PORTRAYING STUDENTS' SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY LEVEL DURING THE ONLINE LEARNING AND REVEALING THE USE OF PAIR GROUPWORK STRATEGY TO DECREASE THE STUDENTS' SPEAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN OFFLINE LEARNING

Eka Pratiwi Yunianti[1], Arif Alexander Bastian[2], Dyah Fitri Mulati[3], Defy Gustianing[4], Septika Ariyanti[5]

Universitas Aisyah Pringsewu, Indonesia
[1] ekapratiwiy05@aisyahuniversity.ac.id, [2] arifalexander1@aisyahuniversity.ac.id, [3] dyah.fitrimulati@aisyahuniversity.ac.id, [4] defygustianing@aisyahuniversity.ac.id, [5] septikaariyanti@aisyahuniversity.ac.id

Abstract

The goals of the current study were to describe the students' degree of speaking anxiety while learning a foreign language online and to demonstrate how pair group work was used to reduce speaking anxiety when learning a language offline. 28 students from Universitas Aisyah Pringsewu were among the participants in this study. This study used a descriptive qualitative research approach. A speaking foreign language anxiety questionnaire that was adapted from Ozturk was used to gather the data (2014). The survey form used a 5-graded likert scale, and the data were analyzed by categorizing the findings in accordance with guidelines adapted from Ozturk's range levels (2014). The majority of students had moderate levels of speaking anxiety, and there were also a small number of students with high levels of speaking anxiety, according to the results of a pre- and post-test. However, after using a pair-group work strategy, no students were found to have high levels of speaking anxiety. In light of this, it can be said that the pair-group work technique has a positive effect on the students' anxiety related to speaking a foreign language.

Keywords: Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety; Pair Group Work Strategy; Online and Offline Learning

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the four language skills that students should be able to acquire, and it is crucial to the English language education process, particularly in the context of communication. Nunan (1999) and Burkart & Sheppard (2004) suggested that the capacity to carry on a conversation in the target language serves as a good barometer for how well one has learned a language. It follows that effective communication skills are essential for learning achievement. Due to the fact that English is still a foreign language in Indonesia and is not used often, there are still many different issues that might arise while using it. Speaking in English is one of the most challenging abilities that students have mastered, particularly in the area of communication. According to Hamzah & Ting (2010), who discovered that students often experience insecurity and struggle to communicate and express themselves in the target language, not all students have the confidence to speak in front of their peers. Also, students will face a significant obstacle while communicating in the target language: engaging in

conversation with the speaker. However, there are other aspects that may influence a student's capacity to communicate in a target language, including vocabulary development, the ability to express a concept, and the environment in which they are speaking. Fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and understanding are often the five key elements of speaking that learners need to emphasize. They must thus pay attention to those factors in order to produce effective communication. The more often pupils talk in the target language, the better they will grow at speaking. Yet speaking still presents a challenge, particularly when the instructor expects the pupils to interact in the target language. The pupils' fear of speaking in a foreign language is one reason that might prevent them from speaking. According to Indrianty (2016) and Thornbury (2005), inadequate vocabulary, incorrect grammar, and concerns of errors are some variables that might lead to speaking failure and intensify anxiety when it comes to speaking. Anxiety may be characterized as a fear of being incorrect. Anxiety is one of the challenging issues for students while learning a language (Oxford (1999) in Gabarre et al. (2016)). Digman (1990) found, and Sheu (2017) supports, that students who exhibit greater levels of anxiety, sadness, and anger struggle to learn the target language. More generally, according to Ganesh Kumar et al. (2015), anxiety has a significant impact on a person's life. Moreover, Saito & Samimy (1996) confirmed that worry affects students' performance in Sutarsyah (2017). Consequently, it is essential to bring up the subject of anxiety in order to identify an efficient method for reducing pupils' nervousness, particularly in a communicative situation.

