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Effect of Students' Speaking Anxiety on their Self-efficacy at University Level

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Abstract: *This study investigates the speaking anxiety among students. The purpose of this study is to examine the causes of speaking anxiety, specific situations that cause the anxiety, and the strategies that might be used by students to control the anxiety. This study focuses on the impact of speaking anxiety on students' self-efficacy. This study helps to understand the challenges students face and ways to support them. The approach of this study is quantitative and descriptive in nature. This research involves the collection of data and tabulation through a questionnaire. The population of this study was all the social sciences departments at the university level. All the data was collected from Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan. Random sampling was used to choose the sample size for the study. The data was analyzed in the form of tables showing the Likert scale. According to the findings, students typically feel nervous when speaking English in a variety of contexts. The findings show how language skills and mental factors are connected. Many people feel scared about talking in public. Studies prove that high anxiety levels can hurt students' overall schoolwork and their ability to talk easily. Understanding this problem makes us want more places for learning that are friendly and supportive.*

Key Words: Speaking Anxiety, Self-efficacy, English Language

Introduction

Because of the complexity of the globalization problem, international cooperation is now essential. The ability to talk to one another and agree on a common language are prerequisites for any kind of diplomatic relations between countries. In today's interconnected world, the English language has supplanted all others as the de facto standard for business and diplomatic communication. English is now widely used in all walks of life and all kinds of endeavors. Many students, even those who are not native English speakers, choose to get their formal education in fields like mathematics, science, politics, economics, technology, the arts, sports, and more via the medium of English.

Most nations have included language instruction, particularly English, in their curricula at all grade levels as a step in this direction. They must cultivate citizens who are fluent in English and capable of engaging in cross-cultural dialogue and global problem-solving. Students at the university level, in particular, benefit from these initiatives since they increase the likelihood that they will find successful employment in a white-collar field following graduation. In addition, depending on the particular student, there may be other motives for the student's desire to study the English language. Some people may want to learn English so that they may impress their friends and family with their linguistic abilities. Some people might utilize it to further their own personal or professional objectives.

The ability to communicate effectively in a second language, particularly English, may help job seekers in a variety of fields, including commerce, industry, government, and academia. That is to say, being able to speak a second language may improve their employment prospects. This may be connected to the belief that those with superior English language skills have a similar advantage when applying for jobs at the

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world's leading multinational corporations. Another remark makes the point that although employees need to be able to speak English in order to do well in their jobs, they often lack the essential degree of skill. Furthermore, it seems that learning a foreign language, particularly in terms of fluency in speech, is a challenging undertaking in an academic environment. Successful second-language acquisition requires attention to both linguistic and non-linguistic aspects.

Anxiety is the typical emotional reaction to stress. It's a negative emotional state characterized by worry or dread about the future (AA Zarei, 2021). Many different types of anxiety accompany these illnesses. The first is panic disorder, characterized by repeated episodes of intense fear at inopportune moments. People who suffer from panic fear the onset of panic attacks (Kierkegaard, 2013). The second is a phobia, which is an extreme and unreasonable dread of something. However, there is a mental disease known as obsessive-compulsive disorder, which is characterized by the recurrence of irrational ideas that cause people to behave in predictable patterns. Separation anxiety disorder is characterized by an excessive fear of being apart from close friends and family members (Craske et al., 2011).

Self-efficacy is defined as the confidence in one's own skills to plan and carry out the activities that will lead to desired outcomes. Students' capacity to successfully plan, organize, carry out, and engage in their English language learning processes is implicitly related to their level of general self-efficacy. Beliefs about one's own ability to influence outcomes in the areas of self, action, and environment are particularly influential. As a result, it helps with the mental controls that keep us inspired. This is because people tend to control how much and where they exert themselves in relation to the outcomes they anticipate. Those who rate themselves highly in self-efficacy are more likely to believe they can successfully complete difficult activities despite the presence of difficulties. That is to say, they could have the ability to handle circumstances, generate new ideas, and address existing issues. Therefore, if an English language learner develops a healthy sense of confidence in his or her own abilities, that person is more likely to become fluent in the language.

