

**Glossophobia in EFL Classroom: Exploring the Fear of Public Speaking Among the  
University Students in Bhutan**

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Arts in English

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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## Approval

The thesis/project titled “**Glossophobia in EFL Classroom: Exploring the Fear of Public Speaking Among the University Students in Bhutan**” submitted by Choki Pema (20203039) of Summer 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in English on 07/10/24.

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## **Abstract**

Public speaking is recognized as one of the crucial life skills, serving as a means for individuals to develop confidence through their communication abilities (Adnan et al., 2014). It refers to a situation where an individual is talking or delivering a speech in front of a crowd or a public gathering. However, one of the primary issues that students encounter in various educational institutions is their fear of speaking in public. This fear of speaking in public is also referred to as one of the phobias, which is 'glossophobia.' Therefore, the study is about Glossophobia in the EFL Classroom: Exploring the Fear of Public Speaking among University Students in Bhutan. Hence, the study's main objective is to explore the root causes of experiencing the fear of public speaking in the EFL classroom. The study further explores ways to overcome this fear of speaking in a public setting. This research study focuses on university students in Bhutan through a qualitative approach. It is undertaken through interviews to gather data or information from students across various universities in Bhutan through students' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. The ultimate goal and result of this research is a comprehensive understanding of the glossophobia experienced by the students and the causes and possible strategies to overcome this issue. Also, these findings are intended to enhance student's confidence in public speaking.

**Keywords:** Glossophobia, public speaking, anxiety, confidence.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Language plays a crucial role as a tool for interpersonal communication in our daily lives. Among the four essential language skills we use regularly, speaking prominently stands out as the one that many people use for interaction purposes. Whether we are talking in a crowd, giving presentations, or responding to inquiries, addressing an audience is a prime example of this skill, often referred to as public speaking. Public speaking is defined by Marinho et al. (2017) as a specific act of oral communication combining physiological, linguistic, psychological, and cultural factors. The author further mentions that if an individual is competent enough to speak in a public setting, this provides a helping tool for them to succeed in their professional life, skills to gain in competitive fields, and positive feedback. It includes various activities like giving a speech or presentation to an audience to share information. On the other hand, Dansieh et al. (2021) state that public speaking is a process where an individual is required to act and make a speech to an audience. Furthermore, he argues that it is a way to communicate one's ideas and express feelings to receive a desired response from the audience. In other words, public speaking is an utterance in which the speaker expresses himself to everyone who is listening (Carnegie & Esenwein, 2017).

### **Role of Public Speaking**

The primary objective of public speaking is information dissemination, enabling individuals to communicate information, facts, and ideas to others. Sharing information is essential for education, which facilitates the transmission of knowledge among students and bridging cultural differences, thereby leading to preserving and passing on cultural traditions. Raja (2017) mentions that in today's world, as countries around the globe develop, public speaking skills are required at all levels. It serves as a platform for individuals to express their

thoughts, facilitating the sharing of personal experiences among students and benefiting their peers. Moreover, it also helps in fostering relationships that play a pivotal role in our daily lives. Public speaking enhances the establishment of fundamental relationships and the cultivation of personal, social, and professional connections. It empowers students to connect and collaborate effectively. Additionally, public speaking functions as a tool for influence and persuasion. Speaking publicly can sway and convince others, constituting a critical skill not only in educational institutions but also in diverse fields like leadership, advertising, and politics. Among students, public speaking promotes innovation and progress. It allows the exchange of ideas and information, contributing to their knowledge base.

### **Fear of Public Speaking**

One of the primary obstacles or challenges that learners face in effective communication is the fear of speaking in public. This fear not only hinders students' ability to learn efficiently but also hampers their academic progress and future career prospects. For instance, in many universities, participation in club activities is typically not compulsory. This situation particularly affects introverted students who are anxious about public speaking, preventing them from stepping forward to express their interest in joining such activities. As a result, this fear deprives students of essential opportunities for exposure, ultimately hindering their confidence development. Similarly, every student attending university is likely to have encountered various public speaking engagements. As suggested by Christensen (2002), all the students have certainly encountered the fear of public speaking or feeling uneasy while speaking in a public situation, such as in classroom presentations, participating in class lectures or discussions, delivering formal speeches in assemblies, and addressing audiences during orientation



ceremonies. This fear typically stems from the necessity to address audiences in formal settings, at conferences, or even during informal discussions with groups of people.

According to Marinho et al. (2017), the fear of public speaking results in communication difficulties that affect an individual's personal and social life. Also, it impacts individuals emotionally, especially those who are weak at handling the emotional aspects of life. Moreover, the author contends that the causes of this fear can be attributed to a lack of speaking experience, an inadequate grasp of the subject matter, or a negative self-perception. It holds that virtually everyone experiences some level of fear of speaking in public, though it varies in different situations. This fear of public speaking has drawn the attention of the academic community in university students, sparking interest in honing the skills necessary for addressing audiences and ultimately cultivating the confidence to engage in public speaking.

Nonetheless, the fear of public speaking is widespread among the global population. In contrast, higher education institutions require their incoming students to excel academically and foster strong interpersonal connections; effective public speaking is a key component. In many university classrooms, it's evident that only consistently active students in discussions continue to participate, while those apprehensive about public speaking tend to remain quiet. When these hesitant students are called upon or asked questions, they often feel pressured to respond, influenced by the formality of the setting or the class itself.

### **Glossophobia in Bhutanese EFL classroom**

English, the international language, allowed Bhutan to interact with the countries in and around the world. Therefore, Bhutan adopted English as the language of instruction for the schools in Bhutan. In all the schools in Bhutan, from primary to higher secondary school, English is a mandatory language subject to study as it is a common language used as a global

language (Curriculum and Professional Support Division [CAPSD], 2014; Reddy, 2016 as cited in Om, 2018). Therefore, most students need to be more comfortable communicating in English, especially in a public setting. However, glossophobia is one of the most common problems among Bhutanese students, despite the fact that they must converse in English since it is used as a medium of instruction or the language of teaching. Additionally, students fear public speaking as they are being judged by their classmates and the teacher when the individual makes mistakes (Om, 2018). This type of anxiety is common, particularly in EFL classrooms where students must communicate verbally to demonstrate their English language skills in peer or group projects, class discussions, and presentations. In Bhutanese EFL classrooms, glossophobia makes language learning difficult for the students. Nonetheless, English continues to play a significant role, and the Bhutanese educational system still depends extensively on English.

Furthermore, the distinct cultural environment and educational background of the EFL Bhutanese university students make researching glossophobia among them unusual. In contrast to other Western nations, Bhutan's culture is heavily impacted by Buddhist principles, which place a significant focus on humility, modesty, and respect while still maintaining tranquility. This influences how learners behave toward their teachers, friends, family, and seniors and younger. Respect for elders and authoritative figures is sacred upon in Bhutanese society, not because people are afraid of them, but rather because speaking in public is difficult and frequently anxious. Additionally, by conducting study on this subject, educational institutions will be able to take cultural sensitivity into account when developing their lesson plans, which will increase student confidence and involvement. More significantly, it promotes student mental health. To further explain, as glossophobia is associated with nervousness, anxiety, and stress, mental health professionals may investigate this issue in order to lessen the psychological effects

of public speaking on students. Finally, research on this topic teaches students how to work on traditional expectations of humility and critical thinking as well as public expression in public speaking abilities. Bhutan focuses on traditional teaching methods in order to bridge the gap between traditional and modern education systems with modernization taking place. To put it briefly, addressing linguistic difficulties and cultural beliefs is important in addition to being culturally relevant in order to improve students' effective learning.

### **Research Problem**

Glossophobia or the fear of public speaking, is a significant barrier to having effective communication in personal, professional, and academic success, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It is particularly difficult for universities in Bhutan because of cultural elements like respect for elders and higher authority, which put extra pressure on non-native speakers. Students get disconnected from group discussions, peer work, presentations, and other classroom activities as a result of this. Strong public speaking abilities are crucial, but little is known about how they impact university students in Bhutan studying EFL in our unique cultural and linguistic context. It is also a result of the lack of culturally appropriate coping mechanisms for glossophobia. Therefore, the research problem is to understand how glossophobia impacts Bhutanese university students in EFL classrooms, focusing on its causes and ways to overcome glossophobia to enhance students public speaking skills.