In fact, there have been various studies investigating about the anxiety, (Toubot & Seng, 2018); (Indrianty, 2016) who did a research in examining the levels, factors and sources influence the students anxiety; (Rafada & Madini, 2017) who explored the Saudi learners' perceptions of speaking anxiety in language classrooms and provide some effective and helpful solutions for reducing it. In more advance there is (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014) who identified the level, major causes, determining factors of foreign language speaking anxiety and students' perceptions of it in a Turkish EFL context. Furthermore, in Indonesian context there are some various studies which conducted a research to reduce the students' speaking anxiety and its relation to the students' performance; (A'yun et al., 2021) who used collaborative strategy to reduce students' speaking anxiety; (Aulia et al., 2020) who reported the advantages of pair work strategy in diminishing the students' speaking anxiety especially in an EFL classroom.

But, because to the proliferation of the corona virus, the teaching and learning process was transferred into distant learning, and as a result, numerous changes occurred that had a significant influence on both teachers and students. In this case, managing the online learning process presented challenges for both the instructor and the students. Online learning, in particular with regard to the students' speaking phobia, may already have a stressful impact on the students, which may prevent them from fully engaging in the learning activity. Luckily, owing to the corona virus's decreased propagation, the teaching and learning process has progressively returned to normal in recent years. So, the instructor has to figure out how to regain the pupils' interest in the lesson. It was assumed that research on students' anxiety, particularly in communication settings, and the description of students' speaking foreign language anxiety level between online and offline learning was still uncommon by reflecting on those prior studies (particularly in the Indonesian context), as well as linking back to the situation changes. The purpose of the current study was to characterize the students' degree of speaking anxiety while learning a foreign language online as well as to demonstrate how pair group work was used to reduce speaking fear in offline learning.

Anxiety is the terrible emotional state characterized by feelings of concern and hesitancy (Delamont & Atkinson, 2001; Spielberg et al., 2014). Anxiety is described as a typical response to dangerous situations in both physical and emotional responses, according to the University

of Cambridge Counseling Service (2012); the intensity of feeling anxious relies on an individual's prior experiences, beliefs, and attitude. Also, it was noted by (Dordinejad & Ahmadabad, 2014; Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013) that anxiety might affect a person's performance and accomplishment in the target language. It should be noted that anxiety is a negative perception of a demanding situation that affects a person's ability to succeed. In light of this, another variable may come after anxiousness. The best method for teaching and learning languages is via foreign language study.

Instead of broad anxiety, it becomes a more particular description when accompanied by a second variable, such as a foreign language, which is a concern and dread response when employing the target language in an anticipated setting (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Sheu, 2017). Additionally, foreign language anxiety, which is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon (Young, 1991), can affect some language abilities and the learning process with a more personally rooted feeling of apprehension connected to the second language contexts (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014). It is connected to Ellis (1997) assertion that speaking in front of a group, finishing an exam, and speaking in class are some of the scenarios that often cause anxiety in the context of education. In other words, anxiety in students may arise in certain circumstances, and (Chen & Chang, 2004; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) emphasized that the learners' unpleasant experiences when learning a foreign language may contribute to the anxiety's development.

According to Sutarsyah (2017)'s citation of Horwitz & Young (1991) .'s classification of foreign language anxiety, there are three associated components; Communication anxiety is the outcome of not being confident enough to express one's opinions. Fear of being judged negatively by others, which arises from the pressure on students to meet expectations from others, Test anxiety is a dreadful sense that one will do poorly in a language test.

Several variables may influence whether pupils succeed or fail while speaking. The pupils' fear of speaking the foreign language is one factor to take into account. Students must practice speaking the foreign language in conversation more since it is well recognized that they require more preparation before speaking their thoughts out. Due of their potential anxiety, pupils may find it harder to grasp what is being taught to them. Similar to this, Young (1991) said (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014) that students' anxiety over speaking would rise when they are required to practice speaking in front of their peers on the spot.

A number of earlier research on speaking anxiety in a foreign language have been conducted, including Öztürk & Gürbüz (2014) investigation of speaking anxiety among Turkish university students. He acknowledged that most of the students had mild levels of anxiety, but further examination found that most students experience anxiety while speaking spontaneously and worry about pronouncing words incorrectly. According to the students' perceptions, this research also illustrated the several fundamental causes of speaking fear, including personal, contextual, and educational factors.

