

## ANALYZING TYPES AND LEVELS OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY

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**Abstract:** This current study analyzed and described the types and levels of students' English speaking anxiety in foreign language learning activities to acknowledge and give awareness about English-speaking anxiety as one of the debilitating factors in learning English as an international language. This study was descriptive quantitative research, conducted at the English Education Department of Muhammadiyah University Prof. Dr. HAMKA. The participants were the second-semester students of the Transactional Listening Speaking class. The questionnaires to find out the dominant types and levels of students' speaking anxiety, that were given to the participants, consisted of 33 statements and were based on FLCAS which was adapted from Horwitz and Cope (1986). The author found that the 'anxious' level was the dominant level of speaking anxiety experienced by 36% of the participants. None of them experienced the "relaxed" and "very relaxed" levels. Moreover, the author found that 67% or most of the participants suffered from 'fear of negative evaluation' as the dominant type of speaking anxiety among the participants.

**Keywords:** Speaking Anxiety, Types of Speaking Anxiety, Levels of Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Skill

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English is considered a tool to communicate with each other around the world, therefore, it is known as an international language. Moreover, many people believe that English is an open door for better opportunities in life. Therefore, learning English is very important to improve one's skills and abilities in this competitive world. There are four skills that teachers should involve in learning and teaching activities to learn English. One of those skills is speaking, including the capability to participate and interact with others verbally, such as asking and answering (Brown, 2001). Therefore, speaking is a crucial skill in learning English, because through speaking people can convey their thought to each other.

However, despite the importance of speaking as one skill in learning English, many students still find it difficult to be fluent in speaking English. Many students show their failure and inability in speaking English. This problem is triggered by various psychological conditions, especially anxiety. In line with the statements above, MacIntyre (1998) confirms that worriedness and an emotional reaction rising during studying or using a second language, which affects the learning process negatively is known as anxiety. Hence, anxiety is considered by teachers as a major barrier to speaking which suffers by English students. It has a big impact on students when they try to speak up in English. Students often show the physical symptoms of anxiety in speaking English, such as excessive perspiration, headaches, and shortness of breath. Whereas the psychological symptoms are fear, discomfort, and difficulties staying focused (Johnston, 2006).

This situation is often experienced by students who learn foreign languages. This statement is supported by Horwitz and Cope (1986), that difficulties to speak are a quite popular topic among anxious foreign language students. Foreign language learners are prone to experiencing this kind of anxiety because speaking activities in classroom environments are extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students compared with other skills. As

stated by Liu (2007), when learners are assigned to speak or given questions by the teacher in class, they become more anxious. Horwitz and Cope (1986) also describe the trigger for speaking anxiety as foreign language anxiety which comes in various types, namely as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. In fact, due to having this feeling of anxiety in foreign language speaking, students often have poor language performance in class.

Not only the types, but speaking anxiety also occurs with various severity levels as well. As stated by Horwitz and Cope (1986) that the highest level of students' anxiety on the test indicates that they are anxious to speak using a foreign language. Whereas Kondo & Ying-Ling (2006) state that anxiety interferes with language learning activities through behavior instrumental, and people who suffer from a severe level of language anxiety are more intense feeling it. Based on Mayangta, (2013) speaking anxiety can be recognized with each level starting from 'Very Anxious' to 'Very Relaxed'.

Furthermore, as explained by Ormrod (2011), a few aspects of cognition in speaking activities might be blocked by anxiety. Anxious students might be bothered to learn, process/retrieve information effectively, and demonstrate skills that they have acquired. Whereas, Basic (2011) explains that anxious students are often very calm and passive when it comes to speaking.

Speaking anxiety which occurs in various types and severity levels is recognized as a kind of debilitating anxiety as stated by Ormrod and Basic above. Therefore, the author is fascinated to investigate the types and levels of English-speaking anxiety experienced by foreign language students. By broadening our knowledge about it, this study can be an insight for fellow educators to learn and give special treatments for students who experience speaking anxiety or to find out the suitable methods to overcome these problems based on the types and levels.

## **METHOD**

This study used a descriptive quantitative method with a survey approach to answering the research question. In this study, the author analyzed and described the types and levels of students' English-speaking anxiety in foreign language learning activities experienced by students. The author used close-ended questionnaires as the instrument to gather the data. It was chosen because it was suitable for the kind of this study itself. Babbie (1990) explained the questionnaire as a file that contains questions and items arranged to gather information suitable for the analysis.

FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) is the questionnaire used in this study. In adapting this questionnaire, the authors made a few minor changes such as changing the questions to make them more understandable, and questions that did not represent the English-speaking anxiety in classroom learning activities specifically were changed. This questionnaire has been widely used to analyze levels and types of speaking anxiety and its validity also has been proved by many previous researchers, such as Aida (1994), Horwitz and Cope (1986), Park (2014), Mayangta (2013), and Dewi (2018). It shows the validity and high reliability of this FLCAS Questioner.

The 55 second-semester students were participating in this research. The participants were the English Education Department of UHAMKA. They were given the questionnaires with Google Form which provides 5 Likert rating scale options from 'Strongly Agree' (SA) to 'Strongly Disagree' (SD) with a score range from 5-1 to measure the types and levels of student speaking anxiety for each statement on the FLCAS questionnaire. The data was calculated statistically and analyzed with descriptive statistics to indicate the mean and standard deviation to obtain the results from students' responses.

In analyzing the levels of students' speaking anxiety, the data were calculated manually for each response from the participants to get the total scores. The range for the scores is from a minimum of 33 to a maximum of 165, based on the FLCAS questionnaire itself. According to Mayangta (2013), the higher the total score, the more anxious the respondent is. After the results of the score from the anxiety level of each respondent were discovered, they will be categorized into some levels. As stated by Mayangta (2013) speaking anxiety can be recognized with each level starting from 'Very Anxious' to 'Very Relaxed'. The following table shows the classification of scores for the measurements of anxiety levels adapted from Oetting's scale, as cited in (Mayangta, 2013).

**Table 1: Level of FLCAS Anxiety Scale Adopted from Oetting's Scale**

<b>RANGE</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>
124 – 165	Very Anxious
108 – 123	Anxious
87 – 107	Mildly Anxious
66 – 86	Relaxed
33 – 65	Very Relaxed

After that, the data were calculated and converted into frequency and percentage to show the comparison of the overall results of any levels of anxiety experienced by the participants. Horwitz and Cope (1986) said that the percentages referred to the total number of students' responses. Next, in analyzing the dominant type of students' speaking anxiety, the data were calculated based on the category of each type of student's speaking anxiety in FLCAS. Then, the data were calculated and tabulated based on the number of statements in each category of anxiety types. Finally, the data is converted into a percentage to see the comparison of which states and which category of anxiety types are chosen the most and have the highest score (dominant).

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. The Dominant Levels of Students' Speaking Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning Activity.**

The data gathered from FLCAS questionnaires have been calculated to find the total score from each student and then the data were categorized into some levels. The details are shown below:

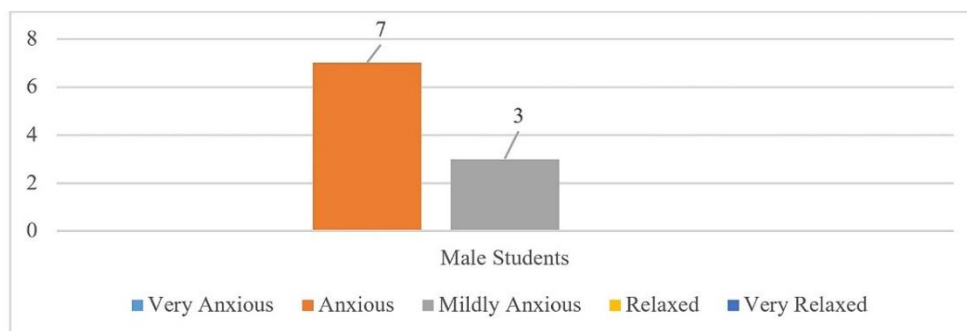
**Table 2: The Calculated and Categorized Scores of FLCAS Questionnaires Responses**

<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>ANXIETY LEVELS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>ANXIETY LEVELS</b>
S1	103	Mildly Anxious	S29	90	Mildly Anxious
S2	114	Anxious	S30	103	Mildly Anxious
S3	97	Mildly Anxious	S31	109	Anxious
S4	108	Anxious	S32	110	Anxious
S5	121	Anxious	S33	116	Anxious
S6	115	Anxious	S34	134	Very Anxious
S7	110	Mildly Anxious	S35	108	Anxious
S8	101	Mildly Anxious	S36	111	Anxious
S9	122	Anxious	S37	93	Mildly Anxious
S10	107	Mildly Anxious	S38	109	Anxious