### **Research Gap**

Glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, is one of the most common phobias that students face throughout their educational life, further affecting their academic performance, professional development, and personal lives. Despite the huge impact, there are limited research studies on glossophobia students experience in EFL classrooms in the universities in Bhutan.

Therefore, to address this gap, this research study aims to explore the fear of public speaking in EFL classrooms among university students in Bhutan. Moreover, I found the need to understand the main causes and the ways to overcome this fear so that the students can perform confidently, further enhancing their oral communication skills.

### **Research Purpose**

The long-term goals of this study are:

1. to identify the main factors that are contributing to glossophobia among EFL university students in Bhutan.
2. to recommend possible strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking.
3. to benefit both learners and the teachers.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the objectives mentioned above, the study will focus on the following questions:

1. What are the causes of glossophobia in EFL classroom universities in Bhutan?
2. How, according to the participants, can students overcome this fear of public speaking and then speak confidently?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

To understand the details of the phenomenon, this chapter reviews the existing literature on glossophobia in the EFL classroom, emphasizing its causes and the possible strategies to help students overcome the fear. By going through the previous research on this topic, the chapter aims to provide clear ideas of addressing glossophobia in the EFL classroom and the need for having effective interventions that make students learning more successful.

### **Glossophobia: Definition of Key Terms**

According to Mohammed et al. (2009), glossophobia refers to speaking anxiety, which is a part of the human condition. He defines it as a subjective feeling of being stressed out, nervous, or worried about something that automatically arouses the nervous system. Also, glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, is directly related to anxiety about communicating or delivering a speech, which occurs mentally or some of which occurs through physical sensations, including shaking, increased heart and breathing rates, turning red, and talking fast. On the other hand, Khan et al. (2015) mentioned glossophobia is a kind of phobia where people fear speaking in public. Glossophobia is also referred to as one of the types of social phobia caused mainly by avoidance of speaking in public because of the fear of getting humiliated and embarrassed in front of others (Hancock et al., 2010). The term glossophobia can be interchangeably used with communication apprehension, which refers to an individual's fear or anxiety of speaking with people or in a public setting (McCroskey, 2001, as cited in Dansieh et al., 2021). However, according to Dellah (2020), glossophobia is an uneasy feeling when an individual is speaking in public or in front of students in the classroom alone. It usually happens to those who fear using a second or foreign language.

### **Student's Fear of Public Speaking in EFL Classroom**

According to Kalra & Siribud (2020), students' fear of speaking in public in an EFL classroom has been one of the most common phenomena that most learners go through. More importantly, it is found that students encounter this anxiousness when they are not native speakers of this language, English. Arifin (2017) mentioned that speaking English, especially in an EFL classroom, is difficult as the students feel the need and pressure to put more effort into using the words appropriately and accordingly. Not only for the learners but also for teachers, speaking in English as a foreign language is challenging because it not only involves building students' ability to speak or produce verbal utterances with fluent and accurate pronunciation but also about the student's mental control as a fortress of performance. Additionally, it is suggested that a student's degree of language anxiety affects how well they communicate in front of an audience (Kocak, 2010 as cited in Kalra & Siribud, 2020).

### **Causes of Glossophobia in the EFL Classroom**

Glossophobia is prevalent among the university students in the EFL classroom. Therefore, it is essential to identify the factors that contribute to glossophobia in students learning experiences. Furthermore, it's important to understand the underlying causes in order to create mitigation methods for glossophobia and improve student learning outcomes. Therefore, this section focused on the multifaceted factors that contribute to glossophobia in English as a foreign language classroom.

#### **Foreign Language Anxiety**

Anxiety refers to distress in our thoughts or uneasy minds caused by fear of danger or misfortune in our daily schedules (Suleimenova, 2012, as cited in Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015).

Foreign language anxiety is a type of anxiety that is status-specific and originating from a formal

language learning environment, principally in a setting where there is low assessment of communicative language skills in the target language (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003, as cited in Wardhani, 2019). Students usually experience anxiety when they have to engage in public speaking, primarily because they are using a foreign language, which can make them feel uneasy. These concerns predominantly stem from a lack of self-assurance and the fear of making errors. Additionally, students feel apprehensive about possible criticism and the expectation to excel, especially in front of their peers, which contributes to the development of anxiety. To specify, the feeling of uneasiness or nervousness is caused by the use of second or foreign language anxiety, which is known as 'xenoglossophobia'. It is regarded that the use of formal language in the classroom itself is an anxiety-provoking factor. However, it is seen that it mainly arises when students experience negative incidents from using a foreign language in the language classroom (Dansieh, 2021).

In short, students commonly experience glossophobia when they are required to use a foreign language, such as English, in the classroom. This anxiety is often a result of their relative unfamiliarity with the foreign language compared to their native tongue. Consequently, concerns about language proficiency, the potential for making mistakes, and the fear of being evaluated by teachers and peers trigger this anxiety. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, it was observed that a significant number of Chinese students were willing to engage in interpersonal communication; nonetheless, a majority of the students needed to be self-assured to risk using English to speak in a classroom setting. Furthermore, they displayed a negative attitude towards and felt anxious about public speaking and examinations (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

**Lack of Confidence**

According to Kushner (2004), as cited in Dansiehet et al. (2021), the fear of speaking can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of confidence, infrequent public speaking experiences, mass laughter from the audience during the speaking session, limited knowledge about public speaking, insufficient preparation for public speaking, and an inability to express ourselves effectively due to limited English-speaking proficiency. Bugayong & Ibojo (2023), A lack of self-confidence can lead to the emergence of self-doubt and the reception of unfavorable feedback and pessimistic thoughts. Additionally, the writer highlights that individuals grappling with the fear of public speaking often display diminished self-assurance, posing a notable hindrance to their capacity for proficient public communication. According to Grieve et al., 2021, as cited in Ibrahim et al. (2022), glossophobia is caused mainly by a lack of confidence, further impacting the students' college experience. The author elaborates that the factors causing the lack of confidence include the fear of being judged, practice and preparation, practical support, and the response they would get from the audience or listeners.

**Unwillingness to Communicate**

One of the quantitative studies by Liu & Jackson (2008) states that students were unwilling to communicate or exhibited a reluctance to communicate, and this tendency was closely linked to their apprehensions, making them strong predictors of each other. Unwillingness to communicate was a “concept of an overall approach towards communication that is far more completely formed” (McCroskey, 1992, as cited in Liu & Jackson, 2008). While certain students may be unwilling to communicate, it's noteworthy that they readily and willingly participate in group discussions. It means that the speaker is not comfortable with his/her audience. Therefore, this observation underscores the existence of a correlation between anxiety



and the reluctance to communicate within specific social contexts. In addition, the author points out that as students' language proficiency improves, their anxiety levels tend to decrease, reducing their reluctance to communicate and making them less inclined to engage in a conversation. Conversely, heightened anxiety tends to amplify the unwillingness to communicate further, resulting in glossophobia or fear of public speaking. These findings indicate that learners or students often require a sense of familiarity with their audience to feel comfortable speaking in a public setting (Magogwe, 2010).

### **Overcoming Glossophobia among Students**

Since many students suffer from glossophobia, it is critical to address this problem in order to foster good communication skills between the students and the teacher as well as among the students. This section aims at exploring the various strategies to help students overcome their fear of public speaking. It provides some useful strategies for assisting students in overcoming their glossophobia and improving their public speaking skills, drawing on the reviews of the literature that have already been published.

### **Creating a Friendly, Supportive, and Non-threatening Learning Environment**

According to Yee & Abidin (2014), one of the ways to overcome the fear of public speaking in an EFL classroom is the responsibility of the teacher, meaning the teacher should create an amicable, supportive, and non-threatening learning environment for the students so that the students can speak English in the classroom. The author further mentions that the teacher should also emphasize creating a collaborative atmosphere with various learning activities at the school so that the students get to know each other and can be supportive and help each other as they get comfortable. On the other hand, a non-threatening learning environment includes creating learning strategies for the students, such as making the learning process easier, more

effective, faster, interactive, and more enjoyable tasks so that students can speak English in an EFL classroom without hesitation. The author also stated self-direction as one of the ways to overcome one's phobias. Self-direction is seen as one of the ways to guide on your own in different situations without having the teacher guide the students while learning or speaking a language. This particular strategy helps students to build confidence and activates the development of their ability in English (Oxford, 1990 as cited in Widhayanti, 2018).

