



## Speaking Achievement across Levels of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety among Female Students in EFL Class

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### Abstract

*This study examined variations in English-speaking achievement across different levels of foreign language speaking anxiety among female students in EFL classrooms. A comparative research design was employed involving 104 female students drawn from a total population of 139 students. Simple random sampling was used to select 52 students from Homosha Secondary School, while census sampling was utilized to include all 52 students from Pharo Assosa School since the number was manageable. Data was collected using a standardized Speaking Achievement Test and a validated Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale. After normality and homogeneity of variance had been checked, descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were utilized. The results show a strong negative association between speaking anxiety levels and speaking achievement. Students grouped as having low speaking anxiety achieved the highest speaking scores, while those with moderate anxiety demonstrated slightly lower achievement, and students with high levels of anxiety scored the lowest achievement. Post-hoc comparisons indicated that the significant differences were primarily obtained in the high-anxiety group. These findings suggest that speaking anxiety becomes considerably harmful when it reaches high intensity. The study highlights the importance of incorporating anxiety-reduction strategies in EFL classrooms to support learners with their speaking skills.*

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### Article Information

#### Article History:

Received: 04-12-2025

Revised: 22-02-2026

Accepted: 25-03-2026

#### Keywords:

*Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Speaking Achievement, EFL Learners, Single-Sex School, Mixed-Sex School, and Oral Performance.*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the affective factors that has a significant effect on the speaking proficiency of students in EFL classes across the world is foreign language speaking anxiety. This anxiety constrains students' ability to communicate effectively because it is frequently associated with speaking tasks. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), foreign language anxiety represents a situation-specific form of anxiety that appears during language learning processes and is particularly evident during speaking tasks that require spontaneous oral

production. A considerable body of empirical research has confirmed that high levels of anxiety can negatively influence language learning outcomes, particularly those related to communicative competence (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Aida, 1994). According to recent studies, meta-analyses showed that the greater the degree of foreign language speaking anxiety, the greater the relationship with less academic performance, primarily on speaking-related tasks (Teimouri et al., 2019).

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Speaking achievement is a significant dependent variable in foreign language (FL) teaching because it is a task-based skill, which is typically measured by the level of fluency, coherence, pronunciation, and interactional skill that a student can display. However, the difference in observed speaking performance can be very high among students who have been taught in a similar manner. The reason is that the predictor that is best applicable in explaining such observed performance variations in the area of foreign language learning is foreign language speaking anxiety, a situation-specific response to oral language performance. Students are supposed to access and develop the knowledge of keywords, voice, structure, and syntax, and at the same time, they must cope with the pressure of the evaluator. The speakers who are full of anxiety may subsequently impose a cognitive capacity on poor performance.

Individuals experience anxiety at varying degrees of intensity, for it does not manifest uniformly across every student. Based on standardized measurement instruments, these variations are often categorized into low, moderate, and high levels of anxiety for analytical purposes. Examining speaking performance across these distinct anxiety levels provides deeper insight into how emotional factors influence language learning outcomes. Students with lower anxiety levels generally demonstrate greater willingness to communicate and more effective participation in classroom interaction. On the contrary, students experiencing high anxiety avoid speaking opportunities, which causes low practice and low oral proficiency.

Most studies fail to consider the possibility that different levels of anxiety can impact speaking performance to a different degree. The fact that anxiety is assumed to be a homogeneous variable fails to recognize the fact that high levels of anxiety always harm performance, while moderate levels of anxiety can sometimes motivate students. Unless these differences in effect are clarified, interventions cannot be tailored to the specific needs of each individual student. There is enough evidence that female students who are anxious have

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., Jan. –March, 2026, 15(1), 89-99* poor performance in school. [MacIntyre and Gardner \(1994\)](#) discovered that the more anxious a person is, the worse he or she speaks. This is observed more in activities that require speaking and comprehension. In an effort to determine the level of anxiety students have in the language classes, [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#) designed a tool known as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that anxiety in a foreign language correlates with the levels of success that students can achieve in their speaking performance. [Horwitz \(1986\)](#) applied the FLCAS and discovered that greater anxiety resulted in poor performance. Several studies have been able to discover the same through this tool. Additionally, [Awan et al. \(2010\)](#) found that the more anxious the students were, the worse they performed. Further evidence was provided by [Sener \(2015\)](#) and [Ghorbandordinejad and Ahmadabad \(2016\)](#), who discovered that speaking anxiety is detrimental to student outcomes. There is very little evidence to prove this ([Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014](#)). Indeed, an example by [Park and French \(2013\)](#) established that more nervous students performed better. They believed that anxiety could be useful at times during language classes.

