

**Investigating the Factors of Spoken English Anxiety among the English Major Students in
Bangladesh**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities

Brac University

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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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Abstract

The issue of spoken English anxiety is common in Bangladesh, where English is used as an unofficial second language. This study was conducted to explore the factors contributing to spoken English anxiety among undergraduate university students in the English department in Bangladesh. This study held significant importance as it investigated the prevalent factors of spoken English anxiety among undergraduate students of English department in Bangladesh, emphasizing the necessity to mitigate these obstacles to facilitate effective communication and enhance language proficiency, which was imperative for their academic and professional achievements. The research was conducted using a qualitative approach. Data was collected from a sample of 12 students in the English department through the use of open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. The data was thematically analyzed, which allowed us to identify three primary categories. The key findings of the research indicated that the students of English department experienced spoken English anxiety due to their background, linguistic challenges, non-linguistic factors such as formal classroom settings, fear of negative feedback and low motivation. The study's conclusions led to the recommendation that creating a supportive and comprehensive learning environment that fosters the development of English language competency require the active involvement of administrators, professors and students.

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
FLCAS	Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale)
US	United States
FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
ANS	Autonomic Nervous System
S.E.O.C.	Survival English Oral Communication

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

According to Article 3 of Bangladesh's Constitution, Bangla is both the national and official language of Bangladesh. On the other hand, English is treated as a second language here, though it has not been formally declared a second language yet (Ara, 2020). This language has had a bitter history in Bangladesh, but currently it has an ambiguous yet overwhelming present. The prevalence of the English language has been constant because of globalization and significant commercial linkages with the rest of the world. It is indisputable that English has become a widely accepted language in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, English is viewed as a tool for progress and transformation. It is essential to trade, foreign communication, government, judicial, and education. This language is widely regarded as a means to gain entry into the global world, and such entry will afterwards facilitate the nation's economic expansion through enhanced trade opportunities and the inflow of remittances. Furthermore, proficiency in the English language is seen as a gateway for pursuing higher education and seeking employment opportunities overseas. In response to the growing importance of global communication and competition, teaching and learning English has become a mandatory part of the curriculum in schools in Bangladesh. It is taught as a mandatory subject in all schools and colleges in Bangladesh. In addition, a widely attended English-medium education system is available in Bangladesh. In Bangla-medium schools and colleges, the majority of textbooks are written in Bangla with the purpose of promoting the national language and preserving its esteemed significance. Though the medium of instruction is Bangla here, students are required to study

English for 12 years since it is a mandatory subject in school and college. However, the proficiency level of students in English is still questionable in all spheres. In order to attain proficiency, it is important to possess a comprehensive understanding of fundamental language skills, namely writing, speaking, reading, and listening. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, the English classrooms of schools and colleges place a significant emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills, whereas the listening and speaking parts remain neglected. The consequences are seen when these students enter university life. The majority of them experience an uncomfortable environment at the beginning of their university life, as English is used as the medium of instruction in more than 150 government and private universities in Bangladesh. Moreover, when they start seeking a job, their lack of spoken English skills becomes a major barrier to getting the job.

In response to the necessity of making students able to communicate effectively in English, the current policy emerged. A communicative teaching method (CLT) was implemented across all educational levels in Bangladesh by replacing the grammar translation method (Rahman & Pandian, 2018a, 2018b). Under the implementation of CLT, the Ministry of Education (MoE) made the decision to change the curriculum, textbook, methodology of teaching, and assessment procedures with the purpose of addressing the imperative of enabling learners with effective English communication skills. These textbooks serve as platforms for learners to engage in interactive activities that simulate real-life situations, thereby facilitating the practice of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (National Curriculum, 2012). Despite the implementation of new language policies and the perceived necessity, several allegations persist in both media reports and scholarly investigations that a significant proportion

of graduate students are still not confident of using English and that their competence in English is not up to par, especially in speaking (Alam, 2018; Ali & Walker, 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). Speaking is the most challenging aspect of learning any second or foreign language, as it requires the use of English in a genuine setting in addition to grammatical understanding. There are certain issues that prevent students from speaking English fluently. Anxiety is one of them. This form of anxiety is also known as spoken English anxiety. It is commonly characterized as one of the most significant affective factors in the acquisition of a second language, which refers to feelings of frustration, nervousness, self-doubt, and apprehension of worry (Brown, 2000). In the context of Bangladesh, spoken English anxiety is commonly seen in ESL and EFL classrooms. As a result, students sometimes are not able to comprehend and refrain themselves from class participation. Instead of studying English since kindergarten, the majority of Bangladeshi graduates still face challenges conversing in English properly. The issue of graduates encountering difficulties communicating in English during job interviews has the potential to contribute to a rise in the unemployment rate among graduates in our country. Despite possessing a considerable amount of knowledge in English, students often face challenges in effectively utilizing the language in their professional and interpersonal contexts due to the presence of anxiety. The complexity of this scenario in Bangladesh is further compounded by the significant emphasis placed on English proficiency and the apprehension associated with committing errors in a language that holds considerable societal value. The saddest part is that students who major in the English department are not excluded from it. It seems like they want to be excellent in English, but at the same time, they're also afraid of falling short of everyone's expectations, as they are not only expected to be excellent at communicating in English but also frequently scrutinized because of their chosen subject of study. As a result, a

lot of students in the English department struggle with a paradox: they want to do well in English, but they also worry that they won't live up to expectations. Their experiences and obstacles, both inside and outside of the classroom, are shaped by this delicate balance between ambition and anxiety.

As previously mentioned, a lack of proficiency in spoken English can significantly impact students' career prospects. In this case, the students of the English Department suffer more than the students of other disciplines since their main area of expertise is English. So failing to improve the necessary English language skills, particularly in speaking, can result in the closure of numerous career opportunities. In the worst-case scenario, it may even render their degree less valuable or potentially obsolete. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the factors contributing to spoken English anxiety and find solutions to overcome it. In order to investigate the phenomenon of spoken English anxiety among students in the English department in Bangladesh, this study is a comprehensive exploration.