### **Develop and implement relaxation techniques and movement strategies to reduce anxiety**

According to O'Hair et al. (2010), as cited in Netta & Helmanda (2020), to overcome the fear of public speaking in an EFL classroom, the students should practice these five steps of preparing, modifying, visualizing, activating the relaxation response, and moving forward in minimizing anxiety. To elaborate, the students should practice and get well-prepared before they present in the classroom. While doing so, they would find the mistakes and changes the students needed to make, so they should modify their thoughts and attitudes. Furthermore, it means the students must have a positive mindset about speaking in the classroom. Next, the students should work on visualization of success, meaning they should think of the success of public speaking helping them to control emotions before speaking in an EFL classroom. After that, students must activate their relaxation response to work on their breathing control. For instance, mediation is one of the ways to control and help in relaxation. Finally, students have to use movements, including physical movements, that help them minimize anxiety so that as they deliver more, they get over the fear of public speaking.

### **Practice, Grab the Attention of the Audience, and Use Virtual Environment**

According to Raja (2017), one of the basic ways to overcome the fear of public speaking in an EFL classroom is by practicing it in small groups. To narrate, the students should be placed

in small groups to speak confidently as they practice speaking with their peers and can face a larger audience. It means that this practice activity will help the students boost their confidence level and help them reduce their anxiety, leading to confidently speaking in a public setting. Kushner, 2010, as cited in Raja, 2017, states that there are various steps and strategies to overcome glossophobia. He first mentioned using rhetorical questions and quotations to start and end the speech to grab the audience's attention. He elaborated that before speaking, the speaker should analyze the requirements of the topic so that the audience will be motivated to listen while the speaker can speak more confidently.

The author further elaborates that it is always important for the speaker to set some aims and objectives. Also, when the speaker does not leave a good impression on the audience, what needs to be achieved is not achieved at the end of the presentation. Many authors, including Sandra, 2002, as cited in Raja, 2017, state the importance of students' exposure to virtual environments to overcome the fear of public speaking. They strongly pointed out that exposing students to the virtual environment will help fight glossophobia through the study of Virtual Reality Therapy (VRT). It was shown that it was conducted on fourteen students who were divided into two groups with seven members in each group. The first group underwent VRT; individual treatment and post-testing—while the other group completed post-testing only. The results of these tests showed that the Virtual Reality Therapy session helped students to reduce their anxiety about public speaking.

### **Role plays and cooperative learning**

According to Chalermnirundorn (2018), using role-plays is a common and helpful way to reduce students' public speaking anxiety. To elaborate, role-play allows students to practice speaking by acting out; this approach not only helps to overcome glossophobia but also to

understand the lesson by interacting with their peers. Moreover, as role-play involves interaction with the group mates and speaking with them, it helps the students to feel less embarrassed and more comfortable, helping to overcome the fear of public speaking. On the other hand, cooperative learning is one of the ways to enhance communicative abilities. To narrate, it is a kind of learning that focuses on active participation, collaborating with peers, and supporting each other. This kind of interaction would help the students overcome glossophobia as the students get used to public speaking and take on different roles and responsibilities in a cooperative learning environment (Dendup & Onthanee, 2020).

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology I used for my study and explain the research design in detail. First, I will discuss the research approach and procedure of the study. Next, I will discuss the setting and participants. Then I will discuss the data collection and data analysis process, followed by ethical considerations of the study.

#### **Research Approach**

For the study research, I employed the qualitative method. This method was used because qualitative research allows the generation of rich data and the exploration of “real-life” behaviors, enabling research participants to speak for themselves (Kuper et al., 2008). Furthermore, this approach allowed me to achieve different perspectives and a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. To clarify, the study delved deeper into the teachers’ and students’ experiences, viewpoints, and behaviors concerning the reasons behind their struggle with the fear of public speaking in EFL classrooms in the universities of Bhutan. Consequently, I considered qualitative research as a suitable method for my study. Moreover, my research has an in-depth understanding of the participants’ insights on how the students perceive the fear of public speaking, particularly focusing on the causes and possible strategies to overcome the fear.

In addition, rather than using statistical techniques to quantify the data, qualitative research focuses on drawing conclusions from the actual experiences of the participants, including their behavior, emotions, and sentiments. Qualitative research takes into account a variety of data, such as social and cultural occurrences and community interactions (Rahman, 2016). In considering this, I chose to conduct my research using a qualitative approach in order to involve glossophobic individuals while offering findings that are grounded in their actual experiences.

In this study, I employed a phenomenological approach to gather data from individuals' real-life experiences, aiming to comprehend the essence of these lived phenomena. So, this study also falls under the phenomenological approach, as my study is based on the students' personal experience of glossophobia. With the participants' distinct contextual perspectives, it also assisted in the understanding of the phenomenon.

### **Research Site**

The primary objective of this research is to explore the main causes and remedies to overcome glossophobia among the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students of Bhutan. Therefore, to conduct this study, I collected data from six universities in Bhutan: 5 from the western part of Bhutan, 2 from the southern part of Bhutan, and 1 from the eastern part of Bhutan.

### **Participants**

The study was conducted among eight participants—six students and two teachers—studying and teaching in EFL classrooms in universities in Bhutan (two sets of participants', including teachers and students from various universities). The demographic details of the participants are provided with the pseudo names as follows:

<b>Sl. no.</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Teacher/Student</b>	<b>Year/Semester/Teaching Experience</b>
1.	Tenzin	23	Student	2nd year
2.	Pema	22	Student	2nd year
3.	Sonam	24	Student	4th year

4.	Sangay	24	Student	4th year
5.	Nidup	23	Student	3rd year
6.	Kezang	24	Student	4th year
7.	Dorji	41	Teacher	15 years
8.	Jambay	45	Teacher	9 years

*Table 3.1: Demographic information of the participants*

### **Selection of Participants**

To have a broader understanding of the phenomenon of glossophobia among university students in Bhutan, the selection of participants was done in a way that included diverse experiences, including students from various years/semesters. To conduct this, I employed random sampling in order to minimize selection bias and explore on broader perspectives. Since the research focuses on students' experiences with glossophobia in an EFL classroom, more student participants are included than teacher participants for this study. However, I also felt that there was a need to include some teacher participants since teachers play an important role in student life and in shaping the classroom environment and student experience, and their experiences as teachers would be useful in pointing out issues, particularly strategies to overcome glossophobia. Therefore, I interviewed both teacher and student participants to balance and reduce biases in the study.

### **Random Sampling Criteria:**

1. Teachers and students teaching and studying in EFL classrooms at the university level.

2. Students from different years or semesters.
3. Teachers who can provide pedagogical strategies to reduce glossophobia and information based on observations.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this research came from mainly interview transcripts. For my study, I conducted semi-structured interviews, as they allow guided conversation with flexibility, rich data collection, and participant comfort. Also, semi-structured interviews allowed me to ask follow-up questions to the participants, which helped me to gain clearer information for the findings. Moreover, data collection is also done through artifacts such as photographs and video recordings. Therefore, the data are gathered from eight individuals using interviews and artifacts. To conduct this, I first requested their permission to do this interview and explained why it was necessary. Furthermore, I made certain that their identification would be kept confidential.

Six of the interviews were conducted virtually via Google Meet, with the other two conducted in person. Both the virtual and face-to-face interviews were recorded, which lasted for around 50-60 minutes. Additionally, I felt compelled to ask a couple interviewers follow-up questions, so I obtained the information via texts. These questionnaires encompass a range of inquiries, including concise and comprehensive questions focusing on real-life practical experiences. To have a wider range of understanding of the phenomenon, there is inclusion of general and specific questions in the interviews. Additionally, I incorporated artifact analysis into the study through visual materials like photographs, videos, and audio recordings to enhance the research.