[Bell and McCallum \(2012\)](#) examined the combination of learning, thinking, and feeling among language learners. Their results showed a weak but significant correlation between speaking anxiety and achievement, as well as the effort made by students. This gives a hint that anxiety may come in handy. However, they applied another instrument as compared to the FLCAS, and thus, their results cannot be completely compared. At a moderate level, the students can engage other people in the classroom. But victories are usually accompanied by the feeling of embarrassment and fear of negative criticism ([Young, 1991](#)). Higher levels of speaking anxiety, however, may not only suppress high-ranking performance but also damage the learner and performance in the speaking skill. Consequently, there will be a loss in speaking achievement ([MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994](#)). The relationships imply that speaking anxiety is the

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defining factor in the actual ability of students in the use of spoken languages.

Among the female students in EFL classes, the level of speaking anxiety might be experienced with different levels of intensity, which would influence the performance of the classes and the achievement that would be measurable. The question that the researcher is supposed to answer is the relationship between the levels of speaking anxiety and the speaking achievement and how the differences could be explained by the affective trait and not necessarily by the cognitive trait. Based on the theoretical assumption that foreign language anxiety is a specific aspect of a foreign language situation and is able to adversely influence communicative practices (Horwitz et al., 1986), the researcher would subsequently attempt to determine the direct and indirect influences of foreign language anxiety on achievement in foreign languages. Besides this, the researcher would also strive to produce evidence that would result in pedagogical practice that reduces speaking anxiety based on the argument that speaking anxiety inhibits the processing capacity, decreases motivation, and desire to communicate (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

The position of the researcher was to illuminate the association between the amounts of speaking anxiety and speaking achievement so as to illustrate the significance of the affective trait in EFL learning with reference to female learners.

As we can see, the degree of anxiety correlates with the performance of anxious students. It is the high-anxiety students who can be expected to perform the worst, and less anxious students tend to perform better (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). This research employed a one-way ANOVA in order to determine the extent to which foreign language speaking anxiety influences the performance of female students.

Generally, the objective of this study was to identify the presence of statistically significant differences in speaking achievement in the cases of low, medium, and high levels of foreign language speaking anxiety among the female EFL students. This stratified analysis assists in elucidating the

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degree of occurrence of the performance disparity, which is associated with anxiety as gradual, proportional, or disproportionately localized among highly anxious learners.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Even though studies have been carried out across the globe on foreign language speaking anxiety, gender studies have shown more 'diverse and contrasting results. Females, as compared to males, also experienced more language anxiety, primarily in evaluative speaking (Park & French, 2013; Ozturk & Gurbuz, 2013), which is explained by the fact that female speakers have more self-evaluative standards and potential fears of audience and neighbors, the judgment of peers, and the sociocultural influence of performance during the speech. On the other hand, female students were considered by others to be more academically motivated and more affectively sensitive to tasks like communicative (Dewaele et al., 2008). Whether such might be non-system specific effects, female students need to be exploited as a population in research, but not simply as a comparative variable.

In Ethiopia, where English is used as a medium of instruction in secondary and higher education, speaking proficiency is essential to academic achievement. However, the national educational testing and situational-based research findings depict the failure of the students to be fluent and speak the English language correctly, despite the numerous years of education that have taken place. A large class size, teacher-centered pedagogies, the inadequacy of communicative activities, and pedagogies that are based on examination inevitably involve anxiety in the experience of speakers, particularly when it comes to oral presentation in the classroom or classroom discussion. In the case of female students, their sociocultural background, which is more inclined to implicit rules that somewhat impede their verbal confidence, can also be the cause of their anxiety.