1.2 Research Aim

The research aimed to identify the factors that contribute to the experience of spoken English anxiety among the students of the English Department in Bangladesh and what efforts they make to overcome the issue. Based on the findings, the study will generate recommendations for students in the English Department.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study holds significant implications for academics, teaching professions, students, and institutions, as well as for society in general. The intricate interplay of students' psychological struggles and linguistic anxieties will be brought to light, which will contribute to the enhancement of academic discourse. This insight can lead to improvements in pedagogy, which will enable educators to adjust tactics for creating learning environments that are more supportive. Students will benefit from becoming more aware of their common experiences, which will also help to reduce feelings of isolation. Educational institutions have the capacity to modify policies in order to promote inclusion, which in turn can improve student involvement and may increase graduates' chances of finding employment. In conclusion, the findings of the study will add to social discussions regarding the relevance of language learning and lay the foundation for further research on the spoken English anxiety and proficiency development of English department students in Bangladesh.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was investigated based on the following questions:

1. What are the factors that cause spoken English anxiety among the students of the English department in Bangladesh?
2. What strategies do they apply to overcome the issue?

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Chapter 2

Literature Review

Speaking anxiety in a second language or foreign language is not a modern subject. The phenomenon of experiencing anxiety when speaking in a second or foreign language has received significant attention from scholars, as seen in the works of Subasi (2010) and Mak (2011). The phenomenon is referred to as an affective factor in the field of foreign language acquisition and has been extensively discussed by various scholars (Baş & Özcan, 2018; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992).

Speaking is one of the language skills that provokes anxiety and is also the primary cause of anxiety in language classrooms (Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2013). Balemir (2009) stated that speaking anxiety is the fear or apprehension of speaking a foreign language. Suleimenova (2013) stated that a heightened level of speaking anxiety exists among second- and foreign-language learners due to their prevailing concern about communication skills in foreign languages. In his study, the participants expressed that they feel tense, anxious, and nervous when learning a foreign language. Their "mental block" to learning the language is another thing they assert. Karatas et al. (2016) agreed with Suleimenova's (2013) suggestion that language students must do oral presentations in front of their classmates and be involved in group discussions. Language learners may experience apprehension and develop negative perceptions about engaging in such activities if the primary emphasis in the language classroom is on communication skills.

2.1 Level of Anxiety

Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the interaction between anxiety in spoken English and other variables including motivation, gender, proficiency, and the length of time spent learning the language.

Huang (2004) conducted research in the context of Taiwan to identify the connection between motivation for language learning and anxiety associated with speaking foreign languages. The primary aim of this research was to identify the correlation between anxiety and gender within the domain of foreign language acquisition. More specifically, the study focused on investigating how the duration of English language learning and the propensity to participate in post-school study activities may be influenced by anxiety levels. Horwitz et al. (1986) conducted research in which the administration of the FLCAS (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale) was involved. In this research, a sample of 502 participants were enrolled as EFL learners at a university situated in Taiwan. Female individuals demonstrated higher levels of anxiety than their male counterparts, according to the findings. Yamat and Bidabadi (2012), on the other hand, discovered that there was no statistically noticeable difference between genders in terms of spoken English anxiety among Iranian EFL freshmen in college. However, they were also experiencing spoken English anxiety.

According to Affective Filter Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen (1982), the process of language acquisition is subject to the effect of emotional and psychological factors. The proposition suggests that individuals who experience anxiety, lack motivation, or possess low self-esteem may exhibit a "heightened affective filter," which functions as an impediment to the

acquisition of language skills. On the contrary, in instances where learners exhibit a state of relaxation, motivation, and confidence, their "affective filter" is diminished, hence facilitating enhanced language acquisition. According to Krashen, the establishment of a positive, motivating and low-anxiety learning environment is of utmost importance in facilitating effective language acquisition.

According to a study, learners who initiate their English language acquisition in kindergarten have reduced levels of anxiety in comparison to their counterparts who initiate their language learning journey in secondary school education. Additionally, research demonstrates that students who actively practice the English language beyond the confines of regular class hours have reduced levels of anxiety in comparison to their peers who do not engage in such extracurricular activities.

Llinas and Garau (2009) conducted a study to investigate how anxiety impacted Spanish students with different degrees of competence in foreign languages. The study had a sample size of 134 students who were enrolled in Spanish lessons at a university in the US. The participants were subjected to the administration of the FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) by the researchers. The results of the study revealed that participants categorized as advanced learners showed significantly higher levels of anxiety in comparison to people categorized as beginner level, who displayed the lowest levels of anxiety.

To identify the impact of language anxiety on academic achievement, the researchers also conducted a comparative analysis of the final grades achieved by the participants in the course. The results suggest that advanced students demonstrate heightened levels of concern and attain superior academic performance in comparison to their counterparts. The study inferred that individuals at an advanced proficiency level demonstrate a comprehension of their goal of achieving a foreign language, specifically to augment their opportunities for future employment. Consequently, persons belonging to this category encounter elevated feelings of anxiety and stress in contrast to their peers who enroll in the language course only to meet the need.

2.2 Concept of Horowitz

Horowitz et al. (1986) proposed a definition of anxiety as a subjective phenomenon marked by sensations of apprehension, tension, and dread that are connected to the activation of the sensory system. The author placed significant emphasis on the observations made by numerous second language learners on the paradoxical impact of this specific aspect on their acquisition of a second language. Moreover, it is apparent that this particular component has been well examined and regarded as one of the foremost aspects influencing the cognitive processes of learners throughout their language acquisition journey. Furthermore, he defines FLA as the amalgamation of cognitive and affective factors that arise during the process of language pedagogy. The phenomenon of anxiety in the context of speaking is characterized by distinct emotions of concern and stress, which have been observed to have a correlation with the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Individuals who demonstrate an excessive preoccupation with their oral communication skills may encounter heightened levels of worry when they commit mistakes. In the study, he also mentions that anxiety can manifest both positive and negative

consequences. Individuals who exhibit a greater propensity to suffer average levels of anxiety within study settings are driven by a motivation to uphold their self-confidence and attain favorable outcomes. In contrast to prevailing beliefs, a significant proportion of learners provide evidence indicating that the experience of anxiety exerts a negative impact on both the learning and speaking process

2.3 Type of Anxiety

According to Hashemi (2011), psychologists identified three distinct categories of anxiety: state anxiety, trait anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety (p. 1812). State anxiety is usually regarded as a psychological reaction to a specific stress-provoking stimulus, such as academic circumstances encompassing classroom environments and high-stakes assessments. Trait anxiety is widely regarded as a consistent and enduring aspect of an individual's personality (Spielberger, 1984:1; Horwitz, 2001: 113). Situation-specific anxiety, as referenced by Rafieyan (2016, p. 113), is a recurring characteristic that commonly manifests in certain scenarios, such as public speaking or oral presentations in a second or foreign language.

Additionally, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified three additional manifestations of anxiety in their study. A topic that is commonly discussed within the realm of communication is communication apprehension. Two other forms include the apprehension of receiving negative evaluations and test anxiety. The description of these three dimensions pertaining to foreign language anxiety will lay the groundwork for the understanding of the notion of foreign language anxiety, consequently augmenting comprehension of the concept.