S11	109	Anxious	S39	110	Anxious
S12	116	Anxious	S40	130	Very Anxious
S13	137	Very Anxious	S41	114	Anxious
S14	116	Anxious	S42	111	Anxious
S15	116	Anxious	S43	106	Mildly Anxious
S16	99	Mildly Anxious	S44	96	Mildly Anxious
S17	113	Anxious	S45	116	Anxious
S18	129	Very Anxious	S46	94	Mildly Anxious
S19	116	Anxious	S47	108	Anxious
S20	102	Mildly Anxious	S48	107	Mildly Anxious
S21	103	Mildly Anxious	S49	102	Mildly Anxious
S22	110	Anxious	S50	144	Very Anxious
S23	120	Anxious	S51	94	Mildly Anxious
S24	93	Mildly Anxious	S52	102	Mildly Anxious
S25	122	Anxious	S53	113	Anxious
S26	99	Mildly Anxious	S54	109	Anxious
S27	124	Very Anxious	S55	110	Anxious
S28	144	Very Anxious			

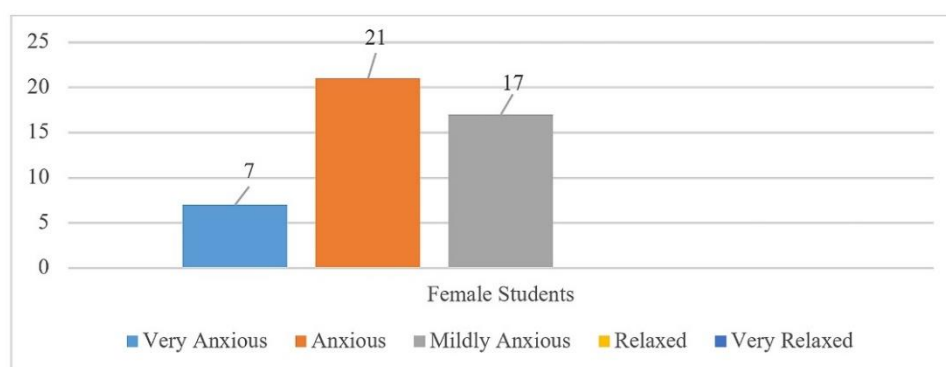
In addition, based on the demographic aspect of the participants as we can see in the figure below, there are 7 (70%) out of 10 male students who experienced the anxious level, while 3 (30%) of them experienced the mildly anxious level.

**Figure 1: English-speaking anxiety levels experienced by male students**



Meanwhile, based on the demographic aspect we can see in the figure below there are 7 (16%) of 45 female students experienced a very anxious level, 21 others (46%) experienced the anxious level, while 17 (38%) of them experienced a level of mildly anxious.

**Figure 2: English-speaking anxiety levels experienced by female students**



Furthermore, the author also calculated the English-speaking anxiety levels experienced by the participants with descriptive quantitative statistic calculation using SPSS software. This action was taken to find the significant differences in anxiety levels regarding the demographic aspect of participants' gender. The detail of the calculation will be shown below:

**Table 3: The difference in students' English-speaking anxiety levels based on gender**

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
FEMALE	45	90	144	111,56	1,902	12,761
MALE	10	93	120	109,50	2,721	8,606

From the calculation, we can see that there are significant differences in English speaking anxiety levels among the participants which for the female participants  $M = 111.58$  and  $SD = 12.761$ , meanwhile for male participants  $M = 109.50$  and  $SD = 8.606$ . Moreover, the maximum score is 144 for female participants and 120 for male participants. Meanwhile, the minimum score is 90 for female participants and 93 for male participants. Based on the mean score and the total score, it can be said that female participants are most likely to suffer from higher levels of English-speaking anxiety compared with male students in speaking class. The above statement is supported by the theory of Mayangta (2013) which explains that the higher the total score, the more anxious the respondent is.