No one has so far attempted to study foreign language speaking anxiety at different degrees of intensity and the effect of foreign language

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speaking anxiety on speaking achievement among female students in Ethiopia, although general English achievement and general foreign language anxiety have been accounted for by researchers in Ethiopia. Previous studies, in general, have understood anxiety to be a continuous variable and examined the correlation between the two variables, as opposed to the categorical assignment of learners into grade levels of anxiety and their performance in the two different modes. (Eysenck et al., 2007; MacIntyre, 2007).

Although all the studies done before have proposed a negative correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and achievement in speaking (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), most of them have not compared speaking achievement by different degrees of anxiety. In addition, the studies on gender differences in the relation, particularly in the EFL context, lacked a particular study to establish the achievement of speaking among female learners of a low to high level of foreign language-speaking anxiety. Therefore, the gap in the empirical field may be regarded as the absence of studies related to the success of speaking among the FL speakers at various stages of the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety.

### **Research questions**

This paper answered the following research questions as it covered the relationship between gender, level of foreign language speaking anxiety, and English-speaking achievement.

1. Do students differ noticeably in terms of the achievement of English speaking depending on the level of foreign language speaking anxiety (low, moderate, and high)?
2. According to the statistical analysis, what are the levels of contribution of foreign language speaking anxiety levels (low, moderate, and high) to foreign language speaking achievement?
3. What is the most significant predictor of weak oral performance in the EFL students

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based on the standardized speaking test in terms of the level of foreign language speaking anxiety?

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Paradigm**

This research applied the post-positivist research. This paradigm assumes that the real world exists independently of human perceptions and that absolute truth can only be approximated through systematic investigation and measurement. This paradigm viewed foreign language speaking anxiety as an observable psychological variable, and speaking achievement as an observable outcome, measured by an administered test. This research assessed the association between various levels of foreign language speaking anxiety and achievement scores. The paradigm adopts an objectivist epistemology, meaning the researcher attempts to collect facts and test hypotheses through statistical testing. It adopts a quantitative methodology in which the researcher employed a standardized measuring device.

### **Research design**

This study employed a causal comparative research design to compare speaking achievement at the three levels of foreign language anxiety (low, medium, and high). A comparative design was most suitable because it allowed for the examination of several variables (foreign language anxiety and speaking achievement) simultaneously and in the same context as the variables occur in a manipulated setting via cross-sectional testing and a statistical comparison of naturally occurring levels of foreign language anxiety. An additional correlative component was included so that information on the correlation could be provided between foreign language anxiety and speaking achievement.

### **Research setting**

The research was conducted in two schools of Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State, Ethiopia. The two schools are Pharo Assosa Primary and Secondary School in Assosa town and Homosha

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Secondary School in Homosha woreda. Both contexts use the national EFL curriculum in which English is taught as a subject as well as taught as a medium of instruction for higher grades. Both contexts imply a communicative instructional approach in which oral skills and oral performance are the main scholarly criteria. The reasons for choosing these contexts over other contexts were for the sake of comparable instructional contexts and an adequate number of female students.

### **Population and sampling**

The population comprised the 2025/2026 academic year female students from both grade levels in the two studied school environments. The population of the two school environments comprises the total population of 139 students, of which 87 are from Homosha Secondary School and 52 from Pharo Asosa Primary and Secondary School. 52 students were randomly selected by simple random sampling so as to give every student an equal chance of being chosen from the total population of Homosha School, and since Pharo Assosa Primary and Secondary School's population was very small, all the 52 students were taken by census sampling, altogether consisting of 104 students. This number was adequate for statistical analysis and enough for comparison purposes.

### **Data collection instruments**

To collect the necessary data for the study, two types of tools were utilized. These included questionnaires, namely the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) and Speaking Achievement Test (SAT). The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLSAS) was adopted and used in this research, as it is a domain specific, psychometrically sound measure of EFL/ESL speaking anxiety that has a direct bearing on a student's speaking performance in the classroom, and unlike other measurements, it straightforwardly separates out other facets of language use and learning to focus entirely on this one. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, developed by [Horwitz et al. \(1986\)](#), objectively removes extraneous aspects of language

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., Jan. –March, 2026, 15(1), 89-99* use and learning to home in on the speaking side of the equation. It is generally considered both dependable and valid, responsive to group discrepancies in both efficiency and gender, simple to implement and analyze quantitatively with similar scales. As a result, researchers frequently choose this instrument to be utilized in research that attempts to find a complete, empirically dependable relationship between speaking anxiety and achievement.