A person's self-efficacy is their belief in their own ability to do a task successfully. It's the difference between the student's "I can" and "I cannot" attitudes. Students' self-efficacy, in contrast to their self-esteem, is a reflection of their confidence in their ability to complete concrete academic tasks. Confidence in one's own abilities does not always translate to confidence in one's own abilities in other areas. Strong self-efficacy in mathematics does not inevitably accompany strong self-efficacy in spelling, just as great confidence in snow skiing may not be matched by high confidence in baseball. The ability to believe in one's own abilities is very task-dependent. Students with high levels of self-efficacy may or may not be confident in their abilities. Students' perceptions of their own ability to achieve well reflect self-efficacy, but they may still worry that other variables will prevent them from excelling.

One's level of confidence in one's ability to complete a task is affected by their sense of self-efficacy. The amount of academic self-adjustment was shown to have a favorable correlation with both self-efficacy and academic success. Adolescent depression was shown to be related to low levels of self-efficacy. It was also suggested that self-efficacy is an important factor in anxiety. Anxiety and poor confidence in one's own abilities were noted to go hand in hand.

To put it simply, speech anxiety is the feeling of apprehension that a speaker has before, and perhaps even during, a public speech. Hands that sweat excessively, a shaky voice, a dry throat, trouble breathing, and even memory loss are all indicators of anxiety. It is difficult to foresee the specific symptoms you may experience. Keep in mind that almost every public speaker has been nervous before giving a speech. Even seasoned public speakers might experience some nervousness before taking the stage. Fear may come in a wide range of forms. Some public speakers report feeling no nerves at all, while others admit they get the jitters just thinking about taking the stage. It was a favorite joke of Jerry Seinfeld's to say that most people would rather be dead than give a eulogy at a funeral. ”

The use of English as a second language in global communication is crucial. Since learning English may open up many doors, many individuals have made the conscious decision to do so. Students have learned four abilities that have greatly contributed to their English proficiency; one of them is speaking, which plays a crucial part in effective verbal communication. Speech that is created on the spot is one kind of public speaking. One of the typical assignments in this class is to give an impromptu speech or a speech



for which there was no or very little prior preparation. According to Ghirardelli, giving spontaneous speeches is a great way to help students develop their public speaking skills, which is very useful in the professional world.

The need for fluency in the English language has grown as its use has spread across the world. Students tend to agree that oral communication is one of the most challenging and perhaps most crucial aspects of English language acquisition. When asked to speak in front of the class unprepared, language learners often experience fear. Anxiety may easily be bred in a speaking class when students are required to provide an impromptu English task in front of their peers. Anxious students often report that class presentations cause them stress.

The key instrument that helps us communicate with people from all around the world is the language we share. A person's degree of assimilation into mainstream society may be inferred, in part, by how well they speak the language of that society. The ability to communicate effectively in the classroom is crucial for students' academic performance. Instead, pupils' inability to communicate effectively and socially is rooted in linguistic deficits and gaps. As Horwitz (2001) has stated, "in addition to contributing to our understanding of second language achievement, language anxiety is fundamental to our understanding of how learners approach language learning,

Their expectations for success or failure, and ultimately why they continue or discontinue study" (p.122). If we accept these arguments as being true, the important role of anxiety in foreign language learning becomes undisputable.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate students' speaking anxiety at the university level.
2. To highlight the impacts of speaking anxiety on student self-efficacy

Research Questions

1. What is the level of speaking anxiety?
2. Is there any impact of speaking anxiety on students' self-efficacy?

Literature Review

Anxiety about communicating in English stems from "self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning" (Horwitz et al., 1986: p.128). Studying a foreign language is unlike studying any other subject since it requires students to communicate in a language they have not yet mastered. Communication apprehension, fear of unfavorable assessment, and test anxiety are the three main components of foreign language anxiety outlined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Students with communication apprehension have a low level of proficiency in the target language and, hence, feel uncomfortable speaking and listening in front of others. Students who worry about being judged negatively by their teachers or classmates tend to see language mistakes as personal attacks rather than learning opportunities. Because of this, they tend to keep to themselves most of the time without engaging in any linguistic activity (Ely, 1986). Rather than seeing the chance to communicate and hone their abilities, students with test anxiety see the whole foreign language process, particularly oral output, as a test.