Similar research was conducted by Toubot & Seng (2018), who looked at students' levels of speaking anxiety as well as its causes. The survey also revealed that the element of low self-confidence has the highest average score, coming in at 181.25, followed by the factor of fearing a poor assessment, coming in at 167.8, and the factor of communication anxiety, coming in at 140.57. The pupils' degree of speaking anxiety is considerable, particularly when they speak English in front of their peers and without any prior preparation since they are afraid of making errors.

The results of more recent research were used to determine the best method for lowering pupils' anxiety. For instance, a research by Wichadee (2010) examined the application of the cooperative learning technique as a means of lowering learners' anxiety in an EFL class.

According to the research, using certain cooperative learning techniques helped students feel less anxious about learning a foreign language. Another study was conducted by Atas (2015), who came to the conclusion that drama has a positive effect on students' speaking anxiety by motivating them to participate in language classes, assisting them in speaking bravely in the target language, and enhancing the emotional climate of the language classroom. Moreover, Aulia et al. (2020) noted that through collaborating with partners, the pair work method was able to lower the students' speaking fear. Also, pair work assisted them in expanding their vocabulary and perfecting their English pronunciation. The use of this method also helped individuals feel more knowledgeable and confident.

These earlier research had previously shown how anxious pupils were about the process of learning a foreign language. The causes of the students' worry have also been identified in other investigations. The use of the pair-group work technique is one of the strategies that have been offered in several studies to help students who are anxious about learning a foreign language. Yet, studies describing students' levels of anxiety while speaking a foreign language during online learning as opposed to offline learning are still hard to come by. The purpose of the current study was to illustrate this circumstance as well as demonstrate how pair-group work may be used to reduce speaking anxiety in students In light of the explanation provided above, the researcher developed the following research question:

1. How is the students' speaking foreign language anxiety level during the online learning?
2. How is the use of pair group work strategy towards the students' speaking foreign language anxiety level in the offline learning?

METHOD

As the research's goals were to depict a phenomena that had occurred, its design was descriptive qualitative. According to Sugiyono (2017), Thurlow & Brown (2003) said that qualitative research should be used to get more in-depth knowledge about a subject or phenomena. The university where this study was done was Universitas Aisyah Pringsewu. The participants in this study totaled 28, pupils. Although they participated in discussion class as well, they were selected using purposive sampling. Thus, the researcher decided to use those 28 pupils as her sample. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale Questionnaire (FLSAQ) was utilized in this study to assess the speaking anxiety of the participants. This measuring tool was created using the 5-point Likert scale. The researcher used a questionnaire that was adapted from a study by Öztürk & Gürbüz (2014) that examined the factors that affect students' speaking anxiety. This form of questionnaire was chosen by the researcher because it places greater emphasis on speaking. It has 18 questions that are especially connected to speaking anxiety and was created by Horwitz et al. from their 33-item questionnaire (Horwitz & Young, 1991). In this study, three research questions are put out. The researcher was able to get the information she needed for her study by employing a pre- and post-questionnaire as her primary tool. The researcher employed a 5-graded likert scale with 18 questions of a foreign language speaking anxiety questionnaire to determine the students' degree of speaking anxiety. In general, the following steps were used while conducting the research:

1. distributing the pre questionnaire as the way to identify the students' level of speaking anxiety
2. implementing the pair group work strategy
3. distributing the post questionnaire to see the differences from the pre questionnaire
4. interpreting the results

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

RQ. 1 *The students' speaking foreign language anxiety level during the online learning*
The primary goal of the first study question was to determine the degree of speaking anxiety that students had while taking a conversation lesson online. The 28 students who participated in the dialogue class were given a pre-questionnaire. The researcher obtained data utilizing a 5-graded Likert scale that were divided into three levels: low level, moderate level, and high level. The range levels guideline was taken from Öztürk & Gürbüz (2014), who identified the following range as the basis for classifying speaking anxiety levels:

Table 1. The range level of foreign language speaking anxiety

Low level of speaking anxiety	<54
Moderate level of speaking anxiety	54-72
High level of speaking anxiety	>72