Communication apprehension refers to the state of anxiety or concern that individuals have in relation to oral communication, as defined by Horwitz et al. (1991). According to McCroskey (1997), communication apprehension can be defined as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person" (p. 78). The anxiety of communication can be attributed to various personality traits exhibited by individuals, including shyness, silence, and reluctance. According to McCroskey and Anderson (1976), communication apprehension negatively affects the performance of students in communication-focused educational settings, such as foreign language instruction. Consequently, communication fear seems to exert a detrimental influence on language learners, leading to bad outcomes.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the second kind of anxiety is fear of negative evaluation. His concept regarding fear of negative evaluation refers to an individual's worry over the evaluation of others, their tendency to avoid evaluative situations, and their belief that they would be evaluated poorly by others (p. 128). The utilization of a foreign or second language is perceived as a matter of assessment by certain learners. Aydin (2001) stated in his study that individuals may have concern regarding the potential for conveying an unfavorable social image, particularly if they are cognizant of their limited linguistic incompetence in the foreign language.

The third form of anxiety he introduced is known as test anxiety, which is characterized by a fear of failure in relation to performance (p. 127). This type of anxiety can be divided into four distinct phases: test anticipation, test preparation, test-taking stage, and test reaction. Covington (1985). During test anticipation, learners engage in the process of assessing their own

degree of preparedness, evaluating their existing knowledge, considering the difficulty level of the test, and making predictions about their potential success (Balemir, 2009). According to Aydin (2001), students may experience heightened levels of anxiety upon anticipating an impending test failure. Learners commence their preparations for the test while also evaluating the efficacy of their test preparation strategies during the second phase, known as test preparation. Anxious learners impose unattainable expectations upon themselves, viewing any grade below excellence as unsatisfactory, despite it being satisfactory for their peers (Namsang, 2011). Test-taking is the last stage of test anxiety, during which learners experience feelings of repression and frustration as a result of their fear. In the last phase, individuals typically come to acknowledge their negative opinions regarding test-taking (Aydin, 2001).

2.4 Variables of Anxiety

Yoshida (2010) stated that while entering the second language learning classroom, students often experience feelings of anxiety. ESL students often experience feelings of pressure, anxiety, or unease when acquiring the language, and some even encounter cognitive difficulties during the process of language learning. Regarding the domain of productive skills, the majority of research has consistently demonstrated the presence of a significant degree of speaking anxiety, as indicated by many studies conducted by Budin (2014) and Suleimenova (2012). Previous studies have indicated a notable inverse correlation between language anxiety and speaking proficiency (Akkakoson, 2016; Liu, 2012). According to Hashemi (2011), language anxiety is influenced by factors such as students' self-confidence, cognitive abilities, and language learning difficulties, learners' individual differences, mother tongue, social status, and background. Anxiety related to speaking is a common challenge encountered by those learning a

foreign language (Hamzah & Asokan, 2016). The involvement of the instructor is of utmost importance in the issue of foreign language anxiety and the implementation of interactive teaching methodologies in the classroom of a second or foreign language (Elaldi, 2016; Asif, 2017).

2.5 Linguistic Factors

Research done by Taiqin (1995) revealed that linguistic factors align with the aforementioned issues. The findings indicated that a significant majority of students, approximately 95%, experienced difficulties when it came to participating in class discussions. These challenges stemmed from anxiety related to potential errors, inadequate preparation, a lack of confidence in handling mistakes, and a general disinterest in the subject matter being taught. In addition, Taiqin put up a proposition for a stage referred to as "Survival English Oral Communication" (S.E.O.C.), which refers to the emphasis on functional communication rather than strict accuracy. This approach is motivated by students' fear of committing errors and the subsequent impact on their self-esteem. As long as the students are able to express themselves clearly, they may consider the communication process to be successful.

There is a substantial gap in the literature since no previous study has investigated anxiety related to spoken English specifically among the students of the English Department who represent the prospective ESL or EFL educators of the future. This study aims to bridge this gap by placing its primary focus on the factors of anxiety associated with spoken English among the students of the English department in the context of Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The study was conducted using a qualitative research approach, focusing primarily on conducting in-depth interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences related to spoken English anxiety. A qualitative approach was selected based on their capacity to successfully investigate psychological phenomena and acquire a comprehensive understanding of participants' perceptions, emotions, experiences, and thoughts about anxiety. The study used open-ended questions to comprehensively explore the various dimensions of spoken English anxiety. This approach enabled participants to articulate their individual experiences and viewpoints using their own language. In this study, the qualitative approach facilitated the exploration of intricate observations that may not be comprehensively captured by the quantitative approach.

3.2 Settings

The study was carried out in university settings, within the English departments of multiple universities in Bangladesh. The selection of these settings was made with the intention of ensuring that the participants are representative of students who are pursuing a major in English, a field that places significant emphasis on the development of spoken English proficiency.

3.3 Participant

A total of 12 students took part in the interview. All the participants were students of the English department from different universities in Bangladesh. All of them were undergraduate students in their third or final year. The participants were selected via purposive sampling in order to ensure a comprehensive representation of diverse experiences and viewpoints regarding spoken English anxiety. To maintain privacy, pseudo-names like A, B, and C were used instead of their names.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect data, I chose a semi-structured interview as it allowed for flexibility to fully explore the participants' individual experiences, perspectives, coping mechanisms, and tactics connected to spoken English anxiety. Allowing participants to freely express their opinions in their own words was one way this technique attempted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Some open-ended questions were prepared before conducting the interview; others were unplanned asked to know clearly about the participants' thoughts and experiences. Firstly, I contacted 16–18 students of English majors from different Bangladeshi universities who were interested in taking part in the study. Communication was done via social media. Among them, 12 students expressed interest in taking part in the interview. After that, the selected students were invited to take part in the interviews and given a thorough explanation about the significance and purpose of the study. Subsequently, the interviews were carried out both online and offline in order to consider the preferences and availability of the participants. It took me one week to take all the interviews. The participants were provided with the opportunity to choose between Bangla and English as the languages in which they may respond to the interview questions, based on their level of comfort. The provision of flexibility in language