According to Ortega (2014), there are a number of different symptoms that make up foreign language speaking anxiety, such as being unable to speak and feeling confused even after extensive practice. Nervousness over public speaking manifests itself in a number of ways, as described by Hanna and Gibson (1992), including elevated blood pressure, trembling hands, weakness, nervousness, forgetting one's lines, and avoiding eye contact with the audience. Fearful expressions of emotion are unflattering. Anxiety causes us to feel uneasy, apprehensive, and afraid. We sweat, shake, and have rapid heart rates while we fight for our lives. Anxiety is a multifaceted emotion that is influenced by a number of factors, including confidence in one's own abilities and realistic assessments of the dangers one faces in various circumstances (Tobias, 1986). Anxiety is a normal human emotion that has many characteristics, with fear (Lader, 1975). Students' ability to adapt to the target environment and pursue their educational objectives may be negatively impacted by their anxiety around communication in a second/foreign language, particularly when that

language is English. There is also widespread consensus that worry is linked to performance and that it has a deleterious impact on education and success.

This is why anxiety is one of the most studied mental states there is. Anxiety may be defined in a variety of ways, from objective behaviors amenable to scientific study to subjective emotions that cannot be adequately measured (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001). Anxiety, in its broadest sense, refers to the subjective experience of tension, uncertainty, uneasiness, and concern brought on by autonomic nervous system activation. Anxiety has traditionally been broken down into three categories: trait anxiety, situational anxiety, and state anxiety. While there is no hard and fast line between the three, the differences can be roughly identified along a continuum from stability to transience, with trait anxiety relating to a relatively stable propensity to feel anxious in a variety of situations falling on one end and moment-to-moment experience of emotional state on the other.

Factors Leading to Speaking Anxiety

According to Ortega (2014), anxiety while speaking a foreign language manifests itself in a variety of ways, including freezing up and being disoriented despite preparation. Public speaking anxiety, according to Hanna and Gibson (1992), manifests itself in a variety of ways, including elevated blood pressure, trembling hands, weakness, nervousness, forgetting the prepared information, and avoiding eye contact with the audience. Speaking anxiety in FL is influenced by a variety of linguistic, psychological, and cultural variables. Low language ability is the first contributing element. According to Ellis (2015), learners with poor language skills (grammar, pronunciation, and lexis) have a propensity to experience high levels of anxiety. The results of an interview conducted in 2013 by Kayaoglu and Saglanel with 30 Turkish EFL students revealed that linguistic difficulties (vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation) increased the students' language anxiety. In addition, Melouah (2013) looked into the causes and severity of oral performance anxiety among 54 Algerian EFL university students.

Analysis of Related Studies

Some earlier studies are pertinent to this investigation. The goal of the research was to determine the degree and possible root reasons of students from Yemen who were anxious about speaking English as a foreign language. Chen and Chang (2004) believe that foreign language anxiety is a perspective of situation-specific anxiety. In their article, neither test characteristics nor academic learning history were found to be variables of foreign language anxiety, which means that foreign language anxiety is a unique type of anxiety.

Those findings supported this theory that anxiety associated with foreign language learning is a specific type of anxiety stemmed from the uniqueness of learning a foreign language. The outcome indicated that 14 out of 33 items had mean values that were higher. Communication anxiety, fear of criticism, and exam anxiety are the three areas from which its average fourteen items may have significant effects on the individual. The item 9 on communication anxiety had the highest mean value ($M=3.5806$, Standard Deviation= 25.8), while the items 3, 13, and 33 on fear of a poor evaluation had higher mean values ($M=3.8387$, Std. Deviation= 13), ($M=3.5484$, Std. Deviation= 25.8), and ($M=3.5161$, Std. Deviation= 25.8), respectively. The item 12 on test anxiety had the lowest mean value ($M=3.774$, Std.

The second study is based on Zia & Sulan's (2015) investigation on the causes of speaking anxiety among Afghan EFL learners. The participants in this research were 115 first-year EFL undergraduate students at Nangarhar University in Afghanistan, with an age range of 17 to 24. There were 30 female and 85 male participants. This research used quantitative methods. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) comprised 33 questions that were included in the questionnaire.