The researcher categorized the pre-questionnaire data into a table of distribution and assessed the total number of replies from each participant, taking into consideration the range degree of speaking in a foreign language anxiety. The following illustration shows the classification's findings;
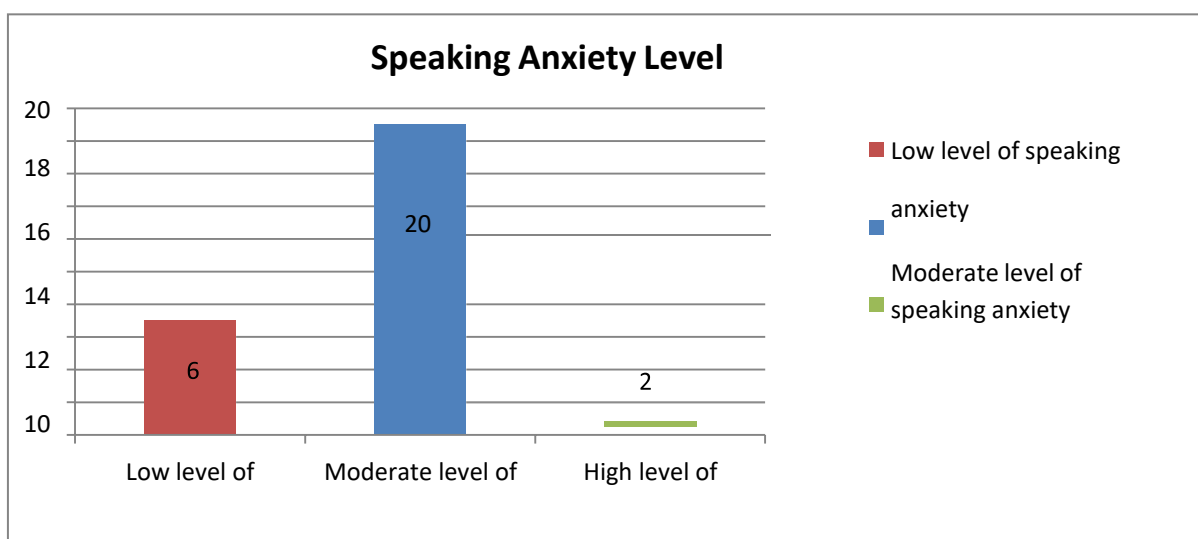

Figure 1. Students' Speaking Anxiety Level During The Online Learning

With a total of 20 students and a percentage of 71%, figure 1 shows that the majority of students had moderate levels of speaking anxiety. In contrast to the low level, which had 6 pupils and a proportion of 21%, it was more populated. As a final note, just 2 kids (7% of the whole class) were classified as having a high degree of speaking anxiety.

RQ. 2 *The use of pair group work strategy towards the students' speaking foreign language anxiety level in the offline learning*
Since the government has given permission for the school to begin, the teaching and learning processes have progressively become relatively routine. This situation makes the teacher should

think back about what strategy which helpful to engage the students in learning. Particularly in speaking class, the researcher tried to implement pair group work strategy as the way to encourage the students to participate in the learning process. After implementing the strategy for about 3 meetings, the post-questionnaire was distributed to the students. The result is reported in the following figure;
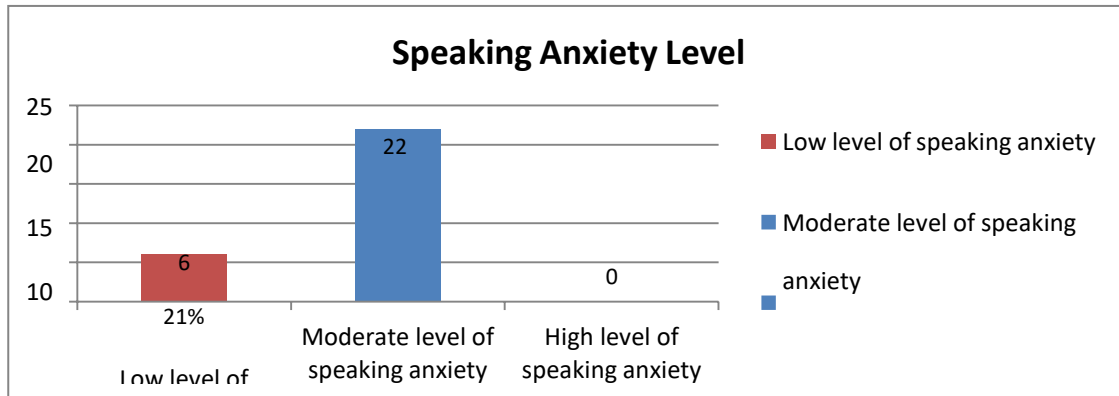

Figure 2. Students' Speaking Anxiety Level During The Offline Learning

According to Figure 2, speaking anxiety at a moderate level was still more prevalent than the other levels. There were 22 students at this level, with a 79% percentage. The low level came next, with 6 pupils and a 21% proportion. Meanwhile, it was discovered that no student fell into the category of having a high degree of speaking anxiety.