choice allowed participants to communicate in the language they were most comfortable with, thus promoting effective and authentic communication. Next, all interviews were recorded with the participants' consent. The primary data source utilized in this study was audio recordings, which effectively captured the intricate details of participants' words, including their spoken tone, as observed throughout the interview sessions. Subsequently, the audio recordings were transcribed into English in order to facilitate data analysis. It maintained the genuineness of participants' reactions, encompassing their use of language and emotional subtleties. After completing the transcription, the next step was systematic coding because thematic analysis was chosen as the method for analyzing the collected data for this study. These codes were based on both explicit and implicit themes that emerged from the data. They encompassed a wide range of aspects related to spoken English anxiety, such as its causes, manifestations, coping mechanisms, and personal anecdotes. After coding, I organized the identified codes into thematic categories. This step involved grouping related codes together to form overarching themes that encapsulated the key findings and insights from the interviews. Thematic categories represented the central ideas or concepts that emerged from the data. Within each thematic category, patterns and variations among participants' experiences were examined. I sought to understand the commonalities and differences in how participants perceived and coped with spoken English anxiety. This process helped in developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This thematic analysis allowed for the extraction of rich insights from the data. The identified themes and patterns provided a nuanced understanding of spoken English anxiety among students majoring in the English Department in Bangladesh. These insights were supported by direct quotes and examples from the interview transcripts, adding depth and credibility to the findings.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were paramount in conducting research involving human participants, ensuring their rights, privacy, and well-being were respected throughout the study. In this study, several ethical considerations were upheld. Firstly, participants' consent was taken informally. Before participating in the study, participants received clear and detailed information about the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, benefits, and their rights. Besides, their identities were kept strictly confidential. Any information that could potentially identify them, such as names or personal details, was anonymized in the research findings. Pseudo names were used instead of their real names. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely, accessible only to the researcher and any potential research assistants involved. The audio recordings were only used for research purposes and will not be shared without explicit consent. In fact, during the interviews, participants' privacy was respected. Interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable setting, ensuring that the content of the conversation remained confidential. Moreover, the research prioritized the well-being of participants. Efforts were made to create a safe and open environment for participants to share their experiences. They were free to participate or decline without any pressure or consequences. Lastly, participants had the option to receive a summary of the research findings if they expressed interest. This feedback mechanism ensures transparency and allows participants to contribute to the research beyond their interview session.

3.6 Validity and reliability

To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, triangulation was employed by involving multiple participants, conducting interviews at different times, and cross-referencing the emerging themes with existing literature. Furthermore, to verify the accuracy of their findings and interpretations, participants got the opportunity to review the interpretation of their interview data and the emerging themes. Thus, the member-checking process allowed participants to confirm or provide feedback on the researcher's interpretations.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

4.1 Participants' Background

4.1.1 Academic Background

All of the participants who experience anxiety while speaking English have a Bangla-medium background in their school and college lives. Their proficiency in English is substantially influenced by their educational background. Out of the total sample size of 12 participants, 10 individuals were from Bangla medium schools and colleges. These participants reported experiencing anxiety when engaging in spoken English throughout the initial stages of their undergraduate journey. Furthermore, it was noted that some participants continue to face this challenge as they have not been used to speaking in English since their childhood

During my first year in university, I felt nervous about communicating in English because from kindergarten to college my medium of study was Bangla. So I did not need to communicate in English before coming to university. (D)

The shift from an academic environment conducted in the Bangla language to a university setting where English serves as the predominant medium of teaching presents notable difficulties. The sudden change heightens feelings of anxiety among them, as

they are compelled to effectively communicate in a language that they are not accustomed to employing in an academic context.

As it is found in this study, those who reported experiencing anxiety when speaking English had a Bangla-medium academic background. One of the challenges faced by Bengali-medium students is the limited exposure to the English language within their academic environment. During their academic years, they had few or no opportunities to engage in spoken English practice. It is taught like a subject, not like a language. So academic discourse is typically employed in textbooks and examinations, as opposed to being commonly used in everyday communication. Students are often deprived of opportunities to engage in regular conversations that require the use of the target language. The limited opportunities for exposure and practice provided challenges for them in acquiring the essential language abilities. Consequently, individuals may experience a lack of self-confidence and aptitude in speaking English, thereby culminating in feelings of unease when compelled to engage in such communication.

You know, in Bangla medium school we treated English as a subject, not as a language. So we only used to study as much as we needed for exams .As for me, I never was into English except for academic purposes. (Participant K)

Participant C reported experiencing initial challenges in spoken English during her first semester at university. These difficulties were attributed to her rural background and little exposure to English as a second language. The presence of a linguistic barrier

impeded their educational progress. Participant D, who also came from a rural setting, expressed that I encountered difficulties in speaking English since I predominantly speak in my native language throughout the day.

In contrast, participants with an English-medium background exhibited the opposite scenario, since they have been accustomed to conversing in the English language since their early education in kindergarten.

As I am from English Medium Background so I am used to with speaking in English. Even I am more comfortable speaking it than Bangla.(Participant E)

Participants who have received their education in English-medium schools have had the benefit of being fully immersed in the English language from a very early age, often commencing in kindergarten or even earlier. The extensive duration of exposure and consistent utilization of English as the primary mode of education, communication, and learning have inherently fostered a greater sense of ease and proficiency among individuals in regards to speaking and articulating their thoughts in the English language. Consequently, those who have been exposed to an English-medium educational background exhibited greater proficiency and self-confidence in utilizing the English language across diverse contexts, encompassing conversation, public speaking, and written correspondence. The familiarity and ease with the English language frequently result in a higher level of competency in comparison to individuals who have predominantly received education in Bangla or another language.

4.1.2 Socio Cultural Environment

The socio-cultural environment refers to the social and cultural factors that influence individuals and communities within a given context. Socio-cultural factors additionally play a role in the manifestation of anxiety in spoken English. The participants conveyed that a lack of English exposure within their domestic setting poses a significant barrier to the enhancement of their communicative proficiency.

It is obvious that I talk in Bengali at my home with my family members. Certain English words are used but I do not talk in proper English them. (Participant K)

In the context of Bangladesh, the primary language spoken within households is Bangla. Consequently, individuals hailing from these particular socio-cultural contexts experience limited exposure to the English language in their everyday lives. The lack of early exposure to immersive language learning experiences provides a substantial obstacle for individuals when they are called upon to engage in English communication within academic or professional contexts. The usage of an unfamiliar language results in individuals experiencing emotions of anxiety and unease, as the linguistic structure and vocabulary may not be as familiar or comfortable as their mother tongue.

The utilization and acquisition of English language skills may not always be fostered within the wider socio-cultural context of Bangladesh. If a prevailing belief exists that English is primarily a foreign language and possesses limited practical

application in local settings, then students may exhibit a diminished inclination to enhance their spoken proficiency in English.