According to the study's findings, the first factor, communication anxiety, had a mean score of 3.5281 and a standard deviation of (.53103), the second, test anxiety, had a mean score of 3.3200 and a standard deviation of (.54327), and the third, fear of a negative evaluation, had a mean score of 3.7130 and a standard deviation of (.68812). This indicates that of the three FLCAS dimensions, fear of unfavorable assessment scored highest.

Research Approach: (Research Design)

Research design is a blue print of a scientific study. More precisely, it deals with the methodical ways in which a researcher plans a study to guarantee accurate and trustworthy findings that address. (MV Demirel, A. T. I. A., 2020).

The study is quantitative and descriptive in nature; data were collected from students in the form of a questionnaire. Descriptive research contains description, analysis, and interpretation. This research involves collection of data and tabulation of data collected through questionnaires. It deals with the analysis and interpretation of knowledge that is collected for particular purposes.

Population and Sampling

A population is the whole group of people from which a sample is drawn for a study. You might think of a sample as the subset of the population that will be the focus of your data collection efforts. In any given population, a sample's size will always be less than the population as a whole. The students of the social science department at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, were the population of this research study. A total of 100 students were selected as a research sample by using a random sampling technique.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data-collection instruments are the forms that are used to collect information on substantially identical items from respondents. A questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was comprised of 20 closed-ended questions regarding the problems students have faced related to speaking anxiety. All the questions were developed after discussion and approval of the supervisor.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

To get a good understanding of the problem, "How student worries about speaking affects their confidence and school scores in college," we need to first learn who our respondents are. This part tells us all about the people in the study and prepares us for analyzing their data later on. The demographic profile includes important details such as age, gender, school year, and field of study. These factors are very important in finding out possible differences between speaking fear, thoughts about doing well, and school success.

Table 1

Descriptive analysis

Questions	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you face anxiety in speaking English when participating in the class discussion?	100	1.515	0.67
Do you hesitate while speaking English with peers in the class?	100	1.684	0.74
Do you hesitate while speaking English with Teachers in the class?	100	1.871	0.82
Do you experience speaking anxiety in class presentations?	100	1.515	0.67
Do you perceive your own speaking abilities as inferior to your peers?	100	1.684	0.74
Do you feel demotivated due to anxiety about speaking English in class?	100	1.364	0.60
Do you avoid speaking in class due to anxiety?	100	1.515	0.67
Does your speaking anxiety affect your academic performance?	100	1.228	0.54
Does speaking anxiety have an impact on your result? (Presentation marks).	100	1.364	0.60
Do you believe your speaking anxiety affects your participation in academic activities? (Debate competitions, speech).	100	1.105	0.49
Do you think speaking anxiety is an important variable that affects academic performance?	100	1.622	0.71
Do you feel speaking anxiety negatively impacts your ability?	100	1.802	0.79

Questions	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you think speaking anxiety has a significant impact on your overall academic performance?	100	2.002	0.88
Do you believe your speaking anxiety affects your overall academic self-efficacy?	100	1.622	0.71
Do you think speaking anxiety affects your confidence level?	100	1.802	0.79
Do you avoid public speaking opportunities whenever possible?	100	1.459	0.64
Do you feel worried about forgetting what you want to say when speaking in class?	100	1.622	0.71
Do you feel capable of handling the challenges associated with public speaking?	100	1.313	0.58
Do you feel speaking anxiety hinders your beliefs in your own speaking capabilities?	100	1.459	0.64
Do you think that speaking anxiety ever made you question your confidence in your communication skills?	100	1.182	0.52

English Speaking Anxiety

Having a mean score of 1.515 and a standard deviation of 0.67, students generally reported rather low feelings of nervousness when speaking English in class discussions. A considerable degree of anxiousness is also demonstrated by hesitancy while conversing with instructors (mean = 1.871) and classmates (mean = 1.684). Anxiety in class discussions is comparable to anxiety during presentations (mean = 1.515). A sizable portion of pupils (mean = 1.802) believe that their nervousness impairs their speaking skills.