Discussion

This study sought to determine how anxious students were while speaking a foreign language during online instruction as well as how well pair-group work addressed speaking anxiety during offline instruction. According to the findings of the pre-questionnaire, the majority of the 20 students who participated in the online learning had a moderate degree of speaking anxiety. Also, it was shown that only 2 students have a high degree of speaking anxiety, whereas 6 students have a low amount. This suggested that the students' anxiety levels, especially while speaking a foreign language, may have been impacted by elements related to online learning. As there is no genuine connection between communicators in online learning, the instructor must consider how to continue the learning process in a remote setting. Zoom Meeting, the most popular platform, has replaced other media as the primary tool for teaching and learning. Yet, there were certain obstacles with the online learning as well. Students may experience anxiety, especially in foreign language speaking classes, when the instructor points at them to demonstrate their speaking. Also, owing to the few interactions, erratic sound and visual quality caused by reliance on internet quality, and technical requirements, the majority of students were uninterested in online learning (Pham et al., 2021). These may be the main issues that the majority of teachers and students are now facing.

The method of teaching and learning has gradually become standard in modern times. Pupils are permitted to return to their school, although for a brief period of time. Due to this circumstance, the instructor has to figure out how to boost the pupils' involvement in the learning process. In keeping with this assertion, the researcher made an effort to include the pair-group work technique into the educational process, notably in the discussion class. The researcher conducted a post-questionnaire after putting this technique into practice to see if there was any change between the pre- and post-questionnaire regarding the students' speaking level of language anxiety. According to the post-questionnaire results, it was discovered that

the majority of the students' speaking anxiety remained at a moderate level, as opposed to the low level, where it was discovered that there was no change between the pre and post questionnaire. Remarkably, no student was identified as having a significant degree of speaking anxiety based on the results of the post-questionnaire. This indicated a difference in the pre- and post-assessment questionnaire's of the students' high degree of speaking anxiety. Although though there wasn't much of a difference between the pre- and post-survey findings, it has previously been shown that the pair-group work technique had a beneficial effect on the students' anxiety levels related to speaking a foreign language.

This outcome was consistent with earlier research by Aulia et al. (2020), who suggested pair group work as a way to reduce students' speaking fear. This method was demonstrated in her research to be effective in lowering students' speaking anxiety in EFL classes. In fact, based on the findings of the current study, it was also shown that the pair-group work technique had the ability to lessen students' speaking anxiety, although to a limited extent as the majority of students were still at a moderate level. The plan was very little implemented—just in three meetings—which may have contributed to this scenario. Nevertheless, the students continued to experience anxiety despite not being too near to their companion, according to the researcher's opinion. Once again, it was a result of the effects of online learning itself, as students were required to study alone without receiving the same level of in-depth engagement as they received during offline learning. As a result, whenever they are matched with another student, they all often feel uncomfortable.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and the conversations, the researcher came to the conclusion that most students participating in online instruction had intermediate levels of speaking foreign language fear, with low and high levels following. On the other hand, it was discovered that no students with a high degree of speaking foreign language anxiety participated in the pair group work technique during offline learning. Even though the strategy's adoption had a positive effect on the students, the majority of them continued to experience anxiety while speaking a foreign language since the moderate degree of this anxiety predominated among the others.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

REFERENCES

A'yun, K., Suharso, P., & Kantun, S. (2021). Google classroom as the online learning platform during he covid-19 pandemic for the management business student at smk negeri 1 lumajang. *Iop Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, *747*(1), 12025.

Atas, M. (2015). The reduction of speaking anxiety in EFL learners through drama techniques. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *176*, 961–969.