My environment is not conducive to supporting me learning and improving my spoken English because most of the people around me never speak English, and they use their native language for daily interaction.(Participant L)

However, it is seen that numerous undergraduate students in the English Department recognize the importance of enhancing their speaking proficiency in English at the university level and want to participate in discussions that extend beyond the confines of the classroom. Nevertheless, a prevalent challenge that individuals often face is the fear of being negatively evaluated when endeavoring to communicate in English within social contexts. One concrete instance of this uncertainty is illustrated by participant F, who openly revealed her concerns about the potential judgment from others when communicating in English.

I realized in my first semester as a student of English Department, I have to be fluent in spoken English. That's why I started speak in English in front of my friends. But many of them mocked me for my pronunciation or grammatical mistake or poked by saying that I was trying to be cool. This causes me anxiety. I thought that whenever I will speak in English, people will make fun of me and this demotivated me to practice English.

The fear of being mocked serves as a substantial barrier, impeding an individual's inclination to engage in and enhance their spoken proficiency in the English language. It's a common challenge that many students face when they try to improve their speaking skills by speaking in front of others.

4.1.3 Social Status and Self Image

The social status of interlocutors is also found to influence participants' communication skills. Speaking in English with someone of a higher status makes students feel inferior, which leads to nervousness as well as anxiety.

Speaking in front of the teacher drives my anxiety because they know more than me, so they will recognize my mistakes. (Participant B)

When speaking in front of the teacher, I can't feel relaxed. (Participant D)

On the contrary, participants coming from an English-medium background are found to feel nervous when they talk to anyone in a higher position in society. In their case, their spoken English proficiency does not cause nervousness or anxiety. Regarding this, an English-medium participant said:

...I sometimes feel nervous when I have to talk to a person who have I status or person in society. But it causes not for my spoken English proficiency. I am confident enough with that. Sometimes it is their status that make me nervous or sometimes I become nervous about whether I can express my words properly in front of them or not.

Speaking in front of a teacher (B and D) established a power dynamic because it is obvious that the teacher is more knowledgeable. Considering the teacher's experience, this can cause people to become more anxious since they worry about being held accountable for their errors. This causes them to struggle to be relaxed and communicate comfortably.

Similarly, both L and K expressed anxiety about being judged when speaking in front of those who speak English more fluently. It was found that when people believe others are more fluent in speaking English, it makes them feel vulnerable and anxious about being judged anytime they use the English language. This anxiety stems from a concern about falling short of the required linguistic standard, which undermines confidence and self-worth.

Speaking in front of someone who has better speaking proficiency makes me nervous because I feel they judge me whenever I speak in English in front of them. (L)

In earlier period of my university life, I ignored talking with the students of English medium schools...But in group work I had to talk with them and at that time I felt very nervous, as they were very fluent in English and I was not. Throughout the time, I have overcome it to some extent though. But I still feel nervous when I talk with someone having better speaking proficiency than me. (Participant K)

4.2 Linguistic Factors

4.2.1 Difficulty in Recalling and Remembering Vocabulary

The presence of linguistic challenges was determined to be a significant contributing factor to the heightened levels of anxiety experienced by participants while interacting in English. The majority of participants reported experiencing anxiety as a result of linguistic challenges, namely difficulties in memorizing and recalling appropriate words. Regarding this matter, a participant expressed the following viewpoint:

I think I have the standard vocabulary knowledge to continue a day-to-day conversation in English. But I cannot properly use them or recall them at the time of conversation. (Participant A)

Sometimes I struggle finding appropriate words to carry a conversation in English and at that time I become anxious. (Participant F)

I learn new vocabulary everyday...During conversation I feel like I am running out of words. I cannot find appropriate words to express my thoughts which made me uncomfortable speaking in English. (Participant G)

The statements made by the participants highlight the gap that exists between the theoretical knowledge of vocabulary and its actual implementation in practice. All participants, with the exception of those who have an English-medium background, encounter the same issue. Individuals often have difficulties attempting to spontaneously utilize their language during conversational exchanges. Rather than effectively incorporating words into their speech, individuals exhibit pauses or engage in word retrieval processes, impeding the smoothness of their communication and inducing feelings of anxiety. In addition, individuals with this condition commonly encounter difficulties in the process of retrieving words when necessary. It can be particularly vexing when an individual possesses knowledge of a word within their lexicon yet encounters difficulty rapidly recalling it during conversation. The lack of smooth integration of languages impedes their fluency. The occurrence of hesitant speech has a detrimental impact on the overall effectiveness of communication and has the ability to induce increased levels of anxiety.

4.2.2 Grammatical Mistakes

The discussion of grammatical mistakes and their influence on spoken English is a significant aspect in the realm of language acquisition and communication difficulties. In this regard, participants G and I provide insights into their respective experiences.

I always think about grammatical rules whenever I speak, I always
Feel anxious whether my grammar is correct or not. (Participant G)

The statement made by Participant G highlights a common issue faced by language learners, which is the persistent concern about grammatical rules. The constant cognitive stress of monitoring their grammatical structures leads to mental fatigue and anxiety. The source of this anxiety arises from the apprehension of committing grammatical mistakes during spoken English, which can result in self-questioning and reluctance in interpersonal interaction.

Participant I faced a similar issue, expressing that grammar caused her difficulty not just in speaking but also in other productive tasks such as writing.

My problem is concerning grammatical mistakes while speaking in English. Even I feel anxious about it during writing which makes me afraid to do such activities, especially speaking.(Participant I)

Participant I highlighted the extensive prevalence of concern associated with grammar, which extends beyond oral communication to written expression. The fear of making grammatical mistakes not only impacts her speaking proficiency in English but also hinders her aptitude for writing. This concern gives rise to avoidance behavior, when the individual abstains from participating in activities that require verbal or written

communication in English due to apprehension over committing errors. The disparity in complexity between English grammar and one's home language is undeniably a prominent cause of fear for individuals. The persistent preoccupation with accuracy impedes individuals' ability to speak fluently, diminishes their confidence, and establishes a cognitive obstacle to successful communication.

4.2.3 Concern for Pronunciation

The participants experience anxiety when speaking English due to concern about pronunciation, which stems from fear of being judged, experiencing communication breakdowns, and feeling pressured to achieve high academic expectations. The participants collectively conveyed their experiences in relation to this matter.

At the time of presentation, thoughts come inside my head if I am pronouncing this word right or not, if my accent is good or not. These thoughts make me more nervous. (Participant H)

Participants A, C, and G face a similar experience. Participant G also added that some teachers had deducted his marks in presentation because of mispronunciation or not having a good accent in English.