Participants indicated the degree to which they agreed with statements on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Negatively worded items were recoded before the data analysis. The total anxiety score was calculated by summing responses, and students were assigned to low, medium, or high anxiety conditions by dividing the sample into thirds based on anxiety score distributions. Speaking achievement was evaluated through a comprehensive speaking test in accordance with the national English curriculum. Tasks included introducing topics, role-playing conversational scenarios, describing pictures, and presenting short arguments, all used to evoke spontaneous speech production. Using a five-point analytic scale, pronunciation, fluency, grammatical correctness, vocabulary, and interaction were rated by two well-qualified EFL instructors independently. The scores were then averaged and saved as the speaking score.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Before data were collected, permission was sought from schools and participants. Data collection was carried out in two stages. First, data collection was done by administering the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale during regular class time with the students. The foreign language speaking anxiety scale administrations were handled equally. The second phase consisted of conducting a speaking achievement test when the classroom was quiet.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

In order to find out the differences and similarities between the foreign language speaking

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achievement and foreign language speaking anxiety level of female students attending only-girl schools and mixed-sex schools, the mean score was calculated using one-way ANOVA for each question. The researcher used one-way ANOVA to see if significant differences in the speaking achievement scores were found among the low, medium, and high language anxious groups. This was conducted to simplify the calculation of the distribution mean score and the establishment of the anxiety levels using student mean scores.

### **Ethical consideration**

While data were collected, crucial ethical principles, such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary involvement, and harm avoidance, were closely followed. Consent was provided by participants and other relevant parties, including school administrators. The study was conducted under very strict ethical conditions. Students were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without detriment to their academic standing. Data collected during the research were kept in coded form to maintain confidentiality and anonymity and

*Sci. Technol. Arts Res. J., Jan. –March, 2026, 15(1), 89-99* were only ever used for academic research purposes. The research was conducted under the principles of academic integrity, safeguarding of participants, and responsible data analysis.

### **Result Analysis**

In order to examine the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between levels of foreign language speaking anxiety (low, moderate, high) and foreign language achievement, a one-way ANOVA analysis was used because the means of three independent groups were analyzed by searching for statistically significant differences. Assumption testing was conducted prior to the analysis. The fundamental assumptions related to a one-way ANOVA were homogeneity of variance (meaning the three groups have similar variances) and normality (meaning the dependent variable follows a normal distribution). Homogeneity of variance was checked through Levene's test, and the normality assumption was tested by Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests of low-anxiety level, moderate-anxiety level, and high-anxiety level.

**Table 1**

*Test of Normality for Speaking Achievement Test*

Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Level	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Low Speaking Anxiety Level	0.112	32	0.200*	0.962	32	0.315
Moderate Speaking Anxiety Level	0.114	41	0.200*	0.967	41	0.267
High Speaking Anxiety Level	0.110	31	0.200*	0.975	31	0.662

In **Table 1**, the scores on the Speaking Achievement Test were examined for normality across the three groups of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (low, medium, and high) using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. The results of both tests indicated no significant deviation from the normal distribution in any group, as the significance levels were all above 0.05. For the Shapiro-Wilk,

the p-values were 0.315 for the low anxiety group, 0.267 for the medium anxiety group, and 0.662 for the high anxiety group. It therefore appeared that the distribution of scores across all groups was approximately normal, which was suitable for the intended statistical tests. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed that the data were normal for all three anxiety levels. The p-values suggested

that the scores on the Speaking Achievement Test were normally distributed for students having low, medium, and high speaking anxiety. Therefore, the

assumption of normality was checked, and the researcher provided an appropriate justification for conducting ANOVA.