Impact on Academic Performance

A large number of students (mean = 1.228) think that their performance in class is impacted by their speech anxiety. There is a perceived influence on academic involvement (mean = 1.105) and presenting marks (mean = 1.364). Concerns regarding how speaking anxiety affects their general academic self-efficacy are also expressed by students (mean = 1.622). Anxiety is the main reason why students avoid speaking in class (mean = 1.515). The levels of confidence are significantly impacted (mean = 1.802), while some individuals avoid public speaking chances at all costs (mean = 1.459).

Overall Impact

It is clear that they are concerned about missing what to say (mean = 1.622) and that their thoughts about their own speaking talents (mean = 1.459) are a barrier. Speaking anxiety causes some pupils (mean = 1.182) to even doubt their trust in their communication abilities. A considerable proportion of students (mean = 2.002) think that their overall academic achievement is significantly impacted by their fear of speaking.

Analysis

According to the findings, students typically feel nervous when speaking English in a variety of contexts. Academic achievement, confidence, and involvement in educational events are all believed to be impacted. The results point to the necessity of support systems or treatments to deal with speaking anxiety, which may have an effect on students' general academic performance. It's crucial to remember that the analysis offered is based just on descriptive data, and more inferential analysis or qualitative research could be required to fully comprehend the root reasons for speaking anxiety and how it affects academic achievement.

Impact of Speaking Anxiety on Self-Efficacy Perceptions

A key part of this study, which aims to explain the complicated relationship between these thinking parts, is measuring how nervousness when talking affects feelings about self-confidence. In the Individual Trial, they look at how nerves about speaking change beliefs of confidence using even chances in known and not



thought-through conditions. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances has a significance level of .441, meaning that we can assume equal variances. This helps make the t-test results easier to understand.

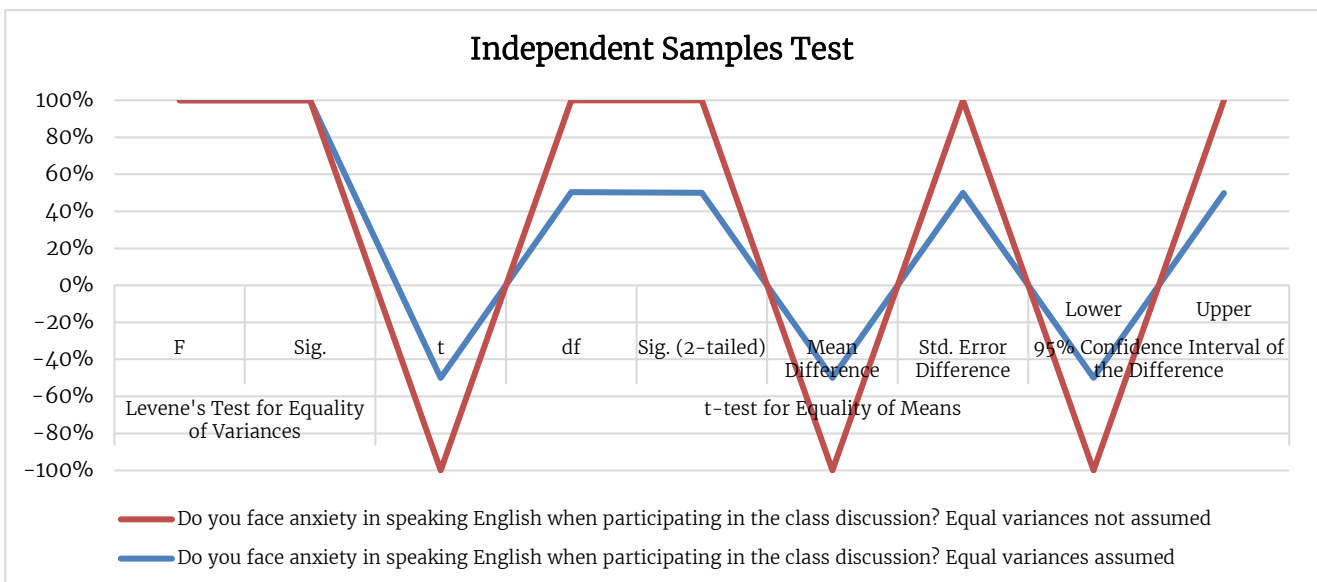
Table 2
Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Do you face anxiety in speaking English when participating in the class discussion?	Equal variances assumed	0.599	0.441	-0.536	98	0.593	-0.12	0.224	-0.564	0.324	
	Equal variances are not assumed.			-0.536	96.58	0.593	-0.12	0.224	-0.565	0.325	