### **Data Analysis**

In order to properly assess the participant's experiences with glossophobia in Bhutan's EFL classroom, the data analysis for my qualitative research used an organized methodology. Translation and transcription are two essential phases in a research undertaking. Transcribing and Translating is one of the crucial steps in a research project. Ross (2009) argues that all researchers should equally focus on transcription and transcribed materials. To make sure that all of the data is appropriately analyzed, I first transcribed and translated the semi-structured interviews. The participants' audio recordings were first translated into written text as part of this process. Additionally, I listened to the audio recording twice to make sure I didn't miss any of the information the participants provided. I went over the transcriptions several times in order to better understand the glossophobic themes present in Bhutanese EFL classes. I tried to familiarize myself with the data provided by the participants. I read all the transcriptions to get a proper idea and key statements given by the participants.

I next started to work on my coding procedure. As I became familiar with the information gathered from the participants, I began by organizing it into tables with the discourse unit, participants, questions and answers, and themes/codes listed. I tried to categorize each participant's response by theme. Sgier (2012) elucidates that having a thematic analysis of the context in qualitative research is related to the logic of coding the collected data to present the ideas more clearly. After finishing the coding process, I began organizing my data thematically in accordance with my research questions to ensure that the appropriate thematic analysis was presented. The themes such as “experience of glossophobia,” “fear of making mistakes/judgement,” “moving out of comfort zone,” and “social expectations” were identified, which were later categorized into different sub-headings based on research questions.

### **Ethical Review Procedures**

In this research, I maintained professional and research ethics strictly. First, I obtained consent from each participant to confirm their voluntary participation in the study before any involvement. As a result, interviews were conducted with individuals who agreed to participate in my study. Furthermore, I ensured the participants that any personal or identifiable information would be securely preserved, and to maintain confidentiality, I used pseudonyms. Most importantly, I emphasized that the research findings are reported transparently and accurately, with no distortion of participants' responses.

### **Chapter 4: Findings**

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from my study related to the participants' experience with glossophobia. The findings are presented thematically to answer the research questions. I will discuss the students' experience of glossophobia; I will explain the main causes of glossophobia; and then I will share the strategies the students use to overcome this fear of public speaking.

#### **Experiences of Glossophobia**

The findings of my study show that all the students and a teacher had experienced the fear of public speaking, particularly in a formal academic environment, when they were being evaluated. However, it was found that the teacher gradually overcome his anxiety when required to speak in public as he grew up. The students and teachers expressed several reasons and examples of experiencing this fear. For instance, Sangay explained how she feared expressing her thoughts in class, stating, "I always felt nervous and felt that my mates were far better compared to me." Pema also said, "Despite being prepared thoroughly, the moment I stood up in front of everyone, I was like, I don't know... my mind went blank." This sentiment was echoed by Jambay, who used to experience glossophobia then.

Yes, I used to experience glossophobia. However, I think I don't have it anymore. One of the experiences I faced would be when I had to do a class presentation. I was nervous and had a quivering voice. I even struggled to make eye contact with my classmates while presenting.

Tenzin shared an intriguing experience,

Yes, I do have glossophobia, and I feel that it is one of the most common problems faced by students. One of the experiences that I faced was in my English classroom, where we

had to give an extempore speech. It was my turn, and then the topic was about ‘Climate Change.’ Although it was a simple topic that I am aware of, I still couldn’t do well due to my fear of public speaking; I couldn’t express what I wanted to say in proper words.

Such experiences by the teacher and the students indicate how each of them experiences public speaking anxiety. Therefore, it shows that the fear of speaking—glossophobia—is common among the university students in an EFL classroom in Bhutan. In summary, the result of the study revealed that all the participants experienced glossophobia, and all of them felt a significant level of nervousness and anxiousness during the public speaking activities. While anxiety and getting tensed were some of the common experiences, some participants pointed out that they were unable to focus, which caused a range of emotions, including a quivering voice, shaking hands, and being.

### **Impacts of Glossophobia on Learning Experience**

The study conducted in the EFL classroom among university students with glossophobia revealed the impacts that they had on their learning experience. All the participants stated how the fear of public speaking impacted their academic performance and growth. The common experience among the participants was reduced participation and limited academic development, while few of them stated low self-esteem and confidence leading to mental stress. One of the participants reported that one impact of glossophobia in the learning experience is that “firstly, it reduces class participation, and also academic performance will be impacted eventually” (Jambay, 2024). Likewise, Dorji (2024) narrated, unable to maintain proper eye contact, including postures.

Glossophobia can significantly impact a student’s learning experience because, first and foremost, students will avoid taking part in class discussions like presentations and other

co-curricular activities. More importantly, it will limit the academic growth of the students, which requires communication skills, and also the confidence of the students will be affected.

In the same way, Kezang (2024) shared how the mental state was disturbed due to having low confidence and being self-conscious.

The impacts of glossophobia are developing low self-esteem and low confidence. From my personal experience, it sometimes causes mental stress, increasing the level of anxiety. Moreover, I kind of became reclusive.

Overall, the findings revealed that glossophobia had a profound impact on students.

Students talked about how it limited their engagement with peers and opportunities. For instance, “I think it impacted in a way that it reduced participation. Most of the time, I also avoid activities that involve speaking or presenting, which limits my learning opportunities,” said Nidup.

Correspondingly, Pema said, “Glossophobia impacts my overall learning experience by making me hesitant to participate in class discussions and presentations. It can lead to missed opportunities for practicing and improving my language skills, as well as reduced confidence in my abilities.”

In summary, this section of findings on glossophobia in EFL classrooms among the university students of Bhutan reported the impacts of glossophobia on their personal learning experiences. All participants revealed that it hindered their academic performance, such as reducing participants and avoiding activities that require public speaking, while some students also stated issues related to low self-esteem and low confidence levels, eventually leading to an increase in mental stress and missing opportunities.

### **Causes of Glossophobia in an EFL Classroom among University Students in Bhutan**

This section of the chapter focuses on the factor that causes glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking experienced by the university students in Bhutan who are studying in the EFL classroom. The thematic analysis provided below is based on the data collected from the semi-structured interviews related to students fear of public speaking or anxiety when speaking in English. The findings reveal various personal and social factors like fear of making mistakes, judgement, lack of confidence, educational influences, and social and cultural factors that cause glossophobia among the university students in Bhutan.

#### **Fear of Making Mistakes, Judging, and Getting Mocked**

Fear of making errors and social pressures like fear of getting judged and mocked are seen as some of the most prominent factors that trigger glossophobia among university students. Pema shares his sentiment about how he experienced anxiety while his hands were trembling even after having a very thorough preparation. She narrated how this fear of public speaking leads to an impact on academic performance, such as presentations. Also, how this phobia leads to making more errors than presenting effectively. Likewise, Sangay (2024) strongly emphasized making mistakes and being mocked by her classmates. She mentioned that it is one factor that is interlinked with each other. She highlighted one of her personal experiences of mockery, which stems from her previous bad experiences. She stated,

As long as I remember, I have always feared speaking out my thoughts in a classroom, even if I had a clear understanding of the concepts, because I care too much about other perspectives and I feel that they might laugh and start mocking me. I grew up with that fear in me, and no matter how much I tried, I could never come out of that zone. I always felt that my friends were far better than me. One time I had to do a presentation in my

class, the day before I lost my peace of mind, and I kept on practicing the whole night. Even though I gave my best, I still found myself stammering, my hands shaking, and I never gave eye contact because of my past bad experiences.

Similarly, Tenzin and Sonam elaborated on their fear of being judged by their classmates and teachers, making them more anxious to deliver what they are supposed to adequately and proficiently. They mentioned that it first stems from the fear of making mistakes and receiving mockery from their peers. Moreover, Dorji emphasized that one of the primary factors that lead to students' fear of public speaking is their worry about making errors and not meeting their expectations, which makes it more difficult for the students to perform well. Also, he said, "Students always fear how they will be perceived by their classmates, causing fear in themselves, which is why they can't thrive well."

### **Lack of Preparedness**

Lack of preparation is another key influencing factor of fear of public speaking among university students in Bhutan. This section mainly highlights not being prepared adequately, which impacts their performance in the classroom. Sonam and Nidup mentioned that one factor that triggers glossophobia is the feeling of being unprepared even after practicing enough. Nidup said, "I don't know what makes me feel this, but how much I practice and prepare for my presentation for the next day, I always feel nervous and not satisfied." Equally, Sonam shares her experience that speaking in front of authority figures or a large audience also triggers my glossophobia, especially when I don't feel fully prepared.