Due to coming from rural background, I had rural influence in my English accent and pronunciation. When I saw my classmates have good accent or some has native like accent, I felt shy and anxious to talk with them in English. Also, some

teachers cut my marks in presentation because of my accent which severely affected my performance. (Participant G)

The presence of accent bias intensifies spoken anxiety, resulting in problems with self-esteem and confidence. Moreover, concern for perfection in pronunciation has the potential to cultivate feelings of disappointment and self-doubt.

I was satisfied and confident with my English pronunciation. But after doing linguistics course my concern for pronunciation started. At that course, I was taught about phonetics and I discovered that my pronunciation is different than the British and American phonetics I started try to follow American phonetics... Even now when I speak in English I become concerned about my pronunciation and accent. (Participant B)

It has been discovered that individuals who have trouble pronouncing words correctly have trouble expressing themselves clearly, which sometimes results in misunderstandings in communication. This frustration snowballs into anxiety.

4.3 Non Linguistics Factors

4.3.1 Formal Classroom Environment

It was found that students have the most anxiety when participating in classroom activities that demand public speaking in front of their peers. Because of the strict

evaluation, students feel nervous about speaking English in class and anxious about failing. It appeared that the participants attributed a great deal of their worry to any and all classroom activities that required spoken English. The perception that the classroom is a place where students would be judged strictly for speaking up in English or making mistakes in front of an audience Anxiety manifests itself during certain classroom activities. For instance, delivering a presentation, asking and answering the teacher's questions some participants said the following in relation to this:

I feel anxious when teacher ask me questions in the class and expect me to speak correctly as a student of English Department (Participant G)

The situation that makes me anxious and stressful is when I need to speak in English in front of the entire classroom. (Participant I)

I feel nervous, anxious when I speak in front of the whole class. (Participant H)

Participants F,D, A, and L mentioned the physical symptoms they have due to spoken English anxiety, such as blushing, shakiness, elevated heart rate, trembling, and trouble forming whole sentences to express thoughts effectively.

My heartbeat increases when the teacher asks me anything in English or I have to present anything in front of class (Participant F)

My body starts shivering at the time of presentation or if teacher asks me any question. (Participant L)

Majority of the participants emphasized that delivering presentations in front of the entire class elicits feelings of fear. Furthermore, the individual expressed experiencing heightened anxiety, diminished confidence, employing fragmented speech patterns, and shivering, along with an accelerated heart rate, during presentations in English. The physical symptoms serve as indicators of the influence of speaking anxiety on students.

The situation that causes me anxiety is the time of presentation. I feel nervous if my teacher asks any questions in the middle of the presentation and my body starts shivering. This is not because I cannot answer the question. This is because I have to answer that in English. (Participant C)

4.3.2 Role of Language Teachers

In the interview, all the participants agreed that language teachers have a significant role in increasing or mitigating anxiety. Unfriendly and strict teachers, as well as a tendency to show an embarrassing attitude towards students' mistakes, have been identified as significant factors contributing to students' anxiety when speaking English.

If the lecturer is very strict in finding mistakes, it will make me nervous to express any words in front of him. (Participant F)

Participants A, I, D, and L shared similar ideas. Participant G particularly proposed that the teachers play a significant role in mitigating anxiety with their friendly and positive feedback. In addition, they can employ effective instructional tactics in the classroom setting.

I found many teachers considerable when students make mistakes while speaking in English. They positively gave students feedback to their mistakes that helps students to improve their speaking. Also there were some teachers who insulted students to their mistakes. They did not consider that many students come from Bangla medium background, so they need time to be used to with it. So I as well as my many classmates used to feel nervous when speaking in English in their classes...

4.3.3 Low motivation and Lack of Practice

Another factor of anxiety that is found in interviews is individual factors, specifically low motivation and a lack of practice. Certain participants had a clear understanding that their lack of motivation hindered their ability to acquire speaking proficiency in English. Motivation is considered to be a vital component of the learning process. Participants with high motivation are found to make significant efforts in order to acquire speaking competency. Individuals who possess lower levels of motivation exhibit behaviors that are contrary to the intended or expected course of action.

My problem in improving my spoken English is my laziness to practice it and I have low motivation for it. (Participant I)

Participant I openly acknowledged that his progress in spoken English is impeded by low levels of motivation and a tendency towards laziness in regards to practice. The significance of motivation in language acquisition is duly recognized. Individuals who possess a strong sense of motivation are frequently more inclined to dedicate their time and exertion towards enhancing their linguistic abilities. On the other hand, those who are found to possess low levels of motivation encounter difficulties in summoning the requisite level of passion required for maintaining a continuous practice routine, impeding their advancement.

What bothers me is my laziness. I am responsible for it because I can't throw away my laziness. (Participant D)

Participant D expressed a similar viewpoint, underscoring that their challenges with spoken English proficiency stem from their own lack of motivation. This acknowledgement demonstrates the individual's recognition of their own internal responsibility for the issue. Overcoming the inclination towards laziness presents a considerable obstacle as it necessitates a transformation in individual behaviors and cognitive orientations.

4.4 Efforts that students make to deal with Anxiety

The study revealed that those who showed high motivation towards enhancing their speaking abilities demonstrated proactive efforts to address their spoken English anxiety issue.

I practice English in front of the mirror every day for 5-10 minutes. This helps me a lot to improve my speaking skill and now I don't usually feel that much anxiety as before... (Participant B)

I, along with some of my friends, practice hanging out in English where we don't judge anyone. (Participant C)

From the interviews, the strategies were found: engaging in speaking English practice sessions with peers, self-talk in front of a mirror, practicing grammatical exercises. Some students also practice extensive reading to learn new vocabulary and its usage.

I read fiction books. By which I can enjoy and learn at the same time.
(Participant G)

I try to read one article from an English newspaper or online news portal daily which updates me with both current affairs and new vocabulary. (Participant L)

Additionally, they pursued English literature to glean novel concepts, read conversational texts, and engaged in independent English practice. All of them somehow incorporate technology into their practices as well.

I watch YouTube videos of my favorite topic in English and listen to English music and imitate those. I have fun improving my speaking skill this way. I noticed the progress of my speaking competence. (Participant K)

I love to watch movies. I watch English movies which has helped me to improve my speaking and listening skills. After watching a movie, I try to copy acting my favorite scene. This is helping me to achieve fluency in spoken English.

(Participant L)

...Apart from this I use several apps such as English Conversation Practice, Stimuler etc. This apps helped me not only to be fluent but also improve my pronunciation. Now I am confident enough about my spoken English skill.