The number that is obtained when testing if two means are equal is -0.536 using freedom of 98, and the level to check importance comes out at .593. This small result means that there is no big change in the feeling of self-confidence between students who feel worried when talking in class and those who don't. Even though this difference is not very important, the average change in being sure about oneself is -0.120 points. This shows a small drop of belief and confidence by those who feel scared to talk or say things out loud. A rough guess of how close the average difference is can be estimated by using a 0.224 standard error for changes in value.

An independent sample t-test was used to compare the level of worry while speaking English in class talks. Two teams of fifty boys and girls each were formed from a group of one hundred students. There was no big difference between the groups ($t(100) = -.453, p = .593, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.564, .32]$). The man's average ($M = 2.68, SD = 1.168$) and the woman's average ($M = 2.80, SD = .487$) did not differ in a significant way statistically speaking when observed closely using scientific methods to gain accurate results or analysis of data sets known as statistics hence reaching meaningful conclusions based on these findings by measuring. These findings show that both boys and girls do not get scared when talking in English during class talks. The 95% confidence range for the difference is from -0.564 to 0.324. Including zero in this range backs up the results are not important. The upper and lower parts of the confidence interval tell us how big or small the real difference could be.

Figure 1



Findings

On the basis of the results, it was found that:

- A student's transition from secondary school to university is a critical turning point in their life, one that is characterized by higher standards and new obstacles. The influence of speaking anxiety on academic achievement and confidence is one of the many variables affecting the educational process. This detailed examination explores the complex dynamics of this interaction using data from large-scale surveys given to instructors and students at the educational institution level.
- 91.80% of educators and an astounding 97.20% of students emphasized the importance of providing regular, detailed feedback. This suggests a dedication to the development and progress of students, highlighting the importance of helpful criticism in building self-efficacy. A good academic experience is greatly influenced by the relationship between receiving constructive criticism and having less nervousness during public speaking.
- Regarding higher education, 91.99% of educators and 88.00% of students agreed that including quick questions in lectures creates an engaging atmosphere. Additionally, 93.40% of educators and 87.50% of students agreed that self-reflection is crucial to the educational process. In addition to actively involving pupils, these techniques also help reduce speaking anxiety by encouraging involvement and awareness of oneself.
- The thoughtful strategy of including both lengthy and short written questions was well received by instructors (94.20%) and college students (91.50%) about Speaking Anxiety on their self-efficacy.

Conclusion

- Studying how speaking fear, self-confidence, and school grades are all connected is very helpful. This can help us a lot to know better ways of learning languages, protect mental health, and make schools even better overall. The findings show how language skills and mental factors are connected. This affects students in different fields while they learn languages. Many people feel scared about talking in public. This shows that we need special ways of helping girls and women have equal chances, especially when it is time for learning at school. Studies prove that high anxiety levels can hurt students' overall schoolwork and their ability to talk easily. Understanding this problem makes us want more places for learning that are friendly and supportive.
- The important part that self-confidence has in linking language fear with school success shows how vital it is to help students believe they can learn a new way of talking. This means that schools must spend money on projects and programs to help students believe in themselves. They know this can make learning a language easier for kids – leading to better results overall. In their chosen areas of study, students see many ways to learn languages. This is shown by looking closely at how different education fields compare with each other. To make language learning programs better, we should change them to fit the demands of each different subject and the confidence levels required for that language.
- A potential direction is to look at how speaking anxiety and self-efficacy are affected by cultural background. More culturally sensitive treatments can be informed by cross-cultural research, which can reveal how cultural subtleties and expectations impact students' reactions to language-related issues. Studies that compare how well various pedagogical strategies work to boost self-efficacy and lessen speaking anxiety might be useful in supporting evidence-based language instruction methods. More effective language learning programs can be created by investigating how different teaching pedagogies affect students' language-related perceptions.

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