**Table 4: The Summary of Students' Speaking Anxiety Levels**

Level of Anxiety	Participants	The Percentage
Very Anxious (124 - 165)	7	13 %
Anxious (108 - 123)	28	51 %
Mildly Anxious (87 - 107)	20	36 %
Relaxed (66 - 86)	-	-
Very Relaxed (33 - 65)	-	-
Total	55	100 %

Based on the table above, we can conclude that from all 55 participants, there are 7 participants (13%) who experienced 'Very Anxious' level, while 28 participants (51%) experienced 'Anxious', and 20 others (36%) experienced 'Mildly Anxious'. This phenomenon is considered normal because many people may feel tense, nervous, and worried (anxious) when they are asked to perform or to speak in a foreign language. However, the author found an interesting phenomenon that from the 55 participants, none of them experienced the "Relaxed" and "Very Relaxed" levels. This means that all of the participants are anxious when it comes to speaking in English.

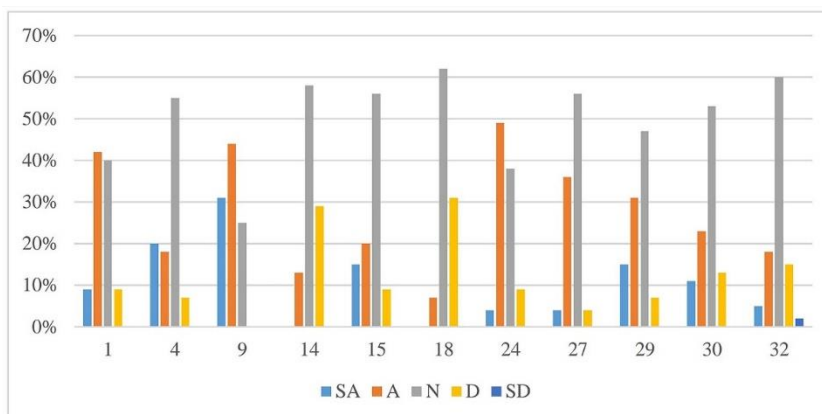
**2. The Dominant Type of Students' Speaking Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning Activity.**

The author has divided the items of the questionnaire into 3 types namely, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation based on FLCAS. To figure out the dominant type of speaking anxiety experienced by the participants, the author categorized and calculated the responses into 3 types.

**Table 5: The Percentage of Students' Communication Apprehension**

No	Questionnaire items	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English during class activities	5	9	23	42	22	40	5	9	0	0
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English	11	20	10	18	30	55	4	7	0	0
9	I start to panic when I have to speak English without preparation in class	17	31	24	44	14	25	0	0	0	0
14	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers	0	0	7	13	32	58	16	29	0	0
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the lecturer is correcting	8	15	11	20	31	56	5	9	0	0
18	I feel confident when I speak in English	0	0	4	7	34	62	17	31	0	0
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students	2	4	27	49	21	38	5	9	0	0
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in my class	2	4	20	36	31	56	2	4	0	0
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language lecturer says	8	15	17	31	26	47	4	7	0	0
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English	6	11	13	23	29	53	7	13	0	0
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers	3	5	10	18	33	60	8	15	1	2

**Figure 3: The Percentage Overview of Students' Communication Apprehension**

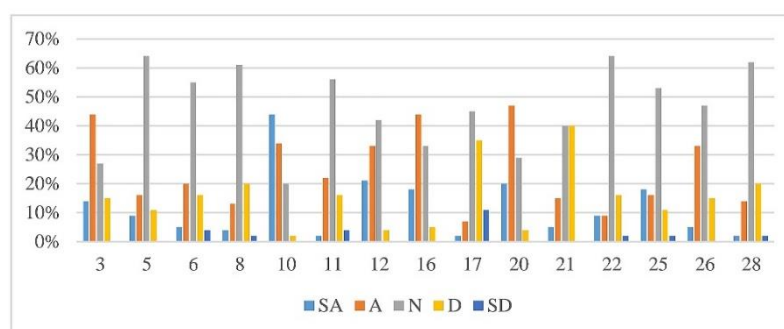


From the figure above, the results show the highest total is for the statement ‘I feel confident when I speak in English’ which is item no. 18 with 34 participants (62%) who answered ‘Neutral’. It can be said that students might feel confident speaking English. However, it can also be concluded that students are still not sure of their answers since they answered the question with a neutral option.