(Participant H)

From these statements, it was noticed that incorporating technologies into speaking practice gave them fun. Through the strategies, they learned how to use English in a real-life context, and it also helped them develop pronunciation. As for overcoming anxiety in a presentation or any speaking test, they said:

I practice a lot before any presentation or speaking test so that I don't get nervous during presentation or any speaking test. (Participant L)

I think the anxiety causes me to not be so fluent in English. That's why, I keep practicing before any presentation and speaking test so that I don't get stuck at any point. In my case, I think if I achieve a standard level of fluency, my anxiety problem will be gone. (Participant C)

Participants who put in efforts daily to improve their speaking skills reported that they had been benefited by the strategies they chose to improve their speaking competence. Like participant C, according to some of them, achieving mastery in speaking skills will help them overcome spoken English anxiety. That's why they practiced daily and achieved a good standard of proficiency in speaking, which also reduced their level of spoken English anxiety to a great extent.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

The study revealed that the participants experienced several types of speaking problems, which significantly contributed to their anxiety. These factors are categorized under three themes: participants' background, linguistic factors, and non-linguistic factors. Several problems arose as a result of linguistic concerns. The participants had a problem remembering and recalling vocabulary, making grammatical errors, and concerning pronunciation skills. On the other hand, some non-linguistic factors were found, such as a strict classroom environment, the role of language teachers, participants' low motivation, and a lack of practice to improve their speaking skills.

5.1 Students' Background

The limited exposure to the English language was found to be a significant factor in spoken English anxiety among participants with a Bengali-medium academic background. Participants thought their academic background was primarily responsible for their spoken English anxiety, as English is usually treated as an academic subject in most of the Bangla-medium schools and colleges, where opportunities for practical application in real-life scenarios are limited. While students may demonstrate proficiency on grammar and vocabulary assessments, they frequently encounter challenges when it comes to applying English language skills in real-life conversational contexts. Theoretical frameworks have the potential to confine the usage of English inside an academic sphere, hence impeding its practical implementation in

real-world scenarios. Consequently, students from a Bangla-medium background find difficulties in developing confidence and proficiency in spoken English since they may be apprehensive about making errors or experiencing discomfort during communication. The process of transitioning from an academic environment to practical English communication in real-life contexts becomes very challenging for them, which provokes their anxiety.

The data additionally highlighted the notable impact of the socio-cultural environment on the levels of spoken English anxiety experienced by students in Bangladesh. In the context of Bangladesh, the primary language spoken inside the house is Bangla. The linguistic context inherently restricts students' access to English within their everyday experiences. Consequently, the students face considerable difficulties when they are compelled to engage in English communication inside academics, as they are students in the English department. The absence of early exposure to English language immersion results in the development of a barrier, which subsequently gives rise to emotions of fear while engaging in verbal communication in English. Participant K's statement regarding the use of Bengali at home and the lack of adequate English usage with family members suggests a limited level of exposure. The linguistic abilities of students are significantly influenced by their surrounding environment, in which they have grown since their early childhood. When English is rarely spoken in their socio-cultural context, students encounter difficulties in acquiring proficiency in the language, especially in speaking. Furthermore, it is important to consider the impact of the wider socio-cultural context in Bangladesh on students' perspectives and dispositions towards the English language. If English is predominantly regarded as a foreign language with limited practical utility in local settings, students may exhibit a lack of drive to enhance their proficiency in spoken English. This

perspective gives rise to a disconnection between the language acquired at educational institutions and its apparent applicability in individuals' daily experiences.

Besides, the interactions among participants might be significantly influenced by their social status. The findings of this study revealed that participants experienced a sense of discomfort and perceived inferiority while engaging in conversation with others who perceived themselves to possess a higher social status. This emotional response then led to heightened levels of tension or anxiety. Pica (1987) stated that the existence of a perceived or actual disparity in status between learners and teachers may contribute to increased levels of anxiety among learners. The aforementioned statement demonstrates that students who lack confidence in their linguistic abilities experience diminished self-assurance and heightened anxiety while engaging with proficient speakers of the language, such as native speakers (Peirce, 1995). Participants in this study experienced a similar thing. Inadequate linguistic ability among speakers might contribute to a fear of engaging in cultural settings, perhaps leading to suboptimal communication outcomes. For individuals of this nature, the act of conversing in a foreign language poses a challenge due to the fear of compromising their favorable perception or sense of self.

5.2 Linguistic Factors

The data of this study demonstrated linguistic elements as a factor in participants' spoken English anxiety. Three primary linguistic factors were identified: difficulty in memorizing and recalling vocabulary, fear of grammatical error, and concern for right or perfect pronunciation. The participants frequently articulated feelings of irritation and anxiety in relation to these

matters. Although they often asserted that they had an adequate range of vocabulary needed for daily conversation in English, they faced difficulties remembering and recalling it during spontaneous conversation. This observation implies the existence of a disparity between an individual's passive and active vocabulary, which has the potential to result in increased levels of anxiety. Furthermore, participants were consistently preoccupied with the intricate grammatical rules of English, which are markedly dissimilar from their mother language. Participants expressed that their fear of making grammatical mistakes during conversation caused them anxiety, as illustrated by Participant G's concern. Furthermore, the issue of grammatical anxiety also manifests itself in the realm of writing, impeding learners from actively participating in language-related tasks, as evidenced by the observations made by Participant I. Moreover, the research conducted by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) provided support for the association between linguistic anxiety and the difficulty of retaining and retrieving vocabulary.

The research also revealed a prevalent concern regarding pronunciation among students in the English department. This concern is driven by various factors, including fear of judgment, breakdowns in communication, academic pressure, and bias towards accents. The experiences of the participants revealed a persistent concern regarding the perception of their spoken English proficiency by others. The exacerbation of self-doubt and anxiety is further intensified by accent bias, particularly among students with Bangla-medium backgrounds. Even participants' desire to sound like native speakers or have perfect pronunciation as students of the English department made them concerned about pronunciation, which led to anxiety while speaking in English.

Pronunciation challenges can have significant consequences, such as hindering effective communication and contributing to a recurring cycle of frustration and anxiety.

5.3 Non-linguistic factors

The study additionally discovered the non-linguistic factors of spoken English anxiety. Participants reported that they experienced anxiety from strict evaluation procedures and language-based assessment in a formal classroom setting. All the participants with a Bangla-medium background agreed that they experienced elevated levels of tension and anxiety when engaging in public speaking activities such as delivering presentations, participating in class assessments, and taking quizzes, particularly when their teachers put emphasis on speaking English accurately. This matches the study of Elaldi (2016), who states that the presence of test anxiety serves as an extra element that contributes to anxiety within the classroom setting, particularly in instances where learners are subjected to frequent assessments.