Aulia, M. P., Lengkanawati, N. S., & Rodliyah, R. S. (2020). The use of pair work to reduce speaking anxiety in an EFL classroom. *Twelfth Conference on Applied Linguistics*

(CONAPLIN 2019), 134–137.

Burkart, G., & Sheppard, K. (2004). Content-ESL across the USA: A training packet. *A Descriptive*.

Chen, T., & Chang, G. B. Y. (2004). The relationship between foreign language anxiety and learning difficulties. *Foreign Language Annals*, *37*(2), 279–289.

Delamont, S., & Atkinson, P. (2001). Doctoring uncertainty: Mastering craft knowledge. *Social Studies of Science*, *31*(1), 87–107.

Digman, J. M. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *41*(1), 417–440.

Dordinejad, F. G., & Ahmadabad, R. M. (2014). Examination of the relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and English achievement among male and female Iranian high school students. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, *6*(4), 446–460.

Ellis, R. (1997). Second language acquisition. *The United States: Oxford*, 98.

Gabarre, S., Gabarre, C., Din, R., Shah, P., & Karim, A. A. (2016). Addressing foreign language learning anxiety with facebook. *Creative Education*, *7*(1), 93–104.

Ganesh Kumar, J., Athilakshmi, R., Maharishi, R., & Maya, R. (2015). Relationship between fear of negative evaluation and anxiety. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *3*(1), 74–80.

Hamzah, M. H., & Ting, L. Y. (2010). Teaching speaking skills through group work activities: A case study in SMK Damai Jaya. In *A Case Study*.

Hashemi, M., & Abbasi, M. (2013). The role of the teacher in alleviating anxiety in language classes. *International Research Journal of Applied and Basic Sciences*, *4*(3), 640–646.

Horwitz, E. K., & Young, D. J. (1991). *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*. Prentice Hall.

Indrianty, S. (2016). Students'anxiety In Speaking English (A Case Study In One Hotel And Tourism College In Bandung). *Eltin Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia*, *4*(1).

MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, *44*(2), 283–305.

Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching & Learning.* ERIC.

Oxford, R. L. (1999). Anxiety and the language learner: New insights. *Affect in Language Learning*, *58*(3), 67–91.

Öztürk, G., & Gürbüz, N. (2014). Speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners: The case at a state university. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *10*(1), 1–17.

Pham, T. T. T., Le, H. A., & Do, D. T. (2021). The factors affecting students' online learning outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic: a Bayesian exploratory factor analysis. *Education Research International*, *2021*, 1–13.

Rafada, S. H., & Madini, A. A. (2017). Effective solutions for reducing Saudi learners' speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, *8*(2).

Saito, Y., & Samimy, K. K. (1996). Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. *Foreign Language Annals*, *29*(2), 239–249.

Sheu, P. (2017). Examining the relationship of motivation, attitude, anxiety and achievement in English learning among elementary school students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, *5*(2), 174–184.

Spielberg, J. M., Olino, T. M., Forbes, E. E., & Dahl, R. E. (2014). Exciting fear in adolescence: does pubertal development alter threat processing? *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, *8*, 86–95.

Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. PT Alfabet. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Sutarsyah, C. (2017). An analysis of student's speaking anxiety and its effect on speaking performance. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, *1*(2), 143–152.

Thornbury, S. (2005). *How to teach speaking*. Longman.

Thurlow, C., & Brown, A. (2003). Generation Txt? The sociolinguistics of young people's text-messaging. *Discourse Analysis Online*, *1*(1), 30.

Toubot, A. M., & Seng, G. H. (2018). Examining levels and factors of speaking anxiety among EFL Libyan English undergraduate students. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, *7*(5), 47–56.

University of Cambridge Counseling Service. (2012). *Angry*. www.counselling.cam.%0Aac.uk/selfhelp/leaflets/anger

Wichadee, S. (2010). Cooperative learning approach: a successful way of reducing learning anxiety in an EFL class. *วารสาร ศึกษา ศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัย ขอนแก่น*, *33*(3), 1–5.

Young, D. J. (1991). Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment: What does language anxiety research suggest? *The Modern Language Journal*, *75*(4), 426–439.