**Table 6: The Percentage of Students' Test Anxiety**

No	Questionnaire items	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called to perform speaking in class	8	14	24	44	15	27	8	15	0	0
5	It wouldn't bother me at all if the durations of Transactional speaking and Listening class are longer than usual	5	9	9	16	35	64	6	11	0	0
6	During class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course	3	5	11	20	30	55	9	16	2	4
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my Transactional Listening and Speaking class	2	4	7	13	34	61	11	20	1	2
10	I worry about the consequences of failing in my Transactional Listening and speaking class	24	44	19	34	11	20	1	2	0	0
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over Transactional Listening and speaking classes.	1	2	12	22	31	56	9	16	2	4
12	In Transactional Listening and speaking class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know	12	21	18	33	23	42	2	4	0	0
16	Even if I am well prepared for the Oral test in Transactional Listening and speaking class, I still feel anxious about it	10	18	24	44	18	33	3	5	0	0
17	I often feel like I'm not going to my Transactional Listening and speaking class	1	2	4	7	25	45	19	35	6	11
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called to perform or speak in class	11	20	26	47	16	29	2	4	0	0
21	The more I study for a Speaking test, the more confused I get	3	5	8	15	22	40	22	40	0	0
22	I don't feel pressured to properly prepare to perform for speaking English in class	5	9	5	9	35	64	9	16	1	2
25	Transactional Listening and Speaking class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind	10	18	9	16	29	53	6	11	1	2
26	I feel more tense and nervous in Transactional Listening and Speaking class than in my other classes	3	5	18	33	26	47	8	15	0	0
28	When I'm on my way to Transactional Listening and speaking class, I feel very sure and relaxed	1	2	8	14	34	62	11	20	1	2

**Figure 4: The Percentage Overview of Students' Test Anxiety**



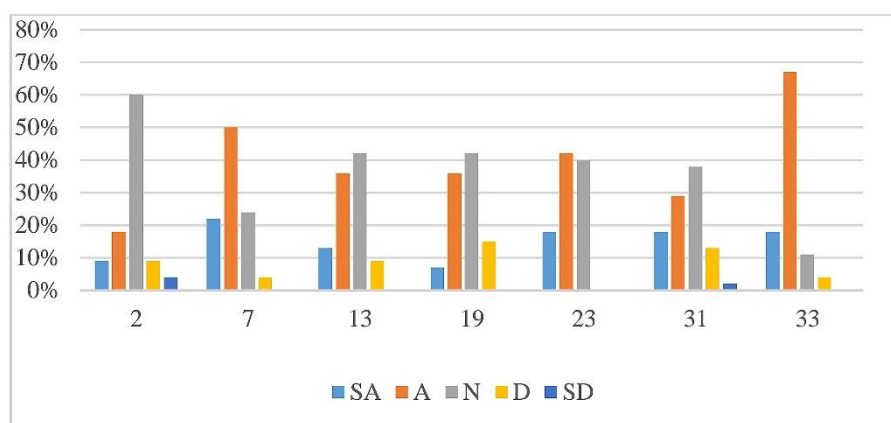
Based on the table and figure above, the writer found that homogeneity appears in the two highest total items. There are similarities both in items no. 5 and 22 with 35 participants (64%) who answered 'Neutral'. The author concluded that students might not be bothered if the duration of the speaking class is longer than usual as shown by statement no. 5. However, it can also mean that students were still not sure with their answers whether they would enjoy it or not if the duration of the speaking class is longer because they answered the question with the neutral option.

Whereas, for statement no. 22, it can be concluded that students were ready if they should perform to speak English in class as long as they were properly prepared. However, since they answered the question with a neutral option this could also mean that they were still not sure whether they were ready or they felt pressured to prepare properly when they are assigned to speak in English.

**Table 7: The Percentage of Students' Fear of Negative Evaluation**

No	Questionnaire items	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%
2	I don't worry about making mistakes while speaking English in class	5	9	10	18	33	60	5	9	2	4
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking English than I am	12	22	28	50	13	24	2	4	0	0
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my class activities	7	13	20	36	23	42	5	9	0	0
19	I am afraid that my lecturer is ready to correct every mistake I make	4	7	20	36	23	42	8	15	0	0
23	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do	10	18	23	42	22	40	0	0	0	0
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	10	18	16	29	21	38	7	13	1	2
33	I get nervous when the teacher/lecturer asks questions about speaking English which I haven't prepared in advance	10	18	37	67	6	11	2	4	0	0

**Figure 5: The Percentage Overview of Students' Fear of Negative Evaluation**



From the figure above, the results show the highest total is in statement no. 33 with 36 participants (67%) who answered 'Agree'. It can be concluded that students are afraid of making mistakes when their teacher/lecturer asks questions in English that they have not prepared. They are afraid of being evaluated negatively by their teachers/lecturers. Most likely, 37 participants (67%) suffer from 'fear of negative evaluation' regarding the type of their speaking anxiety.