Furthermore, Jambay pointed out that lack of preparation is the primary driver of students experiencing glossophobia. He finds students not being able to convey what they are presenting,

which is mainly due to a lack of practice or preparation. Eventually, students end up using fillers like ahh, umm, uhhh, etc.

### **Lack of Confidence**

Glossophobia is also rooted as one of the major factors for the issue affecting the students' fear of public speaking among university students in Bhutan. This particular theme reflects how glossophobia lends to internal struggle for the students when they have to speak up. Tenzin reported how holding something in hand like a pen or paper makes her fear visible to the audience. Further stating how this would drain her confidence level more. With that, students also shared that fear of speaking not only affects communicating effectively with the audience but also leads to a decline in their confidence as they speak further. Nidup (2024) reported,

Lack of confidence is the very factor that causes major fear in speaking in public for me. Though there are other factors like the fear of making mistakes, not being able to express myself, and getting judged, I feel all other factors stem from the lack of confidence also impacting academic performance.

Another participant expressed, “I feel that lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and other insecurities over my English language are some of the factors affecting my public speaking,” said Kezang. Likewise, Dorji stated, “Lack of confidence can be another reason why students often feel unsure about their ability to communicate effectively in a public setting.” Therefore, the findings showed that glossophobia affects the confidence of the students, which also impacts their academic performance and growth.

### **The Difference between Speaking in English and Dzongkha during Public Speaking**

The difference in speaking English and Dzongkha (the native language of Bhutan) contributed to glossophobia among the university students. Participants reported that their



comfort level in speaking in English and in Dzongkha is different during public speaking. Sonam (2024) shared,

When I speak in English, I am often more anxious because I am not a native speaker, and I worry about my pronunciation, vocabulary, or making grammar mistakes. In contrast, when I speak in my native language, I feel more comfortable and confident, as it is easier to express my thoughts clearly.

Likewise, Pema (2024) revealed that she feels more at ease while speaking in her native language than compared to English.

The fear of public speaking in English feels more intense compared to speaking in my native language, which is Dzongkha. When speaking in English, I am more of a worried person who is worried about making language errors or not expressing myself clearly. In contrast, when speaking in my native language, I feel more confident and at ease, as I am more fluent and familiar with the language.

When compared to the student's native language, language proficiency can have a considerable impact on glossophobia. Two more students agreed with the previously mentioned student that speaking in their mother tongue rather than in English makes them feel more comfortable. Additionally, mentioning that they speak different languages and have different levels of confidence could result in misunderstandings or misinterpretations, which would worry the students even more. Sangay (2024) shared,

The difference I observed between the fear of public speaking in an English classroom and my native language is that while speaking English, I am more concerned about the content. I worry a lot about misinterpreting my thoughts due to the lack of vocabulary and not being able to use the right words to express myself, while in my native language,

I can confidently express my thoughts, as I am very well equipped with correct and appropriate words. Moreover, I worry about my grammatical mistakes, which can create misunderstandings among the crowd.

Nidup mentioned, “I feel people often feel more confident while speaking in their native language because they have more familiarity and comfort with vocabulary.” Therefore, it can be seen how the students expressed their language proficiency by elaborating that speaking in English causes the feeling of glossophobia.

### **Social and Cultural Factors**

It is seen that there is an influence of social and cultural factors on glossophobia. Pema and Sonam discussed cultural expectations and societal norms causing glossophobia as they receive humiliation sometimes. The participants reported social factors like societal expectations and comfort level, and cultural factors like following cultural norms while communicating or choosing the right communication style cause glossophobia. Jambay (2024) mentioned,

Social and cultural factors can affect the fear of public speaking because one needs to follow one’s cultural norms while speaking, which is the communication style. The thought of being judged strikes our mind; therefore, it impacts us while speaking in a crowd.

Sonam (2024) also stated on how different cultures have different ways of perceiving things about speaking out in a public setting.

In some cultures, speaking out or being in the spotlight is not encouraged, which may result in a lack of practice. Additionally, different social expectations regarding how we should communicate can add to the pressure, especially if public speaking is seen as a key skill for success in certain environments.

The findings vividly illustrate how the social and cultural factors impacted and gave rise to the university students of EFL classrooms in Bhutan. It shows how cultural tradition and societal expectations restrict students from speaking in a public setting. This section summarized the causes of glossophobia among Bhutanese university students, including nervousness of making mistakes, peer pressure, a lack of confidence and readiness, and differences in language proficiency between the native Dzongkha and English languages.

### **The Strategies to Overcome Glossophobia**

This section of the paper focuses on the findings of the strategies or possible ways to overcome the fear of public speaking based on the personal experiences shared by the participants in a semi-structured interview.

#### **Coming Out of One's Comfort Zone and Practicing Regularly**

Students reported that there are various strategies to overcome or manage their fear of public speaking. A prevalent approach is shared, which involves stepping out of your comfort zone and practicing regularly. Tenzin (2024) stated,

The ways or strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking are first, by moving out of your comfort zone, meaning whether it's right or wrong, we should speak up for one's self. Also, by practicing with our friends. We can start this by first having small discussions with our peers, then in our classroom, and with large public gatherings.

Pema (2024) emphasized that practicing is one of the effective ways to overcome glossophobia. Moreover, she mentioned that a progressive method, like talking to a smaller group and then gradually facing the larger crowd, helps boost confidence.

Yes, there are several strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking. Practicing regularly, starting with smaller groups, and gradually working up to larger audiences can

help build confidence. I have tried to overcome my fear by practicing my presentations and speeches multiple times and seeking feedback from friends and mentors.

### **Choosing an Interesting Topic and Preparing Well**

Similarly, a few other groups of participants emphasized preparedness and choosing a topic of their interest. Sonam said, “I have always tried to practice and prepare well, that is through rehearsing my presentations in front of the mirror before the day of my presentation, which helps build my confidence.” Even Jambay (2024) emphasized choosing an interesting topic and preparedness.

From my own experience, firstly, one should build confidence and try to participate in activities that would help you build confidence. After that, one should choose a topic of interest. Then, practice and be prepared. I think this will help you overcome it.

This highlights the importance of preparing well and choosing an interesting topic, which serves as a strategy for overcoming the fear of public speaking. It is drawn from the participants experience that choosing a topic that interests us and rehearsing presentation before having to present will help to perform well with confidence. Moreover, this outlines a step-by-step process that helps the student deal with glossophobia.

### **Institutional Support to Help Students Overcome Glossophobia**

The participants also revealed that institutional support can help students overcome glossophobia by creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment for the students. Dorji mentioned, “I feel creating a supportive environment would make mistakes viewed as learning opportunities rather than mocking them.” Likewise, “Educational institutions can support students by offering more opportunities for public speaking practice in a low-pressure environment, such as group discussions or informal presentations,” said Sonam. Similarly,

“Educational institutions can support students in overcoming glossophobia by creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment where students can practice speaking without fear of criticism from others” (Pema, 2024).

While few of the participants mentioned providing workshops on public speaking skills and building confidence. “Providing workshops or courses related to public speaking skills would help to overcome glossophobia,” said Pema. Additionally, “Institutions could also provide workshops focused on public speaking, managing anxiety, improving presentation skills, and building self-confidence,” said Sonam. Also, Dorji (2024) mentioned,

As a teacher and from my experience, I feel offering public speaking workshops would help students overcome the fear of public speaking. The institution can provide some structured opportunities, not daily but at least once a week, to practice, develop speaking skills, and develop confidence.

Also, focusing on co-curricular activities and giving positive reinforcement from the institution would help students get comfortable with public speaking. Kezang (2024) said,

I think educational institutions can support students to overcome glossophobia by hosting various English-related fun co-curricular activities like having theater, movie time, and English singing competitions, and also by making compulsory speech-giving sessions for all students three times a year.