**Table 2**

*Test of Homogeneity-Speaking Achievement Test*

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.339	2	101	0.713

A Levene's test was used to examine whether the speaking achievement scores were assigned to groups with equal variances across the three groups listed in Table 2. The Levene statistic was 0.339, with 2 and 101 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.713. Since the p-value is much higher than .05,

the groups do not show any significant difference in variance. In other words, the spread of scores is of equal variance for everyone. Because of that, the data meet the assumption of equal variances, so it is fine to continue with parametric tests like a one-way ANOVA.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Speaking Achievement Test*

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Low Speaking Anxiety Level	32	16.5313	3.01592	.53314	15.4439	17.6186	12.00	23.00
Moderate Speaking Anxiety Level	41	15.6829	2.81460	.43957	14.7945	16.5713	11.00	22.00
High Speaking Anxiety Level	31	13.8387	2.85303	.51242	12.7922	14.8852	7.00	19.00

As seen in Table 3, the researcher began by analyzing raw scores on speaking achievement, categorizing students into low, moderate, and high speaking anxiety levels. The low-speaking anxious group of students (N= 32) had the highest average score of 16.53 (SD=3.02), with a 95% confidence interval of 15.44-17.62, indicating that the majority of students in this group had marked their scores within a good, tight range. Not only were they the best-performing students, but their scores were also significantly consistent. The moderate speaking anxious students (N= 41) scored, on average, a little lower, 15.68 (SD=2.81), while the 95% confidence interval was 14.79-16.57. The high anxious group

(N= 31) had an average score of 13.84 (SD=2.85) and the 95% confidence interval was 12.79- 14.89, which was the lowest of the three groups. Looking at the speaking scores across all students (N= 104), the students had a mean speaking achievement score of 15.39 (SD=3.06), with scores spanning from 7 to 23. As can be seen from the above data, the researcher found a significant reduction in the achievement scores as the speaking anxiety level increased. There is a strong implication that foreign language speaking anxiety and speaking achievement are linked, and it is worth digging deeper with further analysis, like ANOVA, to see if these differences really hold up statistically.

**Table 4***ANOVA result of the Speaking Achievement Test Result*

Item	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	119.796	2	59.898	7.176	0.001
Within Groups	843.040	101	8.347	-	-
Total	962.837	103	-	-	-

Table 4 examines how students' speaking anxiety is related to their performance on the Speaking Achievement Test. According to the range of anxiety level, the participants were divided into three categories: low (n=32), moderate (n=41), and high anxiety (n=31). The descriptive statistics present that the students who had low-level anxiety obtained the highest score in the test (mean=16.53), followed by the moderate group (15.68), while students with high anxiety had the lowest average (13.84).

Overall, scores ranged from 7 to 23, with an average of 15.39. It is obvious that more anxiety usually means lower performance. This lines up with what experts like Horwitz (1986) have said: when students feel anxious, it messes with their ability to speak a new language.

To see whether these differences really mattered, the researcher ran one-way ANOVA: Anxiety level had a significant effect on test scores  $F(2, 101) = 7.176, p = .001$ . The anxiety level explained most of the differences between student scores. It was also supported by the figures; the higher the anxiety, the lower the score. A Tukey HSD post-hoc test showed where the biggest gaps were. Students in the high-anxiety group did noticeably worse than both the low- and moderate-anxiety groups.

### Discussion

The findings of this research are very similar to existing work, both theoretically and empirically, on second language acquisition. According to the conceptualization of foreign language anxiety by Horwitz et al. (1986), excessive levels of anxiety will disrupt cognitive processing because they will be using their attentional resources on distracting themselves from making proper formulations in a foreign language or delivering that message

correctly. In addition, according to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), high levels of anxiety will affect working memory and retrieval processes, which are critical for producing fluent and accurate spoken output in a foreign language. The results of this study provide empirical evidence in support of both Horwitz et al. (1986) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) that as a person's level of anxiety increases to very high levels, their performance will deteriorate significantly. Even though the fact that there were no significant differences in performance between the groups with high and low anxiety demonstrates that anxiety does not appear to function as a purely debilitating or incapacitating force, moreover, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) found that learners experiencing moderate anxiety have greater motivation and alertness. This finding also appears to be consistent with the larger body of psychological research on Yerkes-Dodson theory (Diamond, 2005), which indicates that there are optimal levels of arousal at which performance occurs. Thus, depending on the amount of anxiety felt, anxiety affects the ability to communicate well rather than acting as a barrier to communicating well.