Related to the first research question about the levels of English-speaking anxiety, it shows that the dominant level of speaking anxiety is on the 'anxious' level with 28 participants (51%). The result showed that 7 participants (13%) experienced 'Very Anxious' level, 28 participants (51%) experienced the 'Anxious' level, and 20 participants (36%) experienced the 'Mildly Anxious' level, whereas the 'Relaxed' and 'Very Relaxed' level are the only levels with (0%), none of the participants experienced it. This result shows that the majority of students become self-conscious and feel anxious when they are asked to speak English in class. This phenomenon is in line with Suciati (2020) statement which explains that anxiety in speaking a foreign language is caused by psychological factors (emotions, self-esteem, anxiety, attitude, fear, and motivation), instructional factors (classroom techniques and bonds between lecturer-student), and lastly the situational settings (the condition to speak in front of the class). On the other hand, Young (1991) implied this phenomenon is related to the student's language abilities themselves which means that the high level of anxiety is the result of the low level of students' language skills.

In addition, from the demographic aspect, there are 7 (70%) out of 10 male students experienced the 'anxious' level, while 3 (30%) of them experienced the 'mildly anxious' level. Meanwhile, for the female students, there are 7 (16%) of 45 students experienced 'very anxious' level, 21 others (46%) experienced 'anxious' level, while 17 (38%) of them experienced a level of 'mildly anxious'. Furthermore, significant differences appear in the mean score from the descriptive calculation regarding the demographic aspect of participants' gender which shows that the female participants were most likely more anxious compared to male participants. These findings were supported by Balemir (2009) who found that a higher level of speaking anxiety was experienced the most by female students than male students. In addition, a study conducted by Öztürk and Gürbüz (2013) that a moderate level of anxiety was demonstrated by female students, whereas male students experienced a lower level. Along with this study, it can be said that the psychological condition of male students tends to be more relaxed compared with female students who tend to be more anxious and worried when they have to speak English in class.

Meanwhile, regarding the types of speaking anxiety based on FLCAS, it reveals that the dominant type is fear of negative evaluation as shown in item no. 33. The majority of the participants have chosen 'agree' to answer this statement. From the explanation above, we can say that students are worried about being evaluated negatively by their teachers/lecturers/friends if they make mistakes. It might be the result of fear of punishment or being laughed at by the teacher/lecturer/friends. Therefore, students are nervous, afraid, or anxious when they are asked by the teacher/lecturer/friends. This result is in line with Horwitz and Cope (1986) who said that fear of negative evaluation is one of the types which causes speaking anxiety. In addition, Horwitz and Cope (1986) also explain that worriedness or fear towards an expectancy of being evaluated negatively might come from others as fear of negative evaluation.

## **CONCLUSION**

This current study aims to analyze the levels and types of English-speaking anxiety among the participants. The results show the dominant levels of English-speaking anxiety of the participants are on 'anxious' level with none of them experienced the 'relaxed' and 'very relaxed' levels. There are 7 students (13%) who experienced 'very anxious' level, 28 students (51%) who experienced the 'anxious' level, and 20 students (36%) who experienced the 'mildly anxious' level, while there are none of them (0%) who experienced 'relaxed' and

'very relaxed' level. Furthermore, regarding the demographic aspect of participants' gender, the female participants are most likely more anxious compared to male participants based on the significant difference in the mean score from the descriptive calculation.

The result of the types of speaking anxiety categorized based on FLCAS reveals that the dominant type of speaking anxiety among the participants is 'fear of negative evaluation'. There are 37 students (67%) who answered statement number 33 by which 'Agree' option. After that, test anxiety became the second dominant type with 35 students (64%), then the least type was communication apprehension with 34 students (62%). This study found that the phenomenon of English-speaking anxiety appears in various types and severity levels depending on each individual and gender of students. Therefore, the author hopes that this could be beneficial to bring awareness and insight to teachers or lecturers and educators so that they can find a way or innovation to overcome this matter. Furthermore, for the future researcher, regarding this topic, further research needs to be advanced in the area to find the best method suitable for students who experiencing speaking anxiety or the further studies to find ways to suppress the students' speaking anxiety levels.

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