Likewise, “Giving different activities, including debate and extemporaneous speech, so that as the students practice, they will learn eventually,” said Nidup. On the other hand, Sangay stated that institutions can help overcome glossophobia. “By giving more group work, providing positive reinforcement to students, letting the students share their ideas with their peers, and encouraging students to share their thoughts.” Like Nidup, other participants agree, “Also, I feel

encouragement from friends and teachers is a way to help the students overcome glossophobia. So, I feel institutions should encourage students to give moral support.” (Sonam, 2024).

In summary, the detailed findings reveal that glossophobia in EFL classrooms among the university students of Bhutan includes a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, fear of being judged, and social and cultural factors like meeting cultural expectations and societal norms. However, they stated that there are ways to overcome this fear by coming out of your comfort zone and practicing, preparing well, and choosing a topic of one’s interest. Participants mentioned institutions can help students by coordinating co-curricular activities, giving positive reinforcement, and creating a supportive environment.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter explores the discussion and analysis of the results from the phenomenon of glossophobia among university students in EFL courses in Bhutan by integrating the findings with existing literature. Glossophobia is a term used to describe the speaking anxiety that many people have, either physically or mentally, as the literature study makes clear (Mohamad et al., 2009). According to the interviews conducted, teachers and students shared the same understanding of glossophobia, including its causes and possible ways to overcome this fear.

### **Overview of Glossophobia in the EFL Classroom**

The findings show that glossophobia—the fear of public speaking—is one of the biggest challenges faced by university students in Bhutan’s EFL classrooms. This aligns with the literature that reported that not every individual masters the skill of speaking; rather, they are trained. Therefore, the author further elaborates that it is an issue across the education system as it impacts the learning opportunities of the students (Raja, 2017). Concerning the context of the EFL classroom, it can be seen as an additional pressure for the students who use English as their second language, making it more challenging for students to take part in public speaking platforms. This idea also aligns with the articles by Arifin (2017) and Kalra and Siribud (2020) on how anxiety can be encountered by students who are not native language speakers of the English language.

### **Analysis of the Key Findings: Causes of Glossophobia**

In this section, there is a comprehensive discussion of the causes of glossophobia among the Bhutanese EFL learners identified based on the findings of the research. The key theme includes fear of making mistakes, judgment and mockery, lack of preparedness and confidence, language proficiency, and other social and cultural factors. By examining and discussing the

causes of glossophobia, it aims at providing a clear understanding of how the students are affected by having the fear of public speaking.

### **Fear of Making Mistakes, Being Judged, and Getting Mocked**

The fear of making mistakes and being judged was revealed to be one of the significant factors that contribute to glossophobia. The concepts of making mistakes, receiving criticism, and being made fun of are related to one another. When a student makes a mistake, their classmates criticize and make fun of them.

The participants elaborated on how the fear of making mistakes impacts their physical sensations like stammering, shivering hands, and not maintaining eye contact, which resonates with Dansieh et al. (2011) on how students feared making mistakes and avoided eye contact with the audience because it was common among the students in Ghana to give nicknames to them with the words they mispronounced or stammered. Moreover, this example perfectly connects with Sonam's experience of glossophobia of getting teased by her friends, and having these bad past experiences, she fears speaking in public. This illustrates that while resolving these issues, we must consider both past experiences and current perceptions of judgement so that it won't hinder the particular student from engaging in such public speaking activities in the future to have better learning experiences and outcomes.

### **Lack of Preparedness and Confidence**

Lack of preparedness and confidence was seen as a critical factor that contributed to glossophobia. According to Balakrishnan et al. (2022), students frequently suffer anxiety when speaking in front of an audience because of their lack of preparation, which is consistent with what Jambay said and frequently results in filler like um, uhh, etc. Unlike other participants, Sonam and Nidup elaborated that even after having adequate preparation, they always felt



nervous and unsatisfied with their presentation for the next day. This stance is related to Baumeister & Leary's (1995) research that students felt unprepared and increased their anxiety despite having prepared enough.

Likewise, lack of confidence was another factor that caused glossophobia for not being prepared enough. The findings of the study showed that student participants like Kezang and Pema explained how their lack of confidence affected their fear of public speaking. They went into further detail about how it affected the way they delivered their presentation. In contrast to the two students, Khan et al. (2015) noted that while many people experience dry mouth, elevated blood pressure, and an accelerated heartbeat, some students will be able to overcome glossophobia by hiding their anxiety when they begin their presentations. Additionally, this study shows that students' fear of speaking significantly decreases during their final year. One of the engineering students from Malaysia said that the reason behind this is that the teaching methods help students become more mature and confident.

There are two distinct theories based on my research and the findings of another study; one holds that students have glossophobia because they lack confidence, while the other holds that students who speak in front of an audience eventually overcome their glossophobia. Concerning this perspective, based on my personal experience, while we feel anxious before speaking, once we start presenting, the fear remains partially subdued. Nonetheless, it appears to occur more frequently when we are making a casual presentation to an audience or to a person we frequently engage with, such as our close friends. However, this is not the only thing that occurs; throughout our entire academic journey, we are required to present our work to a wider audience in a formal environment. Therefore, I agree that a lack of confidence is one of the primary causes of glossophobia.

### **Language Proficiency**

Anxiety levels associated with different languages vary. The participants stated that speaking in their mother tongue, Dzongkha, relieves them of tension, while speaking in English, where they are not very proficient, causes them more anxiety. One of the participants, Kezang, elaborated on how worried she becomes about misinterpreting content due to a lack of vocabulary, unlike how she can express it clearly in Dzongkha. This finding supports the idea of Balakrishnan et al. (2022) mentioned that non-native English speakers reported feeling nervous and uneasy when speaking in public. Furthermore, the survey of their study revealed how students from the Philippines, China, Omani universities, and Arab colleges were discovered to speak in public with limited English competence. In particular, the Chinese students reported feeling quite anxious when speaking English in front of others without having had time to prepare; it was observed that they spoke in their mother tongue during this conversation.

We can therefore consider how crucial language proficiency is based on this. It also demonstrates our perceptions and levels of anxiety in various contexts when speaking other languages. When speaking in our native language, we can observe that individuals are frequently easygoing, but when speaking in English, we have to work very hard to acquire the language to live up to the expectations of others. In summary, this demonstrates the value of becoming fluent in English because it is a universal language. It demonstrates the link between language proficiency and glossophobia while emphasizing the need for practical strategies to assist students in overcoming their anxiety.

### **Social and Cultural Factors**

Social and cultural factors also played a role in causing glossophobia. According to Vanni et al. (2013), when students obey the rules and speak in front of a large group of people in places

like auditoriums and classrooms, they often develop a phobia of public speaking. The results of the study are parallel to what Pema and Sonam (2024) said about experiencing social pressure and cultural conventions, particularly when they are in an environment where English is not their first language.

Analyzing this particular factor, it becomes evident that glossophobia is influenced by social and cultural elements, depending on the individual's location, and is not just related to one's psychological traits. I believe that adhering to cultural norms such as upholding professionalism is one of the primary issues that predominates. Without it, one cannot be authentic. When speaking, they must adhere to official guidelines and satisfy the audience's expectations; failing to do so will result in criticism. This is the reason I believe that glossophobia affects Bhutanese EFL students because of these social and cultural issues. Speaking in front of a large group of people in a formal situation while being evaluated is also something that you get anxious about. Additionally, how people interpret the criticism or comments they receive from friends or teachers may vary from society to society or culture to culture. For example, while some people may view the criticism favorably, others may interpret it negatively, which makes it difficult for them to take advantage of future public speaking opportunities. This emphasizes the need to overcome glossophobia through the development of culturally sensitive practices or understanding.

### **Strategies to Overcome Glossophobia in Bhutanese EFL Classroom**

In this section, it focuses on the discussions of various strategies or ways that would help students overcome glossophobia within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It mainly aims at highlighting the practical approaches to addressing the fear of public speaking.

### **Practicing and Encouraging Students to Step Beyond Familiar Comfort Zones**

Putting ourselves outside of our comfort zones and practicing are two crucial strategies for overcoming glossophobia. The participants clarified that, regardless of whether it is correct or wrong, one must step outside of their comfort zone and practice with friends. According to Tse (2012), moving outside of your comfort zone and talking to people about how you are feeling can help you overcome this phobia. Through his writing, he offered readers a figurative hand of support, saying it helps to know that one is not suffering in silence. He stated, for instance, that glossophobia can cause anxiety in even experienced artists or presenters and that this is a perfectly normal and acceptable reaction. Additionally, there are five different practices to follow: getting ready, modifying, planning, activating the relaxation response, and continuing to minimize anxiety (O'Hair et al., 2010 as cited in Netta & Helmanda, 2020). The author's key point was that students should practice presenting skillfully and fearlessly.