The difference between low and moderate anxiety, though, was not significant. So, a bit of anxiety does not seem to hurt much, but high anxiety clearly drags scores down. This matches past research showing that too much anxiety trips students up when they are trying to speak, finding the right words, putting sentences together, and just getting their thoughts out smoothly (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

In general, there is strong evidence that students' communication is adversely affected when the anxiety that they experience exceeds a high threshold. Anxiety levels below and above that threshold (low & moderate) may also motivate

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students, though the level of communication exhibited would reflect each student's motivation and performance expectations. Therefore, teachers need to be particularly attentive to their students with above-average levels of anxiety, as well as looking for ways to assist students who experience greater than average amounts of anxiety in feeling more comfortable when making presentations. Future studies will provide additional insight into how anxiety interacts with other student characteristics (motivation, confidence, etc.) to inform researchers about how they might enhance students' communication capabilities.

Descriptive statistics revealed a clear and consistent pattern in the correlation between speaking achievement and degree of anxiety. Speaking anxiety was correlated with the level of speaking performance when speaking ability was analyzed using descriptive statistics. When comparing the mean scores of students with a high level of speaking anxiety (mean = 63.61) to the average mean scores of students with a low level of speaking anxiety (mean = 68.11), it is evident that students with a high level of speaking anxiety produced a lower mean score than did students with low speech anxiety. Therefore, it can be concluded that a negative correlation exists between speaking anxiety and oral performance, based on the fact that overall mean scores for students decreased as speech anxiety increased. In addition, the confidence intervals show little or no overlap between the low and high speaking anxiety groups, indicating that this is a significant difference and not merely an insignificant variation.

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence in support of the contention that although moderate levels of speech anxiety may not have a significant effect and may even coexist with the attainment of successful speaking outcomes, severe levels of speaking anxiety have a negative impact on the level of success achieved when speaking in a foreign language.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The data met the necessary prerequisites of normality and homogeneity of variance prior to

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performing descriptive and inferential analyses. The negative correlations between speaking achievement and speaking anxiety levels were confirmed through the analyses. Specifically, students with low anxiety (the lowest level of speaking anxiety) had higher speaking test scores than students with moderate anxiety. In contrast, students with high anxiety had the lowest speaking test scores. These results were supported by a one-way ANOVA, indicating that there was statistically significant evidence to support the hypothesis that high levels of speaking anxiety were related to lower levels of speaking achievement. Therefore, speaking anxiety only has a detrimental impact on speaking achievement when the intensity is high. Speaking test scores were highest for students with low speaking anxiety, slightly lower for students with moderate speaking anxiety, and lowest for students with high speaking anxiety.

## **Recommendations**

Teachers of foreign languages should be particularly aware of high-anxiety students because they tend to be most at risk of experiencing greater difficulties in their oral performance. Language teachers should put a lot of effort into helping these students through the use of anxiety-reducing techniques such as small group discussions, progressive exposure to speaking activities, and encouraging students to seek and provide feedback (Horwitz, 2017).

Teachers can help their students minimize their fears of receiving low grades by creating a classroom environment that promotes error tolerance and emphasizes communicative effectiveness over communicative accuracy in oral tasks. This may help to prevent students' speaking anxiety from escalating to the point where they are completely unable to speak (Young, 1991).

In general, teachers should help their students understand that it is totally understandable to have some anxiety when speaking and that anxiety is not a sign of imminent danger. If students are able to see that moderate amounts of anxiety can be managed and can even provide motivation, then they are less likely to engage in maladaptive

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avoidance behaviors and will be more willing to practice their speaking skills.

### **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

**Abiyot Mosissa:** Data Collection, Conceptualization, Analysis & Writing Original Draft,

**Sherif Ali:** Supervision, Data Analysis & Validation, Review & Editing.

**Desalegn Tolesa:** Formal analysis, Investigation, Resources.

### **Declaration of Competing Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

### **Ethical approval**

Ethical approval for this study was obtained for both Homosha Secondary and Pharo Assosa Primary and Secondary School from Pharo Foundation, Pharo Assosa School on 21 September 2025 under approval reference number PF/AS/308/2025. Prior to data collection, participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the study. Their participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. In addition, the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were strictly maintained throughout the research process. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

### **Data Availability**

The data generated and interpreted during this research are accessible to the authors upon a convincing request.

### **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank grade 9 female students of Homosha secondary school and Pharo Assosa primary and secondary, as well as Pharo foundation, for their cooperation in the study. Besides, they would like to thank Wollega University for the financial support.

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