feel lower. Peer comparison, cultural expectation, and societal focus on the English proficiency provide us with an extra burden and make us nervous when communicating orally. Importantly, most of us answered all of them, and it demonstrates that we were struck by all of them simultaneously rather than one at a time.

In short therefore, the responses of the undergrads in QAU indicate that English speaking anxiety is a draw of a combination of fear of appraisal, low self-confidence, embarrassment, language boundaries, and social cultural demands. Such results are consonant with what the study aimed to research and support the existing theories regarding language anxiety. Our analyzed data is intuitive to the research question, the thematic figure, and the theoretical foundation of the entire project.

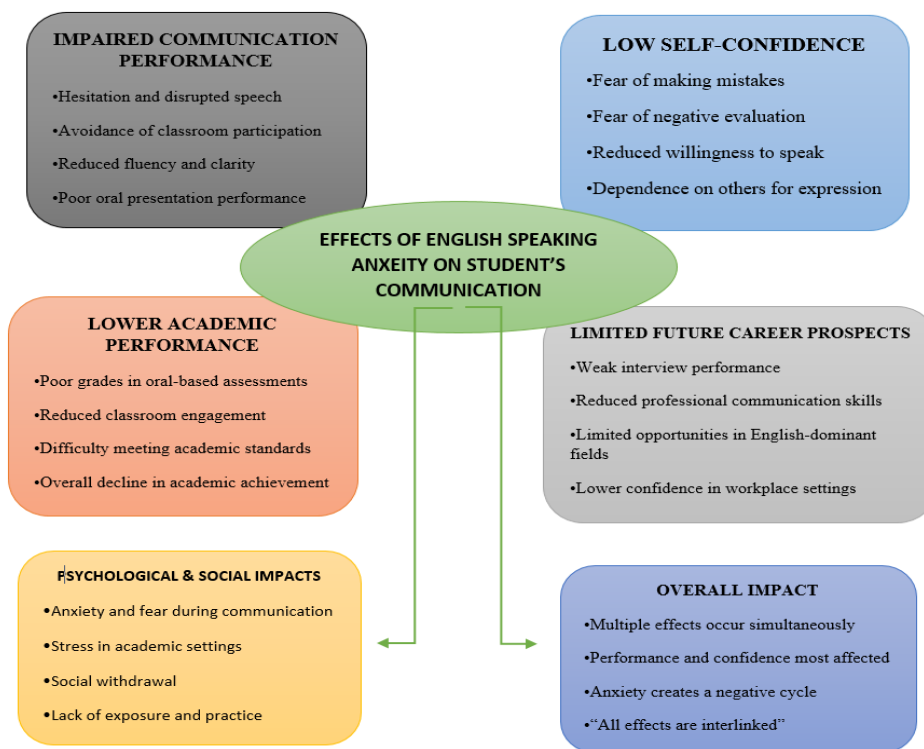


Figure 9.2: Impacts of English speaking anxiety on student's communication.

Q2. In your opinion, what effects English Speaking Anxiety has on the student's Communication? (Please select the main reason(s): i. Negative effect on performance, ii. Negative effect on self-confidence, iii. Lower academic performance, iv. Future Career prospects.

The figure 9.2 indicates the attitude of the students towards English speaking anxiety. This question examines the impacts of English speaking anxiety on the communication of the students. The findings indicate that English speaking anxiety is detrimental to the students in numerous aspects. The largest issue which students complain about is that it deteriorates their speech.

They hesitate to make mistakes and be judged; hence they are less active in the classroom, speak in bits, and take their time. This fear also reduces their self-esteem, thus they become less ready to express their ideas in school without any form of fear.

Academic performance is also impaired by English speaking anxiety. Fear of communicating in English is reported by many of the students to make them less likely to participate in discussions, presentations, and oral tests, which negatively affects their grades. Since most of the school work is in English, lack of confidence and practice in the English language causes more academic challenges. This reduces communication effectiveness because the anxiety is then enhanced by lack of confidence and practice at the time.

The students also reported that English speaking anxiety is capable of influencing their future employment. In the contemporary world of globalization and competition, a good English communication is considered to be the key towards success. The presence of anxiety may deny students the capacity to perform well during interviews, presentation and work interaction. Thus, the results indicate that English speaking anxiety is a serious negative factor that negatively affects

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the students in terms of their communication, grades, confidence, and future perspectives. Hence, English speaking anxiety is a key to poor communication among university students.

10. Findings

The research questions were answered in the research. We examined the prevalence and cause of English speaking anxiety (ESA). High ESA was reported in Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, in a report by students. Their nervousness was mostly associated with fear of judgment, anxiety about speaking, and test anxiety. The interweaving of cultures and languages compounded the anxiety but supportive classroom environments and strategies to develop confidence at QAU assisted.

Most of the learners reported average to high anxiety when they spoke English in the classroom. Presentations, standing before the people or the teachers were the instances that most scared them. This was primarily due to the fear of being judged, concerns over pronunciation or grammar or fluency errors. Others were afraid to talk because they were shy or lacked intentions, were short of words or exposure to English beyond the classroom. In the diversified world of QAU where students spoke various languages, they were disadvantaged when English was the only language spoken. This anxiety negatively affected their learning as it decreased participation, fluency and general grades. They tended to remain quiet at school, they never want to engage in group discussions and they were afraid to ask questions in English. The learning block theory of high anxiety was self-evident: it made it difficult to take in and learn.

11. Recommendations

Student-centered methods should be adopted by the teachers and this reduces evaluation pressure. QAU ought to implement language support programs like conversation clubs, workshops and establishment of English corners where trainees are free to speak English. These policies must be able to acknowledge the presence of diverse mix of languages and cultures in QAU and other Pakistani-based institutions to ensure that the objective of enhancing the English skills does not marginalize the cultural differences.

12. Conclusions

The affective filter theory reveals that anxiety high interferes with an act of receiving new information by the brain. This was observed in the students, as they had difficulties in practicing speaking and listening. Consequently, their language development was not fast. The study conducted based on both numbers and stories of students had established that the majority of QAU students had an average to high ESA in various departments at the expenses of communication and general language learning. The anxiety among English speaking students is a significant impediment to QAU students. It comes about as a result of mental, cultural, and academic pressures. Nevertheless, it may be minimized through an improved classroom set-up, student centered teaching, confidence-enhancing exercises, and recognition of the multilingual diversity.

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