As both the author and the participants mentioned, to have more effective and better learning opportunities, one must gradually step outside of their comfort zone. Students also need to understand that everyone is unique and learns at a different rate. Even though they will make a lot of mistakes when practicing, this will only help them become more confident and less anxious overall.

### **Choosing Interesting Topics and Preparing Well**

According to one of the quantitative studies by Karina (2023), 58 (32%) of the participants stated that preparing well by reading relevant resources and memorizing some key points is the greatest way to lessen glossophobia after selecting a topic of choice. This literature aligns with the topics discussed by my participants and demonstrates how selecting a topic that interests them and preparing properly can boost confidence and satisfaction. It is true, based on

both my own experience and what I have observed, that exposing learners to subjects they find exciting and familiar increases their motivation to work harder. Furthermore, as they talk about what they love, it also helps them become more confident and less nervous. Preparation and selecting subjects that one is passionate about are therefore important factors in helping students overcome or ease their fear of public speaking.

### **Institutional Support**

Findings from my study suggest that institutional support was found to be a significant factor in helping students with glossophobia. They can do this by promoting a nonjudgmental and supportive environment and by emphasizing co-curricular activities and workshops that can help students overcome their fear of public speaking. In the same way, institutions might help students by mandating public speaking classes so that undergraduates can communicate effectively (Balakrishnan et al., 2022). Additionally, research indicates that taking language-speaking classes can improve students' performance and help them feel less anxious (Khan et al., 2015). Tse (2012) argues that colleges should demonstrate how to implement innovative approaches through a range of extracurricular activities. Additionally, instructors must encourage the students to communicate in English rather than their native language.

The majority of college students communicate in their native language. Moreover, lecturers allow students to use their mother tongue when they are unable to communicate in English. Thus, it is evident that using English in the classroom is necessary for students to become habituated to the English language and for it to help them feel less anxious. Universities should also concentrate on fostering a nonjudgmental atmosphere because the majority of students suffer from glossophobia, namely because of the fear of being judged.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The final chapter of the study summarizes the overall key finding of the research with its importance of addressing glossophobia among the university students of the EFL classroom. It also discusses the practical implications of the study, offering recommendations, future research, and some limitations of the study.

### **Overview and Key Findings**

Glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking, is seen as one of the most common issues among university students in Bhutan studying in the EFL classroom. In Bhutan, though English is used as a medium of instruction in the education system, English is often used as a second language. It is often noticed that the students fear significantly impact their academic performance, personal development, and professional opportunities (Perveen et al., 2018). Therefore, in my research, I mainly explored the causes of glossophobia. Findings suggest that the main causes are: fear of being negatively evaluated, judged, and mocked; lack of confidence and preparation; and social and cultural factors. Based on the findings, I will also discuss the effective methods for overcoming glossophobia, including practical measures like regular practice opportunities and adequate preparation. The participating students also emphasized that educational institutions can help students address this issue by fostering supportive and non-judgmental environments, focusing on co-curricular activities, and providing positive reinforcement.

### **Implications of the Study**

Based on the study's findings, this examination of students' fears related to public speaking offers important insights that can be used to improve or modify instructional strategies for teachers or educational institutions. First of all, it would improve the instructors' pedagogical

approaches. To elaborate, educational institutions and teachers might use the study's findings to create better teaching practices that would lower stress levels and provide positive reinforcement to kids to help them overcome glossophobia. Additionally, educational institutions can work on curriculum development by including activities that integrate public speaking abilities and confidence building, which helps the students diminish their fear of public speaking. These activities can be developed depending on the causes of glossophobia and strategies supplied by the students.

In addition, it would be beneficial for Bhutan's teacher training institutions to incorporate educational resources that tackle students' apprehension regarding public speaking. Additionally, the training facilities can offer programs for professional development that will assist aspiring educators in handling glossophobic students and fostering an interesting classroom. This study also offers a more thorough picture of language learning in EFL classrooms, highlighting the importance of all-encompassing support from peers and teachers. Additionally, the research aids in taking cultural factors into account. To explain, Bhutan has a highly distinct culture, and it's crucial to uphold local customs when speaking in public because certain people are extremely sensitive to cultural differences.

### **Recommendations**

Based on my findings, I would like to make a few recommendations on how educational institutions might support students in lowering or getting over their fear.

#### **Supportive and Non-judgemental Environment**

Institutions should put into practice the targeted interventions to alleviate glossophobia, which include enhancing confidence and developing language skills to foster a supportive and judgment-free environment. To elaborate, while it may be difficult to provide a remedy to such

specific intra- and interpersonal fear, many strategies can be implemented to create a supportive environment in which glossophobic students are likely to build their confidence and, ultimately, their ability to speak in public. In essence, what we advocate is a culture of tolerance, empathy, and respect where open, honest communication is encouraged and the risks associated with sharing sensitive information are kept as minimal as possible. Every educator should strive to be a guide to students as they struggle through the often tough but highly instructive journey of self-development.

### **Read More and Watch Motivational Videos on Public Speaking**

Glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking, can be effectively eradicated by reading more books and watching inspirational movies on public speaking skills (Kitchen, 2011). To elaborate, few of the participants mentioned that reading books will help students understand concepts better because it increases their level of understanding. Additionally, students will overcome glossophobia because they will be exposed to more information and inspiration from well-known individuals. To be more precise, reading more will enable students to present more strategies that address stress management, audience engagement, and thinking organization. Furthermore, students will be able to overcome glossophobia—the fear of public speaking—by learning from professionals who are very comfortable speaking in front of an audience and using a variety of resources. By seeing and relating to these real-life examples, students will be inspired to speak in front of an audience. Additionally, increasing the amount of inspiring and motivational content students are exposed to will help them overcome glossophobia and develop calmness and a good outlook. Therefore, it is important to encourage students to read more books and watch more motivational videos, as it serves as one of the ways to overcome glossophobia.



### **Peer Support and Collaborative Learning**

Educational institutions should promote peer support and collaborative learning because when students feel at ease with one another, they become less tense. Support from both peers and educators is crucial in alleviating glossophobia. In this setting, students should be encouraged to share their experiences and fears and to empathize with their classmates. Groups that interact and collaborate naturally provide a safe space for students to share their thoughts and performances and get feedback in return. This is an important step in improving performance, as groups enable students to see that they are not alone in having performance anxiety and can provide students with the confidence to perform by sharing and empathizing with one another. Educational groups of such a collaborative nature provide a support system. Moreover, it provides opportunities for shared learning through collaboration, interaction, guidance, and mutual encouragement. Peers engage the students in the learning process and allow them to engage in the authentic assessment of each other's work. Such interactions serve to help alleviate the fear of judgment by providing shared learning experiences and supportive environments.

### **Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**

Practicing mindfulness meditation leads to focus and centering, a mental rehearsal that helps to build confidence in us. Deep breathing is considered the most common relaxation and stress reduction technique, along with guided imagery. In educational institutions, teaching self-regulation mechanisms are considered to be prominent that would help the student community at large. Moreover, making some mandatory programs, including the practice of mindfulness, so that the ability to manage and think about emotions to maximize human functioning would be efficient for the students rather than only dealing with the fear of public

speaking and thus making the participants more resilient and adaptable irrespective of the situation they may find themselves in.

### **Providing Courses Related to Language or Public Speaking**

To improve public speaking skills, institutions should offer specific courses to improve language, some of which are strictly related to public speaking, focusing on developing the students' oral abilities by showing the main elements related to public presentations. In the first years of university, speech techniques may be proposed in courses directly related to the subject. Many communication courses should be designed to help students become better communicators, which includes speaking. In contrast, courses directly linked to public speaking focus on both the theory and the practice of public speaking. That is, the students who enrol in these courses ought to apply the theoretical knowledge to speeches and presentations. For instance, classes that employ a process-oriented approach that features individual exercises and homework, after that, in-class exercises, as well as written products that are evaluated in terms of content and language.