Besides, the correlation between apprehension of negative evaluations and anxiety is prominently emphasized by Kitano (2001), whose research demonstrates that students who consistently have concerns about negative evaluation are more prone to experiencing anxiety in second language educational settings. In this study, we found the same scenario. Participants become anxious in front of the teachers, who find mistakes frequently during conversation or any speaking activities in English. Also, their spoken anxiety gets provoked if any teacher gives them negative feedback in front of the entire class. Hurwitz et al. (1986), in their study, mentioned this form of anxiety about speaking a second or foreign language. Moreover, numerous studies (Hurwitz et al., 1986; Noormohamadi, 2009) consistently demonstrated that the fear of receiving

negative evaluation from others is a prominent factor contributing to the experience of anxiety in public speaking. The data derived from this research indicated an interconnection between the responses of peers towards a student's spoken English performance and the level of anxiety experienced by the student during spoken English. Several participants' expressed feelings of anxiety and had challenges when they engaged in self-comparisons with those who possess a higher level of proficiency in the English language. The inclusion of individuals with higher proficiency levels in the classroom setting provides a heightened level of stress and anxiety for certain participants, hence impacting their overall speaking experience.

Furthermore, the findings derived from the interviews conducted with participants highlight the substantial influence of individual characteristics, specifically low motivation and insufficient practice, as major factors in the spoken English anxiety experienced by students in the English department who are endeavoring to enhance their oral fluency in the English language. Motivation has an essential role in the learning process and is strongly supported in this particular situation. Participants who possess high levels of motivation consistently made efforts to enhance their spoken English skills, and they said that their spoken English anxiety problem was reduced to a great extent. On the other hand, participants with lower levels of motivation tend to engage in behaviors that impede their anticipated progress in speaking competence. The acknowledgement made by Participant I regarding their lack of motivation and laziness emphasizes the significant impact that motivation plays. On the other hand, Participant D's acknowledgment of their personal accountability for issues related to motivation emphasizes the necessity for transformative changes in behavior and cognition. The results of this study

highlight the significance of resolving motivational obstacles and encouraging regular practice in order to overcome spoken English anxiety.

Based on the data, two types of anxiety were found among participants. The first one is trait anxiety. It is found in one participant who is from an English-medium background. Trait anxiety is a part of one's personality that is permanent. The participant felt anxiety when he had to speak with someone of high status in society. The second is situation-specific anxiety, which all the participants from a Bangla-medium background experienced when they had to speak in English, deliver a presentation, or do any speaking activities in English.

Chapter 6

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, certain recommendations are proposed to help the students of the English department overcoming spoken English anxiety.

Teacher's role in spoken English anxiety is crucial. So they need to be knowledgeable about teaching methodologies and understanding language anxiety to manage students' stress and anxiety in the classroom because though the students are from English Department but majority of them are from a Bangla-medium background. So it is hard for them to cope with class at the primary level. Teachers should be considerate about it and guide them to cope with this problem. The teacher should provide extra attention to those students who have poor speaking skills by arranging a consultation hour or an extra course for them. As the students are majoring in English, they are expected to have a high range of vocabulary, advanced grammatical knowledge, and correct pronunciation. Regarding the vocabulary issue expressed by the participants, it is worth considering the recommendations put forth by Brown (2001). These suggestions include the allocation of dedicated class time for assisting students in learning vocabulary within contextual frameworks, minimizing dependency on bilingual dictionaries, developing strategies to memorize new words, and involving students in "unplanned activities." Besides, the most common non-linguistic issue that the majority of students face is fear. It might be the fear of speaking out, the fear of negative evaluation by teachers, or the fear of being mocked by peers. To overcome this issue,

they should be inspired to speak by teachers. Teachers should focus less on correcting any mistakes made by students in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation and more on the students' development of their speaking performance. In fact, teachers can convince students that making mistakes is part of this journey. In addition, teachers can provide feedback in a positive and friendly way on their mistakes. In speaking activities, the emphasis should be on effectively presenting ideas and content rather than on formalities. Before the students practice speaking, teachers should give them the expressions they will need for speaking. The participants attributed their anxiety to the strict and formal classroom environment, making it essential for teachers to recognize that the classroom atmosphere can provoke anxiety. Formal classroom arrangements are identified as the primary source of anxiety and stress for English-learning students because all activities and learning processes need to be correct and disciplined. In this case, teachers can create an informal and friendly classroom environment that will help students reduce anxiety and make them interested in interacting in class. Teachers should incorporate communicative and fun speaking activities into their theoretical courses. Thus, students' spoken English will be developed along with achieving theoretical knowledge about their major subjects. They should also give students more chances to speak in class by asking questions and arranging small group discussions so that they become accustomed to speaking and do not feel anxious to do so, and they should make sure of the participation of all students in these activities.

As for students, the participants of this study already mentioned some practical steps that students should take to overcome their spoken English anxiety. Besides,

students should find their own strategy that will optimize their oral communication competence. It is advisable for students to maximize their opportunities for English language practice both inside and outside of the classroom. Students can establish agreements with their peers to maximize their use of the English language in their day-to-day interactions.

Last but not least, university authorities should offer specialized courses for students in the English department, focusing on enhancing their spoken English proficiency through interactive activities and innovative teaching methods.

Chapter 7

Limitation of the Study

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the sample size of this study is small, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Next, the perceptions of university teachers on students' spoken English anxiety were not included, which might add valuable information to this study.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

To sum up, the type of anxiety students in the English department face is situation-specific anxiety. This study provided insights into the prevailing factors of English-speaking anxiety among undergraduate students pursuing a major in the English Department in Bangladesh. Addressing this matter is important since it not only affects students' academic results and career opportunities for current students but also affects the students of the next generation, as many students in the English department are expected to be English teachers in schools, colleges, and universities in the future. So if they do not achieve the required proficiency in spoken English, they also cannot make their students competent in spoken English, and it will be a never-ending cycle. The research found several factors that contribute to spoken English anxiety, including linguistic difficulties, fear of negative evaluation, fear of being mocked, low motivation and lack of practice, formal classroom setting, etc. These factors are interconnected with one another. The research emphasized the necessity of implementing a complete strategy to effectively deal with the issue of spoken English anxiety among English department students. The aforementioned statement highlighted the significance of language teachers in creating interactive and motivating classroom settings, prioritizing effective communication rather than mere grammatical accuracy. Students have to increase opportunities for speaking English, along with the efforts they make to get rid of spoken English anxiety. To mitigate the issue, efforts should be made by teachers, students, and

universities' authorities in Bangladesh to create a learning environment that is both supportive and effective.

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