### **Focus on the Message and Embrace Imperfection**

Another suggestion that would assist the students in getting over their fear of public speaking is to concentrate on conveying the primary ideas in the speech rather than on ourselves. Rather of concentrating on mistakes, one should consider the principles we all share. To put it another way, we should concentrate on communicating or educating the audience on what we are speaking about rather than worrying about how other people would see us. Second, since not everyone has flawless public speaking or communication abilities, it's critical to embrace imperfection. Remembering this, friends or teachers should support one another while speaking in front of an audience by encouraging one another to talk boldly and owning up to errors that

come with public speaking. When we engage in public speaking activities, for example, we can learn from our mistakes and move on confidently from them. This allows us to handle small challenges with grace. It could also help the others overcome their phobia of public speaking. To summarize, overcoming glossophobia, learning more, and having speaking experience are all beneficial. Given that this is one way to overcome glossophobia and lead to increased confidence and less anxiety, it is crucial that students pay attention to the message and accept imperfection.

### **Creating Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities serve as powerful partners in alleviating glossophobia. Activities such as drama, theatre, music, student press, and art allow students to more completely express themselves. People who have a fear of public speaking worry that others will judge them negatively. They fear that their voice, body language, and words will not be adequate to impress or to be authentic. Therefore, a talent show might also be an effective stress reducer for someone anxious about speaking in public. Other expressive activities, such as art, poetry, music, and even dance, can follow similar paths to help a student see their chance to create and interpret their experience. In addition to providing general experiences, many creative extracurricular activities facilitate student-student and student-teacher interactions, which enhance communication. Different forms of creative expression can help students search for their unique voices, and this leads to reducing their fear of public speaking.

In conclusion, a variety of social and cultural factors, such as adhering to specific communication styles and cultural norms, fear of making mistakes, a lack of preparation time, a lack of confidence, and language proficiency, all had an impact on glossophobia among university students in Bhutan participating in EFL classes. Nonetheless, there are practical ways

to get over this anxiety, such as consistent practice, picking engaging and well-known subjects, and receiving institutional support for both personal and academic development.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the results are based on a small sample size of eight participants, two teachers, and six students. This represents the limitations of the sample size. A larger sample size might have allowed for more comprehensive knowledge and individual experiences with the study. However, recruiting participants for the study is challenging because of the students' time constraints. Additionally, the study's geographic focus is restricted to Bhutanese university students enrolled in EFL classes. This restricts the study's broader implications because it makes no connections to other cultural or educational systems. Most crucially, the study is restricted to a few particular factors that all of the research study participants have in common. All these aspects might not be the potential factors that are affecting students fear of public speaking, or there might be other factors that contribute to students fear of public speaking based on our own personal experiences.

### **Scope for Future Research**

There are several scopes for future research related to the study. As the current study only focuses on the aspect of Bhutan, future research on this study could work on broader demographic studies by including different countries with similar educational systems. Also, to have a diverse understanding of the phenomenon, research could be done by focusing on different countries around the world and comparing the causes and ways to overcome students fear of public speaking among the university students of an EFL classroom. Another future scope of this study is to conduct quantitative research. Most of the research on this topic is conducted through a qualitative approach. So, there is scope to conduct quantitative research where there

will be availability of more participants with broader perspectives through providing statistical evidence of the study. Similar to this, the majority of the glossophobia study was grounded in student experiences. Therefore, there is a future scope to conduct a study exploring the teachers' perspectives, as they could provide clear insights based on their experience as a student or teacher.

In conclusion, this study's chapter explored glossophobia among university students who are Bhutanese EFL learners, emphasizing how it affects students' academic achievement. The study primarily identifies the main causes of glossophobia, such as low self-esteem, fear of being judged, and social and cultural issues. It also emphasizes the techniques that could potentially be used to assist students in overcoming their fear of public speaking. To be precise, the factors include reading, practicing mindfulness, creating an increased encouraging learning environment, and using positive reinforcement. There was, however, still room for more research that would yield more insightful findings using quantitative methods, larger demographic studies, and teacher-focused studies that would help students overcome glossophobia by boosting their self-esteem and public speaking abilities.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Consent Form

**Title of Research Study:** Glossophobia in EFL Classroom: Exploring the Fear of Public Speaking among University Students in Bhutan

**Researcher:** Choki Pema

**Institution:** BRAC University

**Email:** choklay001@gmail.com

**Purpose of the Study:**

This study aims to investigate the primary causes of glossophobia, or the fear of public speaking experienced by Bhutanese English as foreign language learners, as well as potential solutions. Additionally, the study's findings and outcomes will make certain that students are benefited and lessen their fear of public speaking.

**Participation Details:**

1. The study will be conducted via Google Meet.
2. Participation will involve a one-on-one interview.
3. The interview will last approximately 50-60 minutes.
4. Interviews will be scheduled at a time convenient for you.

**Voluntary participation and confidentiality:**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Moreover, your information will remain confidential, and pseudonyms will be used to keep the personal information disclosed.

**Consent:**

By signing this form, it indicates that you have read and understood the information; therefore, you willingly agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation.

**Appendix 2: Interview Questions for Students**

1. Could you please introduce yourself briefly? I would like to know about your educational background, work experience etc.
2. Do you have glossophobia? Can you describe any experience you have faced with public speaking in your EFL classroom?
3. How do you feel when you experience the fear of speaking in public?
4. What are the factors that contribute to your fear of public speaking?
5. Can you identify any specific factors that trigger your fear of speaking in a public setting?
6. Do you think social and cultural factors affect the fear of public speaking? In what ways?
7. What are the differences you observed between the fear of public speaking in an English classroom and within your native language?
8. What impacts does experiencing glossophobia have on your overall learning experience?
9. Do you think there are ways or strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking? How did you try to overcome your public speaking fear?
10. How do you think educational institutions can support students to overcome glossophobia?

**Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Teachers**

1. Could you please introduce yourself briefly? I would like to know about your educational background, work experience etc.
2. Did you have glossophobia when you were a student? Can you describe any experience you have faced with public speaking in your EFL classroom?
3. How did feel when you experience the fear of speaking in public?
4. What are the factors that contributed to the your fear of public speaking?
5. Can you identify any specific factors that triggered your fear of speaking in a public setting?
6. Do you think the social and cultural factors affect the fear of public speaking? In what ways?
7. What are the differences you observed between the fear of public speaking in an English classroom and within your native language?
8. As a teacher now, what do you think are the impacts does of experiencing glossophobia have on your overall learning experience?
9. Do you think there are ways or strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking? How did you try to overcome your public speaking fear?
10. How do you think educational institutions can support students to overcome glossophobia?

**Appendix 4: Coding Sample**

<b>DU</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Question&amp; Answers</b>	<b>Codes/Themes</b>
1.	I	Could you please introduce yourself briefly? I would like to know about your educational background, work experience etc.	
2.	Tenzin	My name is Tenzin. I am currently studying in Paro College of Education pursuing my Bachelors Education in Primary and I am in my second year.	Education
3.	I	Do you have glossophobia? Can you describe any experience you have faced with public speaking in your EFL classroom?	
4.	Tenzin	Ahh yes, I have glossophobia and I personally feel that it is one of the most common problem faced by the students. One of the experience that I faced is in my English classroom is umm where we had give an extemporary speech. It was my turn and then like the topic was about 'Climate change.' Ah though it was a simple topic that I am aware still I couldn't do well due to the fear of	Experience of Glossophobia

		public speaking, I couldn't express what I wanted to say in proper words.	
5.	I	How do feel when you experience the fear of speaking in public?	
6.	Tenzin	Ahh I feel very nervous and low when I experience the fear of speaking in public. Uhh it would be better for me if I am not holding a paper or pen in my hands, because like if I am doing so, I would be literally shivering. That's why I usually don't hold something in my hands when I am speaking public.	Nervousness Fear of public speaking Hands shake
7.	I	What are the factors that contribute to the your fear of public speaking?	
8.	Tenzin	The main factors that contribute to my fear of public speaking would be lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes and being judged.	1. Lack of Confidence 2. Fear of making mistakes 3. Fear of being jugded